



August 22, 2023

**Dear Chairman Airey, Members of the Parish Council, and Parish President Cooper,**

Thank you for your continued openness to conversations regarding concerns from citizens. I would like to familiarize you with the current operations, policies, and procedures of the St. Tammany Parish Library System (STPL) to ensure you are up-to-date ahead of the August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 special council meeting.

In 2022, we served over 85,000 cardholders through 541,040 library visits, this is more than 120,000 visits than the year previous. We had over 44,000 patrons in attendance for just over 2,600 classes and events. These statistics reflect a community that uses their Library system and trusts the people who work in our branches every single day.

The Library's policy has always been that parents and guardians are the decision-makers for what their children read, see, or hear. We have several longstanding policies that protect children and the rights of their parents.

**These include:**

- Children under the age of 18 may only obtain a Library card and use the computer with the written permission of their parent or guardian.
- Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian in the branches and when using public computers.
- All public computers have filters in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act or CIPA.
- Parents have the ability to see their child's library account and know what their child is checking out

Over the last year and a half, the library has enacted further policies and procedures to give parents even more tools to use in the selection of library materials.

**These include:**

- An updated card system that specifies the level of access their minor child will have for the collection

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- A resolution by the board directing that graphic (art) novels with sexual conduct be placed behind the circulation desk - only available to an adult or unrestricted juvenile card that a parent selects
- An updated challenged materials process where the board makes decisions on all challenged items in an open public meeting allowing for greater transparency
- A resolution requiring the library staff to temporarily house all challenged items behind the circulation desk until they can be reviewed.

As you may know, the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 436, which was then signed into law by the Governor on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This act provides for several measures regarding library policies.

**These measures include:**

- That the Library shall adopt policies to limit access of minors to sexually explicit material.
- Policies must be adopted by January 1, 2024, and implemented by June 1, 2024.
- These policies must include:
  - Language added to our collection development policy that specifies community standards be applied to materials acquired by the library and language that adopts the Act's definition of "sexual conduct"
  - A library card system that allows parents to select whether the minor can check out sexually explicit material as defined by the Act.
  - This same card system should allow parents an option to select whether the minor can check out / download digital content.
  - A procedure that allows a library patron to request a reconsideration of whether the materials should be included in a collection accessible to minors.
  - These measures can be amendments to existing policies.

The good news is that STPL is already in compliance with much of what the Act requires. As mentioned previously, The Library has already enacted a card system that allows parents to choose their minor child's level of access to the collection. Our card system - which we developed last fall, rolled out in November, and implemented fully on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 – was the model upon which the card system described in Act 436 was based on. We will have to make some tweaks to the system to include the option for parents to turn off digital access and then have the Library Board of Control officially adopt the card system with these changes.

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Our robust “reconsideration process” or “statements of concern” policy exceeds the requirements of Act 436. Not only is there a procedure that allows library patrons to request the reconsideration of library materials, but as mentioned earlier, all decisions are made by the Library Board in an open meeting for full transparency.

The library administration and Board are actively working with the District Attorney’s office to draft the necessary changes to our existing collection development policy. We anticipate addressing all necessary policy and procedural changes at our regular Board meetings in September and October of this year - which will have STPL in compliance with Act 436 well before the January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 deadline.

St. Tammany Parish Library is absolutely committed to compliance with the law and equally committed to serving our entire community. For your convenience, I have included an explanation of our current card system, our Challenged Materials policy, our Unattended Child policy, the Internet Usage Policy, and resolutions regarding graphic novels and the temporary disposition of challenged materials. Thank you for reviewing these materials and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have regarding the Library.

Sincerely,

Kelly LaRocca  
Director  
St. Tammany Parish Library

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Information Package on Current Policies and Procedures  
*As of August 22, 2023*



## Information Package on Current Policies and Procedures as of August 22, 2023

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# Statements of Concern About Library Resources Policy

## General

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. Responsibility for the use of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. While a person may reject material for themselves and for their children, an individual may not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others to read, see, or hear. No one, least of all the public library, has the right to judge what another may read, view, or hear.

