

Material Selection Policy

Intellectual Freedom

The Freeport Community Library believes that the materials collection must represent all points of view, especially concerning controversial issues, and must not exclude items because of their origin or viewpoint or the views of those contributing to their creation. Furthermore, materials will not be marked or labeled in any way to show approval or disapproval, either by the Library or any other organization. In support of this end, the Library has reviewed and endorses the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association (see Appendix A), the Free Access to Libraries for Minors interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association (see Appendix B) and the Freedom to Read Statement as adopted by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers (see Appendix C).

In carrying out the spirit and letter of this policy, materials which are considered controversial will be added to the Library collection. The Library will not remove from the shelves items purchased in accordance with the policy outlined here, even though one or more persons may take issue with the selection of an item. However, any Freeport resident or library card holder will have the right to question the library's decision to include or not include any item in the collection.

Selection of materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children. It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to screen materials used by their minor children, if they so desire.

Selection Principles

A written materials selection policy aids the Library staff in building a useful, well-rounded collection to meet the needs of the community as well as accepted standards of quality. Finally, a policy statement helps to answer questions from the public regarding the presence or absence of certain materials and shows the basis on which materials have been selected.

1. The library, under the direction of the Director, and with the participation of the staff, will provide any materials which help meet its objectives. Materials may include books, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, pictures, slides, films, videos, music scores, maps, recordings, microforms, computer software, and electronic information services.
2. The library will not furnish readers or textbooks needed for formal courses of study in local schools or institutions of higher learning. The library will not select for inclusion in its collection material required for courses offered in the area unless such materials meet the objectives of library services. Providing library resources for local schools and institutions is primarily the responsibility of those schools and institutions.
3. It is the policy of the library to maintain an up-to-date collection of the standard works in all fields of knowledge; this collection is to be supplemented with materials on current issues and items in great demand.

4. The library will keep itself informed of other publicly available resources in the area to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Method of Materials Selection

Any materials selection policy must be fairly general, and librarians must always exercise their knowledge and experience of all library materials and of the community served. Certain methods and principles must be followed as closely as possible.

1. **Criteria:** Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own merit and intended audience. All selections, both purchases and gifts, must meet some of the following criteria:
 1. Appeal to the interests and needs of individuals in the community
 2. Permanent value as source material or interpretation
 3. Vitality and originality of thought
 4. Contemporary significance
 5. Artistic excellence
 6. Entertaining presentation
 7. Accuracy and objectivity
 8. Suitability of physical form to library use
 9. Skill, competence of the author
 10. Relations to other materials and existing areas of coverage in order to maintain a well balanced collection
 11. Technical quality in selection of non-book material
2. **Reviews:** Reviews in professionally recognized periodicals are a primary source for material selection. Standard biographies, booklists by recognized authorities and the advice of competent people in specific subject areas will be used.
3. **Requests:** All requests from patrons for specific titles or subject requests will be considered. Whenever there is enough demand or interest in a title or subject, an item with unfavorable reviews may be purchased unless it is completely without literary or social value, or the subject in question is already adequately covered by better materials.
4. **Specialized Materials:** Specialized materials of limited community interest will not be ordinarily purchased. Referral to other library collections and interlibrary loan will be used to supply patrons with these materials. Supplementary materials for students and information for specialists are provided on a limited basis.

Withdrawal of Materials

The physical restraints of the library require that some older items are discarded or weeded to make room for new items. The following guidelines are designed to serve as a backdrop to the process of identifying items which may be suitable for discarding.

All decisions to discard are made by members of the library staff. The staff will use discretion based on experience, areas of expertise and professional skills in making a determination of which items to ultimately keep or discard from the collection. The Director or his/her designee is responsible for the final decision of items to add or remove from the collection.

Effort should be taken in weeding to maintain at least one copy in the statewide system.

Defined Weeding Criteria

Materials which are no longer useful in the light of the stated objectives of the library will be systematically weeded from the collection according to accepted professional practices, and based on the following guidelines:

1. Remove physically worn out or damaged materials based on MUSTIE factors:

M = Misleading (and/or factually inaccurate)

U = Ugly (worn and beyond mending or rebinding)

S = Superseded (by a truly new edition or by a much better book on the subject)

T = Trivial (of no discernible literary or scientific merit)

I = Irrelevant to the needs and interests of your community

E = The material may be obtained expeditiously Elsewhere through interlibrary loan or reciprocal borrowing.

2. Eliminate obsolete or out-of-date information
3. Remove duplicate or single copies of titles which are no longer in demand (based on the last date of circulation)
4. Disposition of withdrawn materials is the responsibility of the Director. Materials may be sold at library book sales, given to other library sales, sold to used book dealers, donated to the fund-raising efforts of nonprofit organizations, or recycled as paper.

Requests for Withdrawal of Objectionable Materials

1. If a patron expresses objection to material in the library collection, the librarian receiving the complaint will listen to the patron's concerns, explain FCL's materials selection policy to the patron, and ask the patron if they'd like to fill out a "Material Reconsideration" form. If the patron chooses to fill out the form, he/she will be told that the form will be given to the Director for consideration and that he/she will be contacted after the Director's review. Residents of Freeport or library card holders may fill out this form.
2. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Director and the appropriate materials selector will check reviews on the item in question, and determine if it meets the standards of the materials selection policy. The Director will then decide whether or not to retain the material and will inform the patron of the decision. The Director will also keep the library Board informed of any major challenges to materials in the library. Materials subject to complaint shall not be removed from use pending final action.

Replacement of Lost Materials by Patrons

Patrons are required to compensate the library for lost materials through payment for the items. Replacement copies will not be accepted in lieu of payment.

APPENDIX A

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of their origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifying information.

A Statement endorsed by the American Library Association Council. Adopted June 19, 1939; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; and January 29, 2019. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

APPENDIX B

Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources available to other users violate the *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The "right to use a library"

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includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates these principles.

Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis. Librarians cannot predict what resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual user based on a single criterion such as chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community, and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information in the library. Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.¹ Librarians and library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether material is not constitutionally protected.

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize librarians or library governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents. As “***Libraries: an American Value***” [a statement adopted by the American Library Association] states, “We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children’s use of the library and its resources and services.” Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children—and only their children—to library resources. Parents who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children. Librarians and library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child.

Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, format, or amount of detail. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Librarians and library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

¹See *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975)-”Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable [422 U.S. 205, 214] for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors. See *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, *supra*. Cf. *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943).”

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, June 30, 2004.

APPENDIX C

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label “controversial” views, to distribute lists of “objectionable” books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be “protected” against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression

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that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

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No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

A joint statement by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

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