



Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield Collection Development Policy

Prelude

The Board of Trustees for the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield has adopted the following Collection Development policy to provide guidelines for acquisitions and withdrawal decisions and to inform the public of the principles upon which the selections are made.

The Library Board believes that the public library is the principal source for information that is freely available to everyone. In support of its mission, the library functions to provide free access to all subjects in which the residents of Smithfield and Johnston County claim an interest or for which they have a need. Therefore, the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield shall:

- A. acquire and organize educational, informational and recreational materials to promote the communication of ideas, an informed community and an improved quality of life.
- B. curate a well-balanced and broad collection, in various formats, representing a variety of viewpoints and current information sources.
- C. ensure that the collection reflects the priorities in the current strategic plan.
- D. provide materials through which inquiring minds may discover original and sometimes controversial ideas essential to a society that depends on the free circulation of ideas for its existence.
- E. provide a progressive, user-oriented service which anticipates and responds to the educational, cultural, recreational and other information needs of Johnston County residents.

I. Mission and Vision Statements for the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield

The mission of the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield is to empower our community by supporting literacy, fostering connections, and providing services that enrich lives.

As your library, we aspire to meet the needs of our rapidly growing and diverse community by providing connections to promote well being. This is our vision.

II. Purpose

This Collection Development Policy has been created:

- A. to clearly state the policies of the Library Board,
- B. to identify responsibility for collection development and provide staff with consistent guidelines for development and maintenance of the collection,
- C. to provide a process for public input,
- D. to assist in budget allocation for materials, and
- E. to defend freedom of information and protect against censorship.



III. Definitions

- A. “Collection management” includes selection, deselection, preservation, storage, budgeting and resource allocation, collection evaluation, resource sharing, and other functions related to improving the collection and facilitating patron access to library materials.
- B. “Selection” is the decision to add a piece of library material to the collection or to remove it from the collection.
- C. “Library material” is any format of material added to the collection, including but not limited to: books, audiobooks, magazines, videos, photographs, maps, pamphlets, clippings, compact discs, and online databases. New formats that become available as technology changes shall automatically be included in the term “library materials.”
- D. “Material review” is an evaluation written by a person knowledgeable about the material’s subject matter. Reviews occur in library review journals, professional journals, newspapers, online sources and in other popular media. Primary review sources include: *Booklist*, *Hornbook*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Publisher’s Weekly*, *School Library Journal*, and *Video Librarian*.
- E. “Deselection” is the component of selection that involves removing items from the collection (a.k.a. “weeding”).
- F. “Public” refers to the library’s users. This is primarily the residents of Johnston County. However, the library as a recipient of North Carolina tax dollars offers its materials and services to all residents of North Carolina.

IV. Philosophy and Goals

- A. Traditionally, a public library is an impartial repository for the accumulated knowledge and ideas of human thought. Libraries offer the public access to a myriad of viewpoints, even though individuals within the community may find certain ideas unacceptable. The selection of an item to the collection does not imply endorsement by the library, but rather is a reflection of the public library’s role in society to offer divergent points of view. All points of view will be represented at the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield within the constraints of budget and space so that residents of this community may exercise critical judgements and make informed choices.
- B. Within the limitations of budget and space, the function of the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield is to provide library materials on subjects in which the residents of Smithfield and Johnston County claim an interest or for which they have a need.
- C. Materials in the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield collection should furnish information, education, inspiration, or enjoyment for persons of all ages, education, and reading levels and should be selected for their intrinsic value by the professional staff of the library.
- D. The Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield adheres to the principles of the *Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A)*, *First Amendment and Censorship (Appendix B)*, *The Freedom to Read (Appendix C)*, and the *Freedom to View (Appendix D)* statements adopted by the American Library Association. Adoption of these national standards does not constitute endorsement of all policies of the American Library Association and in no way limits the local authority of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield or the staff. Copies of these statements are appended to this document and are made part of this policy.



