

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Introduction

Requirements:

Libraries in Massachusetts are required by law (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, Section 33) to adopt a written policy for the selection of library materials. The Board of Library Trustees has adopted the following policy in accordance with this law.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Wilmington Memorial Library Collection Development Policy is to set broad guidelines for the selection of library materials that correspond to the Library's mission and the goals identified in the Library's Long Range Plan. It may also be used to inform the public about standards and principles upon which selections are made.

Mission and Long Range Planning:

The library's collection development policy supports the basic tenets expressed in the library's mission statement which reads: *The Wilmington Memorial Library enriches the community by promoting the joy of reading, lifelong learning, and is a welcoming place for quiet reflection and community connection.* Every five years the Library undertakes a planning process involving staff, library trustees, and community representatives. The process results in a review of the library's mission and the development of a long range plan that identifies how the library should serve the community. The principles espoused in the library's mission statement with the accompanying goals and objectives serve as continuing guidelines in collection development.

Philosophy:

The Board of Trustees endorses the *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read Statement* and the *Freedom to View Statement* of the American Library Association and subsequent documents defining the principles of intellectual freedom. Thus, the Library does not promote particular beliefs or views. Rather, it provides a resource for the various opinions which apply to important, complex, and controversial questions, including unpopular positions. Language, situations, or subjects which may be offensive to some patrons do not disqualify material that, in its entirety, is judged to be of value. Materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents, no materials are marked to restrict their use by ages. No materials are sequestered except to protect valuable items from damage or theft. Materials may be placed in temporary storage due to lack of adequate shelf space in the open stack areas.

Collections

Children's Collection:

The children's collection serves children through grade five and parents, teachers, and others who work with children. The collection focuses on materials that develop reading ability, inform children about the world around them, stimulate the imagination, and entertain. The collection is balanced between popular titles and core materials suitable for the varied

interests and reading levels of their audience. The collection is meant to supplement, but not replace, the Wilmington Elementary School libraries.

Teen Collection:

The teen collection serves patrons in grades six through twelve, and is primarily a browsing collection meant to supplement, but not replace, the Wilmington Middle and High Schools' libraries.

Adult Collection:

The adult print and media collection is a browsing collection geared toward the recreational and educational needs of the general adult population in Wilmington. The adult collection also includes online educational resources. The collection is meant to supplement, but not replace, school and/or academic libraries.

Materials:

The Library acquires materials in a variety of formats, including paper and digital. The same work may be acquired in more than one format to meet the various needs and/or preferences of library patrons.

Selection

Selection refers to the decision to add to, retain, and remove items from the collection.

Selectors:

The Board of Library Trustees has the ultimate legal responsibility for the library's collection. The authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials is delegated to the Library Director and under his/her direction to professional librarians who are knowledgeable in collection development principles and practices.

Process:

The following sources are among those regularly used by selectors.

- Reviews in professionally recognized resources are a primary source for material selection. Standard bibliographies, book lists by recognized authorities, and the advice of competent people in specific subject areas will also be used. Review sources include but are not limited to:
 - *Best Seller Lists (New York Times, Boston Globe, Amazon, etc.)*
 - *The Horn Book Guide & Magazine*
 - *Library Journal*
 - *The New York Times Book Review*
 - *Publishers Weekly*
 - *School Library Journal*
 - *VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)*
- Suggestions from staff (other than those officially assigned selection responsibility)
- Requests from library patrons

Selection Criteria:

Individual items are purchased based on the following criteria:

- Staff judgment and expertise
- Demonstrated or perceived interest, need, or demand by library patrons or potential patrons
- Availability of shelf space
- Contemporary significance or permanent value of the material
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Quality, including accuracy, clarity, and usability

- Reputation of the author, publisher or producer, or other contributors
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relative importance in comparison to existing materials on the same subject
- Format, durability, and ease of use
- Value of resource in relation to its cost
- Availability through other sources, particularly the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium

Multiple Copies:

The library will strive to meet the high interest or high demand of popular titles by purchasing multiple copies as necessary, keeping in mind constraints of budget and competing needs of the collection.