## Process

1. Any person residing in St. Tammany Parish and wishing to express concerns about library materials, programs, or displays shall complete a "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" form. The [Statement of Concern about Library Resources Form](#) shall be available at the library circulation desk, the library's website, by email request, and at all Library Board of Control meetings. All completed Statement of Concern Forms will be forwarded to the Library Director and to each member of the Library Board of Control. Upon receipt of the Statement of Concern Form the Director will confirm receipt in writing to the complainant(s).
2. The Director will select two or more staff members to serve on an internal committee to review each Statement of Concern and the subject of the concern. Committee members will be chosen by the Director based on the type of material under review and taking into consideration the staff member's education and experience. A recommendation regarding which action to be taken, if any, will be made by the committee within 45 days of the Director receiving the Statement of Concern Form, unless a longer period is authorized by the Library Board of Control, in which case the complainant(s) shall receive notice.
3. **The committee members shall:**
  - a. Review the material in its entirety
  - b. Create and consider a resume of the material which can include:
    - A brief synopsis
    - Reviews in standard evaluation guides
    - Topical information concerning the material
    - Circulation information
    - Information about holdings in other public libraries
    - Awards received
    - Biographical information about the author/producer
    - Library of Congress Subject Headings
  - c. Consider the suitability for age level of current placement

- d. Consider present and potential relevance to community needs
  - e. Conduct a discussion to reach a recommendation
  - f. Submit a written report to the Director with recommendations based on the result of the committee's efforts.
4. The complainant(s) shall be notified of the date of the Library Board of Control meeting at which the committee's report and recommendation will be on the agenda. A copy of the correspondence to the complainant(s) shall be forwarded to each member of the Library Board of Control.
  5. The Director will present the committee's recommendation to the Library Board of Control at a properly noticed Board meeting report.
  6. The complainant(s) will have five minutes to address their concern to the Library Board of Control prior to any action taken by the Board. In lieu of addressing the Board in person at the meeting, the complainant(s) may submit a written statement to the Board. A period of public comment will precede any action taken by the Board.
  7. The Library Board of Control shall vote to affirm, modify, reject, or take under advisement the committee's recommendation. Matters taken under advisement shall be re-noticed for a future meeting. Upon modification or rejection of the recommendation of the committee, the Board shall make a decision on what action will be taken in response to the Statement of Concern. The decision of the Board shall be rendered by a majority vote. In the event there is a tie, the recommendation is affirmed.
  8. The complainant(s) will be notified in writing of the decision of the Library Board of Control.

[Statement of Concern about Library Resources Form 12-190](#)- This form is a fillable PDF. You may download the form, fill it out electronically, and email as an attachment to the Library Administration at [statements@stpl.us](mailto:statements@stpl.us). If you need more space, please attach an added page.

Or, you may print out the form and turn it in to any branch of the St. Tammany Parish Library or mail it to:

Library Director

St. Tammany Parish Library

1112 W. 21st Ave.

Covington, LA 70433

# Unattended Children Policy

The St. Tammany Parish Library welcomes the use of its facilities and services by children of all ages. Our services and programs are offered to make the library enticing to children, to encourage them to visit the library and to develop a love of books, reading and libraries.

The safety and welfare of young children left alone in the library is a serious concern of Library Board of Control and the administration. Young children, left unattended, often become frightened and anxious. Even older children, though they may be able to occupy their time for a short while, often become bored hungry, and disruptive, disturbing the enjoyment of the library by others.

It is not desirable to have unattended children in the library. The library is a public building and staff cannot know if the children are leaving the building with parents or strangers or even by themselves. Parents are responsible for their children's care and behavior at all times while in the library. The library staff cannot be responsible for children left alone without proper supervision.

For the protection and well-being of children who enjoy our libraries and to prevent undue disruption of normal library activities, the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control has adopted the following rules. Library supervisors and staff have been authorized to enforce these rules and procedures, **effective March 10, 1997.**

## Rules

1. Children age 9 and younger may not be left unattended in any branch of the St. Tammany Parish Library. They must be accompanied by a responsible person - an adult or mature adolescent (16 year of age or older). Responsible parties not attending children's program with children age 9 and younger must remain inside the library facility.
2. The parents, guardians and assigned chaperons are responsible for their children's behavior while in the library and while attending library programs.
3. Children age 10 and older may use the library unattended, but must display acceptable library behavior, conduct, and demeanor.
4. Staff members are not allowed to assume responsibility for any child in the absence of an adult or assigned chaperon, even for a very short time.



# Internet Policy

## Library Statement of Policy

The St. Tammany Parish Library supports access to all subjects that serve the interests or needs of our patrons. In response to changes in technology and the information needs of the community, the St. Tammany Parish Library endeavors to expand our electronic resources to meet the cultural, informational, recreational, and educational needs of the community. The St. Tammany Parish Library has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content.

