



**Exeter Public Library Board of Trustees**  
4 Chestnut Street  
Exeter, NH 03833

**September 23, 2025**

The Honorable John M. Formella  
Attorney General of New Hampshire  
New Hampshire Department of Justice  
33 Capitol Street  
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Attorney General Formella,

We, the Exeter Public Library Board of Trustees, write to respectfully request your office's guidance in drafting Child and Teen Library Card Policies that comply with the provisions of HB 273.

As part of our commitment to legal compliance, patron privacy, and equitable access, we seek clarification on what forms of legal documentation or verification our front-line library staff may accept to confirm a parent or guardian's authority to view the protected and private contents of a library card issued to a minor. Specifically, we are looking to understand what constitutes sufficient legal proof for the following categories of adult caregivers recognized under New Hampshire family law:

- Biological and adoptive parents
- Step-parents (with formalized legal authority)
- Legal guardians (appointed through probate or family court)
- Temporary guardians (court-appointed for short-term care)
- Foster parents (assigned by DCYF)
- Kinship caregivers (with or without formal guardianship)
- Guardians ad Litem (court-appointed advocates)
- Individuals or agencies with temporary custody
- Professional guardians (appointed for minors or incapacitated adults)

Furthermore, we seek guidance on how front-line library staff should handle situations where there are name inconsistencies between a parent or guardian and the minor. For example, if the adult's surname differs from the child's, or if documentation presents variations in spelling or formatting, what forms of verification are legally sufficient to establish the relationship? We aim to ensure that staff can reconcile such discrepancies respectfully and accurately, without inadvertently denying access to legitimate caregivers or violating privacy protections.

We also request clarification on how HB 273 applies to emancipated minors. In cases where a minor has been legally emancipated under New Hampshire law—whether through marriage,

military service, or court order—does the individual retain full control over their library account and records, independent of parental access rights? If so, what documentation should library staff request to verify emancipation status, and how should this be reflected in our policy and procedures?

Additionally, we respectfully seek clarification on how HB 273 applies in cases where a parent’s legal rights have been revoked. Specifically, we ask whether such individuals retain any access to a minor’s library account under the law’s current stipulations. If access is no longer permitted, what procedures or documentation should front-line staff rely upon to determine whether a parent retains legal authority? Should proof of dependency or custody be required in addition to the verification methods outlined above?

We also seek clarification on whether HB 273 applies solely to physical library materials or if its provisions extend to digital content, such as eBooks, audiobooks, and other downloadable media. If digital items are covered under the law, we respectfully request guidance on how library staff should facilitate parental access—particularly in cases where materials have been downloaded to a minor’s personal device and are no longer visible within the library’s digital lending platform. We are mindful of the privacy protections outlined in RSA 201-D, which governs the confidentiality of library user records, and seek direction on how to reconcile those protections with parental rights under HB 273.

Finally, we respectfully request guidance on how HB 273 should be interpreted in cases involving domestic violence or abuse. If a patron—such as a legal guardian or protective parent—requests that we withhold access to a minor’s library account in order to prevent disclosure of their new address or location to a non-custodial parent, how should library staff respond? We are particularly concerned about situations where compliance with a parental access request could inadvertently compromise the safety of the child or guardian. Clear direction on how to balance statutory obligations with trauma-informed confidentiality practices would be invaluable.

We would greatly appreciate any statutory interpretation, procedural guidance, or sample language your office can provide to assist us in this effort. The Trustees are committed to adopting a policy that upholds both the spirit and letter of HB 273 and ensures the protection and privacy of our youth patrons.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your response and remain available for any further clarification or discussion.

With highest regard,  
The Exeter Public Library Board of Trustees

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