Deselection:

Deselection is the process by which the collection is purged of materials that are damaged beyond repair, outdated, or no longer in use. Deselection is done on a regular basis by the selectors. The library makes every reasonable effort to see that deselected materials are disposed of in the most appropriate manner.

- **Criteria for deselection:**
 - Changing needs and interests of the community
 - Outdated information
 - Number of circulations
 - Availability of similar materials in the collection
 - Physical condition and age of the item
 - Appearance on standard lists
 - Available shelf space
 - Availability at other local libraries
 - Obsolescence of format
- **Deselected items will be:**
 - Given to the Friends of the Library to be sold at the Bookstore Next Door or donated to other organizations/businesses
 - Donated to the local schools or other libraries
 - Recycled or destroyed, if condition warrants

Donations

Material Donations:

The library does not accept direct donations of physical materials. All material donations should be brought to the Friends of the Library Bookstore Next Door. Selectors may acquire items donated to the Book Store Next Door for the library's collection on a case by case basis. The Bookstore and/or Library retain the right to sell, donate, recycle, or discard any donated item at any time.

Monetary Donations:

The Library welcomes monetary donations for the purchase of library materials as a memorial, or for any other purpose. The general nature or subject area of the materials to be purchased will be based upon the wishes of the donor when expressed. The library staff, however, in accordance with the needs and the selection policies of the Library, will make the selection of specific titles in accordance with the Gift Acceptance Policy.

Self Published Books

Self published books that are donated by the author should meet the following criteria in order to be considered for inclusion in the library's collection:

- The book has been edited by an editor or professional literary agent
- The author can provide a copy of one positive review of the donated book. The following review sources will not be considered:
 - Self-written reviews
 - Unsourced reviews
 - Reviews from friends and family
- The selector may also choose to review and evaluate the merit of the book as an addition to the collection.

Local History Collection

The purpose of the Wilmington Memorial Library Local History Collection is to preserve materials that document the history of Wilmington, and to make these materials available to researchers and the general public.

The major emphasis of the collection is current and historical information about the town of Wilmington. In addition, the collection includes a small selection of materials about the towns contiguous to Wilmington. A small collection of genealogical materials about Massachusetts and the United States is also available.

The local history collection is limited to typed, bound books and pamphlets; microfilm; films; maps; and photographs. The collection does not include artifacts of any type, nor does it include traditional archival materials such as posters, diaries, letters, or personal handwritten or unbound papers. These items are housed at the Town Museum under the care of the Town Curator.

Every effort is made to digitize local history documents and make them available through the library's website.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for himself/herself, he/she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some requests for reconsideration, the following procedures have been developed to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner.

Any resident of the Town of Wilmington that has a concern regarding the selection of a specific title is welcome to discuss the interpretation of these principles with the Library Director. A formal review of any title or material is initiated only upon the submittal of a *Request for Reconsideration* form. Upon submittal of this form, professional selectors on the staff will read, review and comparatively assess the material being reconsidered. A formal written response and assessment will be forthcoming from the Library Director.

Should the patron desire further edification from the governing body of the Library, the resident should then put their concerns in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board will then study the

matter relative to the individual concern and the selection principles as promulgated. If the challenged material meets the criteria of selection, it will not be removed from the collection because of pressure from any individual or group

Approved by Board of Library Trustees 2/15/11;

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Revised 6/16/15

Addendums

Request for Reconsideration

Library Bill of Rights

Access to Library Resources and Services to Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