## Electronic Resources and Users Responsibility

### Choosing and Evaluating Internet Sources

Use of the electronic resources in the library is intended primarily for research and educational purposes. Internet resources contain much valuable information, but users should be aware that some information found on the Internet may be inaccurate, incomplete, outdated or offensive (including material that you may consider indecent, obscene, pornographic or otherwise offensive). It is the user's responsibility to evaluate the quality of the information accessed through the Internet. The user, not the library, is responsible for sites accessed.

In choosing sources to link to its home pages, the Library selects sites using the same criteria as selecting books. Beyond this, the Library does not control information accessible through the Internet and is not responsible for its content, for changes in the content of the linked sources, or for the content of sources accessed through secondary links.

### Children's Access to the Internet

Parents and legal guardians, not the library, are responsible for the use of the Internet by their children. The St. Tammany Parish Library requires signed permission, in person, from the parent or legal guardian to be kept on file for those young patrons ages 10-17 that wish to use the Internet. Due to the high costs and delicate nature of complex electronic and mechanical equipment, children under the age of 10 will be required to have a parent or legal guardian present at all times when using the Internet workstation.

### Age Requirements

Children under the age of 10 must have a parent or legal guardian with you at the Internet workstation at all times.

Children ages 10 to 17 must have the Library Card Application or and Internet Use Consent Form (filtered or unfiltered) sign in person by a parent or legal on file at the St. Tammany Parish Library and a valid STPL library card in order to use an Internet. No consent form is required to use a computer without Internet access.

Adults over the age of 18 do not need a library card to use a computer.

### **Email**

The library does not provide email accounts.

### **Unacceptable Uses**

Workstation use is a privilege and should be treated as such by all users. Please remember that you are in a public library and choose Internet sites that are appropriate for viewing in a public space. Library staff has the right to determine the appropriateness of workstation use and can at any time require a patron to leave the workstation. Prohibited uses may result in loss of workstation privileges. Potentially unlawful activities will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

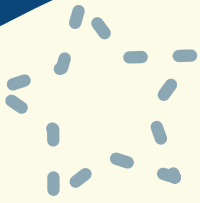
Examples of inappropriate use include, but are not limited to the following:

- Using the Internet workstation for other than approved purposes.
- Visiting sites that are inappropriate for viewing in a public space.
- Downloading files of any type to the hard drive.
- Using own personal software on library computers.
- Making any attempt to damage or alter computer equipment, software configurations, or files belonging to the library, other users and external networks.
- Using the Internet for any illegal or criminal activity that violates local, state or federal statutes.
- Violating copyright laws or software licensing agreements.
- Violating another user's privacy.

### **Time Limit**

Because of the limited number of Internet workstations, a patron may sign-up for a one-hour time slot once a day with time extended based on workstation availability.

# **St. Tammany Parish Library Card Types for Minors Ages 5-17**



## ST. TAMMANY PARISH LIBRARY CARD TYPES FOR MINORS AGES 5-17

Parents will choose a juvenile card level when creating a new card, or when prompted to update a card for any minor in their care.\*

### Juvenile Full Restriction Card

Cardholders **may only** check out materials in the Children's Collections.

Cardholders **may NOT** check out any materials in the YA Fiction collection or any Adult collections, including magazines in the Teen area.

### Juvenile Semi Restriction Card

Cardholders **may** check out materials in the Children's Collections.

Cardholders **may also** check out books in the YA Fiction Collection.

Cardholders **may NOT** check out any materials in any Adult collections, including Adult non-fiction items that have a YA sticker.

### Juvenile Card

Cardholders **may** check out any book, audiobook, music CD, or magazine in the library.

Cardholders **may** check any DVDs except R-rated. Cardholders **may NOT** check out **R-rated DVDs**.

### Juvenile Unrestriction Card

Cardholders **may** check out any book, audiobook, music CD, or magazine in the library.

**Cardholders may check any DVDs including R-rated with parental permission.**

\*Parents and guardians of children ages 10-17 can also choose whether or not their child may use the internet in the library without supervision for all card types. All children 9 and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times in St. Tammany Parish libraries and must be present when their child uses the internet.

## Internet Use

### For All Juvenile Cards

- Children ages 5-9 **may only** use a computer or access the internet with direct parental supervision in the library.
- Children ages 10-17 **may only** access the internet with parental permission.

