

Collection Policy

The Coshocton County District Library was established to provide the residents of Coshocton County with materials in a variety of formats for information, entertainment, intellectual development and enrichment. In recognition of the pluralistic nature of this community and the varied backgrounds and needs of all citizens, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, ancestry, political persuasion, or status as a veteran, the Board of Trustees declares as a matter of materials collection policy that:

Materials Selection:

1. Book or library material selection is and shall be vested in the librarian and under their direction such members of the staff who are qualified by reason of education and training. Any book and/or library material so selected shall be held to be selected by the board.
2. Selection of books or other library materials shall be made on the basis of their value of interest, information, and enlightenment of all the people of the community. No books shall be excluded because of the race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, ancestry, political persuasion, or status as a veteran of the author. Materials shall be evaluated on their literary merit, authenticity of material, and honesty of presentation.
3. Books and materials on all sides of controversial issues shall be provided as far as possible.
4. Selection of materials for the teen collection shall be guided by the same principles and shall range from a 7th grade reading level to a senior in high school reading level.
5. Selection of materials for the children's collection shall be guided by the same principles and shall range from birth through a 6th grade level.
6. The rising cost of library materials and the uncertainty of library funding have increased the difficulties of selection. Requests of patrons shall be seriously considered and evaluated relative to the funds available and the balance of the collection as a whole. Probable demand for the material may also be considered.
7. The library collection is for the people, and any member of the public may question a selection decision made by the library. Should a patron object to the inclusion or exclusion of any title or author, they will be asked to make a written statement to the Director on a form provided by the library which shall include: name, address, phone number, statement that the complainant has read the entire book, or played the entire audiovisual media, specific complaint, recommendations, suggested substitute, and signature. Items are evaluated as a whole; therefore, a title will not be reconsidered unless the patron making the request has read/viewed/heard the entire item. Incomplete forms will not be considered. Also, if the material has been previously reconsidered, it will not be reconsidered again unless the more recent request is based on substantially different reasons than an earlier request. The patron will be informed in writing of the receipt of the request and the decision. If the patron is not satisfied with the decision, the individual may appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees. The letter should be addressed to "President, Board of Trustees, Coshocton County District Library, 655 Main Street, Coshocton, Ohio 43812." The Board will make a decision and inform the patron in writing, usually following the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The title under consideration will remain in the collection throughout

the process to support the freedom of other patrons to read, view, or listen. The director may pull the title for a period of time to allow for necessary review.

8. This board respects the right of individuals to be selective in choosing their own materials and of individuals and groups to express their views for the guidance of others. However, we oppose efforts by individuals or groups to limit the freedom of choice of others or to impose their standards or tastes on the community at large. Therefore, this board defends the principles of the freedom to read and declares that whenever censorship is involved, no book or library material shall be removed from the library save under the orders of a court of competent jurisdiction.

Collection Maintenance:

In order to maintain a high interest, popular collection, in good condition, materials are withdrawn on a systematic and continuing basis. Damaged, unattractive, outdated and unused materials are subject to recycling or discard. Decisions to discard materials shall be vested in the librarian and under their direction such members of the staff who are qualified by reason of education and training. Any book and/or library material so selected shall be held to be discarded by the board.

Request for Purchase:

The library serves a diverse public, and on occasion, a patron may request a particular title to be added to the collection. Patrons may request the addition of a title by informing a library staff member. A request does not guarantee the purchase of any one title. The decision will be guided by this policy.

Collection Types:

In addition to the physical collection, the library may contract with vendors to provide content in various forms, such as digital formatting. Those formats that are not the standard physical collection are held to the same policy as the physical collection. It is acknowledged that the content provided through vendors is not necessarily selected by the librarian and under their direction such members of staff who are qualified by reason of education and training, and that content is not necessarily withdrawn by named persons. However, by entering into a contract with a vendor, the board supports the content provided on behalf of the library.

Gifts:

1. The Coshocton County District Library encourages gifts of materials or money for materials by groups or individuals, citizens of the county and beyond, foundations, corporations, etc.
2. The Library actively seeks bequests and memorials to honor members of the community.
 - a. The Memorial/Honor Materials Program obtains needed items for the library while honoring the departed person or honored while comforting the family.
 - b. Special interest will be given to the person's hobbies and career but will not be placed before what is needed in the collection.

- c. Longevity of titles will be considered so that titles are not discarded in a short period of time. However, memorial and honor titles are subject to collection maintenance and are not guaranteed to remain in the collection forever.
 - d. Topics that could potentially embarrass the family or individual will be avoided.
 - e. When a specific title is requested, the title will be purchased so long as it does not already appear in the collection. Should the title already appear in the collection, comparable recommendations will be made to the donor.
 - f. Recent publications that are currently available should fill most memorial and honor requests.
3. Gifts of materials must meet standard criteria; any materials received that cannot be used by the Library will be placed in the Friends of the Library book sale or discarded.
 4. Donated collections of materials cannot necessarily be kept together as a group.
 5. The Library cannot be responsible for the appraisal of gifts for income tax or any other purpose.

Proclamation:

This board adopts and declares that it will adhere to and support:

- A. The Library Bill of Rights; and
- B. The Freedom to Read Statement adopted by the American Library Association both of which are made a part hereof.

Board of Trustees
Coshocton Public Library
September 21, 1993
Revised November 2023

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.

The Freedom to Read

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 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 Foundation for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses, Inc.

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