- E. The Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield Board of Trustees, working with the staff of the library, affirms the following goals:
 - 1. To provide the best possible collection within the limits of financial resources and space available.
 - 2. To meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of the residents of Johnston County.
 - 3. To strive for a collection that is balanced, comprehensive, and of adequate size, quality, and diversity to meet the needs of its users.
 - 4. To ensure that all parts of the collection are up-to-date, attractive, and well maintained.
 - 5. To continually evaluate present formats and to identify new formats that will enhance the collection's value to our patrons.
- F. This Board believes that censorship is a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject for themselves library materials that they do not approve of, they cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of access to information to others.
- G. The Board of Trustees recognizes the pluralistic nature of the community and the varied backgrounds and needs of all citizens regardless of age, race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or political persuasion.

V. Statement of Responsibility

The Library Director is responsible for collection development and maintenance who operates in accordance with the general policies established by the Library Board. In practice, the Director delegates these responsibilities to members of the library staff who are qualified by reason of education or training. Any library materials so selected are held to have been selected by the Board.

The Director may elect to bring to the attention of the Board any acquisition which in his/her judgment may be of concern to the Board.

The presence of any book, video, or other material in the library does not indicate endorsement of its contents by the Library Board.

VI. Community Responsibility

The library realizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some customers. The Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield adheres to the *Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A)*, specifically principle II which states: “*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.*”

While library staff is available to assist individuals and groups to select material, the ultimate responsibility for the choice of materials lies with the customer.

The Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield provides access to its materials to all customers. The library staff does not act in *loco parentis*. Decisions concerning a child's use of specific library



materials and/or electronic resources are the responsibility of the child's parents or guardian. *(Relocated from Philosophy and Goals, Statement H).*

Collection development decisions are not restricted by the possibility that children may obtain materials that their parents consider inappropriate. The library believes that individuals have the freedom to choose their own reading material and that it is the right and obligation of parents to develop, interpret, and maintain their own values in their family.

The library attempts to provide materials which complement and augment the reference, research, and leisure needs of students of all ages. The library does not duplicate the collections of school libraries. The library acquires textbook and other curriculum related material only if they may be useful to the general reader or are valuable sources of information on a particular subject.

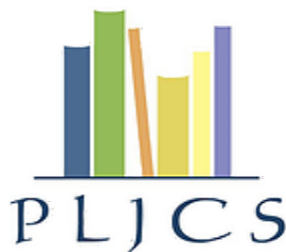
VII. General Criteria for Selection

Criteria for a potential item will vary. Not every standard can be applied to each item. Criteria may include artistic merit, scholarship, and value of the material to the informational needs of the community. In some cases, the criterion may be substantial demand. While selection of material is a discerning and interpretive process, it is based on principle rather than personal opinion, reason rather than prejudice, and judgement rather than censorship.

A. Selection Criteria:

Materials selected will meet high standards in quality, content, expression, and format. These criteria apply to purchased and donated materials as well as special collections:

1. Relevance to community needs
2. Timeliness and/or permanence and accuracy of the material
3. Potential or known demand for the material
4. Relationship to the existing collection; relative importance in comparison with existing materials in the collection on the same subject
5. Reviews in professional journals; attention of critics, media, and the public; staff reviews
6. Reputation of the publisher or producer; authority and significance of the creator of the work, scope, accuracy, and format of the work
7. Suitability of subject, style, and level for the intended audience
8. Availability and accessibility of the same material in the local area and/or NC Cardinal consortium
9. Cost of material
10. Space requirements
11. Patron requests
12. Insufficient materials available on the same subject
13. Author or illustrator is from Johnston County or North Carolina
14. Enhances a specific collection within the library
15. Author or producer is already represented in the collection
16. Literary and artistic merit
17. Authentic reflection of diverse ideas, information, stories, and experiences
18. Demand in the community



An item does not have to meet all of the above criteria in order to be acceptable. Materials which do not meet these criteria may be recommended for purchase to satisfy heavy reader interest.