### **For Downloadable and Streaming Services**

We are working with some services to provide access to titles by card type. As these become available we will provide access. This document will be updated to reflect changes in the future.

### Cloud Library Download Service

Fully-restricted and Semi-restricted Juvenile cards have no access to Cloud Library content. All other patron types do have access to Cloud Library.

### Overdrive Download Service

- Fully-restricted cards can access Children's content items, only; do not allow Teen or Adult content access.
- Semi-restricted cards can access Children's and Teen's content items; do not allow Adult content access.
- Juvenile and Unrestricted Juvenile cards can access Children's, Teen's, and Adult content.

### Hoopla Download Service

- In order to block Adult content for any Juvenile card type, Kids Mode must be turned on at every session.
- All Juvenile cards only have access to download G-rated videos, E-Everyone comics and children's music.
- All juvenile cards, including unrestricted ones, are blocked from borrowing comics rated T or higher. Adult cards can borrow comics rated T or above.

### TeenBookCloud

At this time TeenBookCloud does not have a way to restrict access to content including streaming e- books, e-audiobooks, or videos by card type. We advise parents to restrict access to this service or closely monitor their child for Full and Semi Restriction cardholders.

### Tumblebook Library

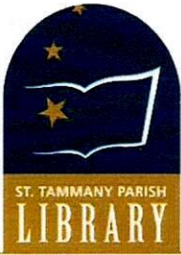
All Juvenile cards have access to Tumblebook Library's streaming picture books, chapter books,

graphic novels, and videos.

### World Book eBooks

At this time World Book eBooks does not have a way to restrict access to its nonfiction titles in streaming e-book format by card type. We advise parents to restrict access to this service or closely monitor their child for Full and Semi Restriction cardholders.

## **Resolution Regarding Graphic Novels**



St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control
Resolution regarding graphic novels

February 28th, 2023

WHEREAS, pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute § 25:215, the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control has the authority to establish rules and regulations for the St. Tammany Parish Library not inconsistent with law;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Attorney General has provided guidance regarding access of certain materials that depict sexual conduct;

WHEREAS, the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control has determined that graphic novels found to contain depictions of "sexual conduct" as defined by the Attorney General, and as similarly defined in La. R.S. § 14:106 et. seq., (See Exhibit "A" attached hereto) should be retained behind the circulation desk, and that digital access to graphic novels should be similarly restricted, and only available to adult library card holders and to minors whose parents or guardians have chosen a juvenile unrestricted card; and,

WHEREAS, the Library Board of Control continues to recognize that parents and guardians are primarily responsible for the supervision of their children, including making decisions regarding the materials that their children may check out.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control directs library administration and staff to do what is necessary to identify all graphic novels that the library owns physically or has access via digital media that contain depictions of "sexual conduct" as defined by the Louisiana Attorney General and as similarly defined in La. R.S. § 14:106 et. seq. This definition is attached to this resolution as Exhibit A. Any graphic novels that are found to have these depictions shall be retained behind the circulation desk, and only available to adult library card holders, or to minors whose parents or guardians have chosen a juvenile unrestricted card. Digital access would similarly be restricted making it only available to adult library card holders, or to minors whose parents or guardians have chosen a juvenile unrestricted card.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all graphic novels that do not contain depictions of "sexual conduct" shall remain on the shelves and/or available electronically.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Library Board of Control directs the administration and staff to move forward with this directive.

THIS RESOLUTION HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO A VOTE, THE VOTE THEREON WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Moved for adoption by J. Airey and seconded by A. Shaw.

YEAS: 4 - Jake Airey, Carmen Butler, Ann Shaw, Becky Taylor

NAYS: 1 - Mary Reneau

ABSENT: 1

ABSTAIN: 0

AND THIS RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED DULY ADOPTED ON THIS DAY, THE 28th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2023, AT A MEETING OF THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL, A QUORUM OF THE MEMBERSHIP BEING PRESENT.