ALA Freedom to Read Statement

ALA Freedom to View Statement

**Wilmington Memorial Library
Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Completion of this form is required in order to initiate a formal request for reconsideration of any library material. After completing this form, please return it to the Library Director.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Address</u>	<u>City/Zip</u>
<u>Telephone</u>	<u>Email</u>
<u>Who do you represent?</u> <i>Yourself</i> _____ <i>Organization (please name)</i> _____	
<u>Have you read the Library's Collection Development Policy?</u> <i>Yes</i> _____ <i>No</i> _____	
<u>Type of Material</u> <i>Book</i> _____ <i>DVD</i> _____ <i>CD</i> _____ <i>Video Game</i> _____ <i>Other (please specify)</i> _____	
<u>Item Title</u>	<u>Item Author</u>
<u>Item Publisher/Producer</u>	<u>Item Publication Date</u>
<u>Have you seen reviews of this item?</u> <i>Yes</i> _____ <i>No</i> _____	<u>If yes, do you agree with the reviews?</u> <i>Yes</i> _____ <i>No</i> _____

Please answer the following questions. Use the reverse side of the paper if necessary.

1. How was this item brought to your attention?

2. Have you read/viewed the entire work? Yes____ No____ If not, which parts?

3. What concerns you about this material? Please cite specific examples, page numbers, etc.

4. What would you like the library to do about this material?

Patron Signature _____ **Date** _____

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 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.

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

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.

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

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the [Intellectual Freedom Manual](#).

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](#).

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

Libraries are a traditional forum for the open exchange of information. Restricting access to library materials violates the basic tenets of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*.

Some libraries block access to certain materials by placing physical or virtual barriers between the user and those materials. For example, materials are sometimes labeled for content or placed in a "locked case," "adults only," "restricted shelf," or "high-demand" collection. Access to certain materials is sometimes restricted to protect them from theft or mutilation, or because of statutory authority or institutional mandate.

In some libraries, access is restricted based on computerized reading management programs that assign reading levels to books and/or users and limit choices to titles on the program's reading list. Titles not on the reading management list have been removed from the collection in some school libraries. Organizing collections by reading management program level, ability, grade, or age level is another example of restricted access. Even though the chronological age or grade level of users is not representative of their information needs or total reading abilities, users may feel inhibited from selecting resources located in areas that do not correspond to their assigned characteristics.

Physical restrictions and content filtering of library resources and services may generate psychological, service, or language skills barriers to access as well. Because restricted materials often deal with controversial, unusual, or sensitive subjects, having to ask a library worker for access to them may be embarrassing or inhibiting for patrons desiring access. Even when a title is listed in the catalog with a reference to its restricted status, a barrier is placed between the patron and the publication.¹ Because restricted materials often feature information that some people consider objectionable, potential library users may be predisposed to think of labeled and filtered resources as objectionable and be discouraged from asking for access to them.

Federal and some state statutes require libraries that accept specific types of federal and/or state funding to install content filters that limit access to Internet resources for minors and adults. Internet filters are applied to Internet resources in some libraries may prevent users from finding targeted categories of information, much of which is constitutionally protected. The use of Internet filters must be addressed through library policies and procedures to ensure that users receive information and that filters do not prevent users from exercising their First Amendment rights. Users have the right to unfiltered access to constitutionally protected information.²

Library policies that restrict access to resources for any reason must be carefully formulated and administered to ensure they do not violate established principles of intellectual freedom. This caution is reflected in ALA policies, such as "Evaluating Library Collections,"³ "Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors,"⁴ "Preservation Policy," and the ACRL "Code of Ethics for Special Collections Librarians."⁵

Donated resources require special consideration. In keeping with the "Joint Statement on Access" of the American Library Association and Society of American Archivists,⁶ libraries should avoid accepting donor agreements or entering into contracts that impose permanent restrictions on special collections. As

stated in the “Joint Statement on Access,” it is the responsibility of a library with such collections “to make available original research materials in its possession on equal terms of access.”

A primary goal of the library profession is to facilitate access to all points of view on current and historical issues. All proposals for restricted access should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that the purpose is not to suppress a viewpoint or to place a barrier between users and content. Libraries must maintain policies and procedures that serve the diverse needs of their users and protect the First Amendment right to receive information.