B. Selection Tools:

To find material which meets the selection criteria, the library makes use of various resources. Since it is not possible for the professional library staff to personally read and review the large number of books published annually, certain sources are used to facilitate the selection process. Standard reviewing tools such as professional journals are the primary source for authoritative information about current material. The standard selection tools used by librarians and others include the following but are not limited to: *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Baker & Taylor Forecast*, and *Ingram Advance*. Selections are also made from publisher's announcements of forthcoming materials. By keeping up-to-date on what is making news, the library attempts to anticipate demand for certain subjects. Making use of circulation statistics and customer requests help to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the collection.

C. Collection Maintenance:

As materials become worn, dated, damaged, or lost, replacement will be determined by the appropriate staff members, who will determine whether or not:

1. The items are still available and can be replaced
2. Another item or format might better serve the same purpose
3. There remains sufficient need to replace that item
4. Updated, newer or revised materials better replace a given item
5. The item has historical value
6. Another agency could better provide the same or a comparable item
7. Circulation or use warrants replacement

D. Internet and Electronic Resources:

One of the roles of the library is to provide useful, current sources of information for individuals, businesses, and organizations. The library recognizes the increasing importance of electronic media to provide information which may not be found within the building itself. To provide rapid and easy access to electronic resources, the library will attempt to provide, within budget limitations, the necessary equipment, connections, and personal assistance.

E. Non-book Materials Selection:

Non-book materials shall be considered an integral part of the library collection. They shall be provided to add dimension to the book collection and also to provide alternative methods of access to information and recreation. Standards of quality are the same as those set up for the library collection as a whole.

F. Foreign Language Materials:

Foreign language materials, such as fiction and non-fiction titles, how-to-speak languages, and dictionaries, are a valuable asset to the collection and are added as special needs of the community are identified.



VIII. Deselection

Weeding is an integral part of collection development and relies on the continuous evaluation of the content and physical condition of the collection. Items will be weeded if found to contain incorrect, misleading, or obsolete content. In general, items in poor physical condition will be weeded. Items may be weeded due to lack of use or questionable value.

- A. Library staff will generally follow the principles established in *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* (Jeanette Larson, 2008) for detailed guidelines for weeding.
- B. Library material which is withdrawn will be disposed of as follows:
 1. If worn, obsolete, or unattractive and not likely to sell, the item will be disposed of in the most economically and environmentally friendly manner.
 2. If attractive and likely to sell, the item may be given to the Friends of the Library Book Sale or sold online.
 3. Incentive giveaways for library promotions and programming.
 4. In some instances, books may be donated to non-profit organizations or institutions.
 5. In cases of information of an antiquated or obsolete nature (e.g. medical information) or heavily damaged materials (e.g. mold, mildew) some items may be destroyed.

IX. Citizens' Statement of Concern

The Board and staff welcome public input and reaction to materials in the collection. The library will review the selection of a specific item upon written submission of a "Statement of Concern Form" which is available at the Patron Services Desk.

- A. For a Statement of Concern request to be submitted, the submitter must be a resident of Johnston County and a library cardholder. Item must be within the PLJCS collection.
- B. A fully completed Statement of Concern form must be submitted. If the form is not completely filled out, then the concern does not merit consideration.
- C. The concern will be first reviewed by the Department Head responsible for the selection of the item. If the patron is dissatisfied with the response, then the request will be forwarded to the Library Director for a recommendation of action.
- D. This *Collection Development Policy* will be used as a basis for the review.
- E. A letter will be sent within thirty days to the person or organization that submitted the concern.
- F. If necessary, the request will be reviewed by the Library Board of Trustees for final disposition.

Filing of a request neither automatically removes nor adds items to the collection. If the inclusion of the item in the Library collection is found by the Director to be legitimate and justifiable based on Board policy, the policy shall be explained in writing to the requester and no further action need be taken.



X. Gifts and Donations

The Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield accepts gifts of materials with the understanding that they will be added to the library collection subject to the same principles of selection as are applied to all materials added.