Signature of Rebecca Taylor

Rebecca Taylor, Board President

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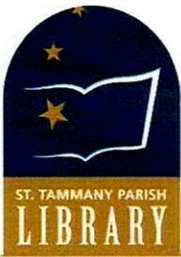
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**Exhibit A**

Sexual Conduct – any of the following:

(a) Masturbation or lewd exhibition, actual, simulated, or animated, of the genitals, pubic hair, anus, vulva, or female breast nipples;

(b) Sadomasochistic abuse, meaning actual, simulated or animated, flagellation, or torture by or upon a person who is nude or clad in undergarments or in a costume that reveals the pubic hair, anus, vulva, genitals, or female breast nipples, or in the condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained, on the part of one so clothed;

(c) Actual, simulated, or animated touching, caressing, or fondling of, or other similar physical contact with a pubic area, anus, female breast nipple, covered or exposed, whether alone or between humans, animals, or a human and an animal, of the same or opposite sex, in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification;

(d) Actual, simulated, or animated stimulation of a human genital organ by any device whether or not the device is designed, manufactured, or marketed for such purpose; or

(e) Actual, simulated, or animated ultimate sexual acts, whether between human beings, animals, or an animal and a human being.

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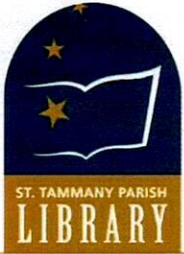
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# **Resolution Regarding Temporary Disposition of Challenged Books**



St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control  
Resolution regarding temporary disposition of challenged materials

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control directs library administration and staff to do what is necessary to move all currently challenged items off of the shelves and have them placed on reserve behind the circulation desk.

**WHEREAS**, the Library Board of Control has heard the concerns of parents and community members, and

**WHEREAS**, the Library Board of control continues to recognize that parents and guardians make decisions for what their children may check out, and

**WHEREAS**, these items will be available for check out based on the permissions of the library card in possession of the patron.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, The Library Board of Control directs the administration and staff to move forward with this directive.

THIS RESOLUTION HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO A VOTE, THE VOTE THEREON WAS AS FOLLOWS:

Moved for adoption by B. Allin and seconded by M. Reneau

YEAS: 4

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 3

ABSTAIN: 0

AND THIS RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED DULY ADOPTED ON THIS DAY, THE 13th DAY OF DECEMBER 2022, AT A MEETING OF THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL, A QUORUM OF THE MEMBERSHIP BEING PRESENT.

Rebecca Taylor, Board President

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310 WEST 21<sup>ST</sup> AVENUE COVINGTON, LA 70433  
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Frequently asked questions about the St. Tammany Parish Library  
(STPL) and the ALA

## What is the ALA?

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According to ALA's Website, "The American Library Association (ALA) is a non-profit membership organization that develops, promotes, and improves library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all." It is the national professional organization for librarians and other library workers. They were founded in 1876 and are 147 years old. Many professions have associations. It is similar to the American Medical Association (AMA) for doctors and other health professionals, the American Bar Association (ABA) for attorneys, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for architects, or the American Accounting Association (AAA) for accountants.

## Who is the ALA President and what is their role in the organization?

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ALA presidents serve a largely ceremonial 12-month terms. The current President is Emily Drabinski and her term will end next year. In any given year most library staff would be hard-pressed to know off the top of their head who the president was.

## Is the St. Tammany Parish Library an Institutional Member of the American Library Association?

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The library is not an institutional member.

## Does the library pay for personal memberships in the ALA for its staff?

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No, the library does not pay for personal membership for its staff. Whether or not a staff member would choose to be a member of the ALA would be entirely up to them and paid for out of their own personal money.

## Is it required that a staff member be a member of the ALA to be employed by St. Tammany Parish Library?

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No, it is not a requirement of employment, and it is not something we ask about or keep records of.

## Does the ALA provide legal advice to the St. Tammany Parish Library?

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No, the Library's legal advisors are the Civil Division of the District Attorney's office.

## What does the ALA do that St. Tammany Parish Library or its employees have utilized in the past?

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Like many other professional organizations, the ALA offers continuing education opportunities (like webinars or conferences), and an opportunity to network and exchange ideas with other working librarians across the nation. We are also able to purchase printed material like bookmarks, posters and stickers that have literacy and reading-centric artwork.

## Who in the ALA provides this continuing education?

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The ALA itself has a small staff; most continuing education is offered by working librarians.

## Does the ALA give orders or directives to St. Tammany Parish Library staff? Has the Library adopted the ALA's Library Bill of Rights or the Freedom to Read statement?

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No, the ALA does not give STPL staff directives or orders. The Library has not adopted these documents into our policies.

## Did the library turn over all the statements of concern to be included in an ALA database?

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The ALA keeps statistics on book challenges (like the number of challenges and which titles). STPL did not and does not turn over Statements of Concern forms to the ALA. Statement of Concern forms are public documents. These forms are redacted (to protect the individual's personal information) and placed on our website for all to see.