- A. The library reserves the right to accept or refuse any materials received as donations.
- B. Acceptance by the library of any gift does not mean that that item will be incorporated in the collection.
- C. Donated material not added to the collection will be discarded or sold at the library's discretion to generate additional funding for library programs and services.
- D. The library will not accept materials that are not outright gifts and donated material becomes the property of the library.
- E. No monetary evaluation of gifts for tax or estate purposes will be provided.
- F. The library reserves the right to withdraw donated materials from the collection when they are no longer appropriate under the Collection Development Policy.
- G. The library does not accept the following donated materials:
 - 1. Textbooks
 - 2. Medical books
 - 3. Encyclopedia sets
 - 4. National Geographic magazines
 - 5. Reader's Digest Condensed Books
 - 6. VHS or cassette tapes
 - 7. Software

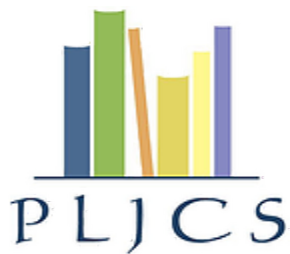
The Library accepts donations of cash for the purposes of supporting library budgets, such as collection development, programming, service, activity, or resources. These donations will be deposited into the current fiscal budget.

Endowments and bequests will be considered a gift to the Library. All proceeds will be used for the purposes outlined in the trust or agreement. In the event that no specific purchases or conditions are required, the Library Director will inform the representatives of the endowment or bequest on how those funds will be budgeted and spent.

XI. Adopt-a-Book Program

The Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield benefits from the gift of monies designated for memorial books. This program allows patrons to celebrate the life of a loved one, friend, or community member; to recognize a birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion; to honor a favorite teacher; or to simply give the gift of reading to the community. These gifts will help the library build an eclectic and well-rounded collection and may be tax deductible (a tax professional should be consulted for tax advice).

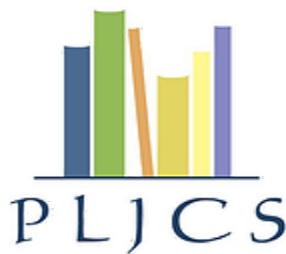
The honoree or family of the memorialized will receive notification of an adopted book via regular post and a bookplate will be placed in the front of the book recognizing the gift.



XII. Revisions

The Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield's *Collection Development Policy* is reviewed regularly so that it adequately reflects changes in the library's goals and users' needs. Amendments and revisions to the policy are made as needed by the Board.

To achieve this, the Director will monitor new developments and the implementation of this policy and bring forward issues and recommendations for Board consideration.



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 the 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 abridgment 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 identifiable information.

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

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights.



Appendix B: First Amendment and Censorship

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution passed by Congress September 25, 1789. Ratified December 15, 1791.

One of the ten amendments of the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment gives everyone residing in the United States the right to hear all sides of every issue and to make their own judgments about those issues without government interference or limitations. The First Amendment allows individuals to speak, publish, read and view what they wish, worship (or not worship) as they wish, associate with whomever they choose, and gather together to ask the government to make changes in the law or to correct the wrongs in society.

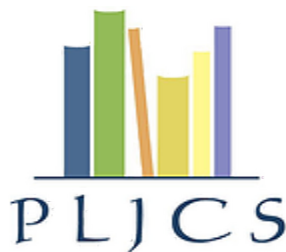
The right to speak and the right to publish under the First Amendment has been interpreted widely to protect individuals and society from government attempts to suppress ideas and information, and to forbid government censorship of books, magazines, and newspapers as well as art, film, music and materials on the internet. The Supreme Court and other courts have held conclusively that there is a First Amendment right to receive information; the right to receive information is a corollary to the right to speak. Justice William Brennan elaborated on this point in 1965:

“The protection of the Bill of Rights goes beyond the specific guarantees to protect from Congressional abridgment those equally fundamental personal rights necessary to make the express guarantees fully meaningful. I think the right to receive publications is such a fundamental right. The dissemination of ideas can accomplish nothing if otherwise willing addressees are not free to receive and consider them. It would be a barren marketplace of ideas that had only sellers and no buyers.” *Lamont v. Postmaster General*, 381 U.S. 301 (1965).

When the Supreme Court considered whether a local school board violated the Constitution by removing books from a school library, it held that “the right to receive ideas is a necessary predicate to the recipient’s meaningful exercise of his own rights of speech, press, and political freedom.”

Public schools and public libraries, as public institutions, have been the setting for legal battles about student access to books, removal or retention of “offensive” material, regulation of patron behavior, and limitations on public access to the internet. Restrictions and censorship of materials in public institutions are most commonly prompted by public complaints. Government officials, in the form of the library board or school administration, are ever mindful of the importance their neighbors may place on religious values, moral sensibilities, and protecting children from offensive materials. So, directly or indirectly, ordinary citizens are the driving force behind the challenges to the internet, information and ideas.

The First Amendment protects public institutions from having to compromise the ideals of free speech by establishing a framework that defines critical rights and responsibilities. It protects the freedom of speech, thought, and inquiry, and advocates respect for the right of others to do the same. Supreme Court Justice



Louis Brandeis wisely guides the American people to resort to "more speech not enforced silence" in seeking to resolve our differences in values, sensibilities, and offenses.

The First Amendment's constitutional right of free speech, which is also applied to the states, only prevents government restrictions on speech, not restrictions imposed by private individuals or businesses. Mark Zuckerberg can restrict speech on Facebook because it is a private business and he is not the government.

Criticism of the government, political dissatisfaction, and advocacy of unpopular ideas that people may find distasteful or against public policy are almost always safeguarded. The U.S. Supreme Court has recognized several categories of speech that are not protected by the First Amendment. Among these are obscenity, child pornography, and libel and slander. Deciding what is and is not protected speech is almost always reserved for a court of law.

First Amendment Resources

Clauses of the First Amendment

<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-i>

The National Constitution Center. *"The National Constitution Center is the first and only institution in America established by Congress to 'disseminate information about the United States Constitution on a non-partisan basis in order to increase the awareness and understanding of the Constitution among the American people.'"*

First Amendment - Religion and Expression

<http://constitution.findlaw.com/amendment1.html>

FindLaw. *"FindLaw, a Thomson Reuters business, provides consumers and lawyers with a range of case law, statutes, legal news, online career center, blogs and a variety of community-oriented tools."*

What is Censorship?

Censorship is the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons — individuals, groups, or government officials — find objectionable or dangerous. It is no more complicated than someone saying, "Don't let anyone read this book, or buy that magazine, or view that film, because I object to it!" Censors try to use the power of the state to impose their view of what is truthful and appropriate, or offensive and objectionable, on everyone else. Censors pressure public institutions, like libraries, to suppress and remove information they judge inappropriate or dangerous from public access, so that no one else has the chance to read or view the material and make up their own minds about it. The censor wants to prejudge materials for everyone.

"Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment." — Article 3, Library Bill of Rights (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>)



ALA Statements and Policies on Censorship

Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (2019)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/challenged-resources>)

A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group. A banning is the removal of those materials. Challenges do not simply involve a person expressing a point of view; rather, they are an attempt to remove material from the curriculum or library, thereby restricting the access of others. ALA declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources.

Labeling Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (2015)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretation/labeling-systems>)

The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (2015)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/rating-systems>)

Libraries, no matter their size, contain an enormous wealth of viewpoints and are responsible for making those viewpoints available to all. However, libraries do not advocate or endorse the content found in their collections or in resources made accessible through the library. Rating systems appearing in library public access catalogs or resource discovery tools present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles. Q&A on Labeling and Rating Systems

Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (2014)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/expurgationlibrary>)

Expurgating library materials is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agent, or its parent institution (if any).

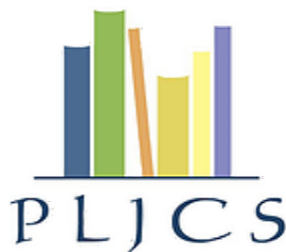
Restricted Access to Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (2014)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/restrictedaccess>)

Libraries are a traditional forum for the open exchange of information. Attempts to restrict access to library materials violate the basic tenets of the Library Bill of Rights.

Complete list of Library Bill of Rights Interpretations

(<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations>)



Core Documents

Library Bill of Rights (1939)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>)

Adopted by ALA Council, the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries. ([printable pamphlets](#))

Freedom to Read Statement (1953)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/freedomreadstatement>)

A collaborative statement by literary, publishing, and censorship organizations declaring the importance of our constitutionally protected right to access information and affirming the need for our professions to oppose censorship.

Libraries: An American Value (1999)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/americanvalue>)

Adopted by ALA Council, this brief statement pronounces the distinguished place libraries hold in our society and their core tenets of access to materials and diversity of ideas.

Guidelines

Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities (2005)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/otherpolicies/guidelinesdevelopmentimplementation>)

Guidelines for librarians, governing authorities, and other library staff and library users on how constitutional principles apply to libraries in the United States.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q&A (2007)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorshipfirstamendmentissues/ifcensorshipqanda>)

Social Media Guidelines for Public and Academic Libraries (2018)

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/socialmediaguidelines>)

These guidelines provide a policy and implementation framework for public and academic libraries engaging in the use of social media.

Publications

Intellectual Freedom Manual (2015)

(<http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=11353>)

Edited by Trina Magi and Martin Garnar with ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom

The 9th edition manual is an indispensable resource for day-to-day guidance on maintaining free and equal access to information for all people



Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy (2016 - present)

(<https://journals.ala.org/index.php/jifp>)

Edited by Michael Zimmer with ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom

Published quarterly, JIFP offers articles related to intellectual freedom and privacy, both in libraries and in the wider world.

True Stories of Censorship Battles in America's Libraries (2012)

(<http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=3524>)

By Valerie Nye and Kathy Barco

This book is a collection of accounts from librarians who have dealt with censorship in some form. Divided into seven parts, the book covers intralibrary censorship, child-oriented protectionism, the importance of building strong policies, experiences working with sensitive materials, public debates and controversies, criminal patrons, and library displays.

Protecting Intellectual Freedom in Your Public Library: Scenarios from the Front Lines (2012)

(<http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=3107>)

By June Pinnell-Stephens with ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom

A level-headed guide both to the general principles of intellectual freedom as based on current interpretation(s) of the First Amendment and to practical and tactful ways of dealing with disputes as they arise.

Lessons in Censorship: How Schools and Courts Subvert Students' First Amendment Rights (2015)

(<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674057746>)

By Catherine J. Ross

Lessons in Censorship highlights the troubling and growing tendency of schools to clamp down on off-campus speech such as texting and sexting and reveals how well-intentioned measures to counter verbal bullying and hate speech may impinge on free speech. Throughout, Ross proposes ways to protect free expression without disrupting education.

Assistance and Consultation

The staff of the Office for Intellectual Freedom is available to answer questions or provide assistance to librarians, trustees, educators, and the public about the First Amendment and censorship. Areas of assistance include policy development, minors' rights, and professional ethics. Inquiries can be directed via email to oif@ala.org or via phone at (312) 280-4226.

Updated October 2017



Appendix C: 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 arise 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 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 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:

1. ***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.

2. ***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.

3. ***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.***

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.

4. ***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.



5. ***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.

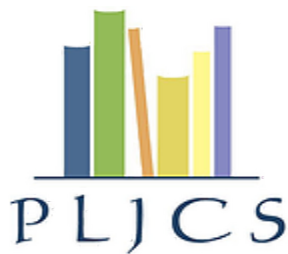
6. ***It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce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

7. ***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.

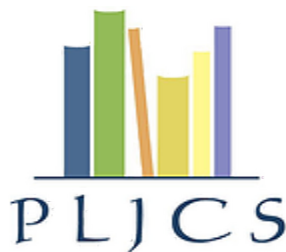
Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses
The Children's Book Council
Freedom to Read Foundation
National Association of College Stores
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Council of Teachers of English
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression



Appendix D: Freedom to View Statement

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council