

South Plainfield Public Library Collection Development Policy

I. PURPOSE OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The purpose of the collection development policy is to establish standards in the selection of library materials and to inform the public of the principles on which the selections are made. This policy has been reviewed by the Library's Board of Trustees and approved at the May 2018 meeting.

II. INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

As a basis for this collection development policy, the Library Board has reviewed and endorses the *Library Bill of Rights*, *The Freedom to Read* statement, and *The Freedom to View* statement of the American Library Association. These documents may be accessed on ALA's website: www.ala.org

III. SERVICE GOALS

The South Plainfield Public Library serves the needs of our community by providing free access to a diversity of ideas and information through various library materials, services and experiences. It is the goal of the library to

- Provide a wide range of library materials and services which reflect the diverse needs and interests of the community
- Support the information needs of its users through the provision of timely, accurate and useful information
- Offer our patrons library materials and information in a wide array of formats, including access to digital content.
- Provide supplementary materials and services to meet the educational needs of the community

IV. SELECTION CRITERIA

Materials selection is defined as the decision making process of adding new materials or retaining existing materials in the Library's collection. All library materials, regardless of format or intended audience,

are evaluated according to these guidelines. Items are judged as a complete work rather than on the merits of individual parts. The decision to purchase an item for the collection may be based on one or more of the guidelines.

The authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials rests ultimately with the Library Director. The process is delegated to staff members who are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience. The Adult Department and Children's Department are responsible for monitoring the funds in their respective materials accounts and for submitting quarterly reports to the Library Director.

The selection of any material for the Library's collection does not constitute an endorsement of its contents. The Library recognizes that many materials can be considered controversial, and that any given item may offend some patrons. The Library will make an effort to provide materials representing several viewpoints on public issues of controversial nature.

The amount of new materials published each year is vast and therefore it is impossible to evaluate each one first hand. In order to maintain a diverse collection of items, materials will be selected from a range of sources, including but not limited to evaluations by reviewers in professional library publications, evaluations by critics in the popular press, staff review of materials from publisher reps and suggestions from the community. While we cannot honor every specific request that is made from the community, we will give careful consideration to each one and will try to fulfill as many as possible.

Selections are made on the merits of the materials under consideration in relation to the existing collection and the needs of our users. The library will base its inclusion of materials on the following factors:

- Community demand
- Quality of the material
- Needs of the existing collection
- Relevance to the needs of the community
- Evaluations in professional and popular media
- Format (durability, ease of use etc.)
- In print availability
- Scarcity of published information on a subject area
- Reputation of author/artist/publisher
- Literary merit
- Price

Special consideration will also be given to locally produced or authored material.

The Library does not collect textbooks from the area schools, but will give consideration to the curriculum needs of the school system and will attempt to help support the curriculum needs of the local public school system through the purchase of supplemental materials when possible.

V. NON-PRINT MEDIA (INCLUDING AUDIO BOOKS, DVDs, RECORDED MUSIC, DOWNLOADABLE AUDIO BOOKS AND E-BOOKS)

The library is aware of constantly changing formats used in the delivery of materials. Every effort is made to keep the collection current in non-print media formats. This includes adding new formats and retiring old ones. The decision to retire certain formats is based on, but not necessarily limited to, the following criteria:

- Popularity of the format
- Support of the format
- Expected “lifespan” of the format

Criteria for evaluation and selection of non-print formats are the same as used for print material, however the Library’s collection of downloadable audio material is made through consortia and therefore group decisions are made regarding the addition of new materials.

VI. PLACEMENT OF MATERIAL

Several factors determine the placement of material at the South Plainfield Public Library. Dewey Decimal Classification, which divides material by subject, is used to arrange the various collections. Staff members in the Technical Services Department use the Dewey Decimal Classification and the Library of Congress subject headings to determine the location of the items in the Library. Material are classified under broad headings, such as “Adult Fiction”, “Juvenile Nonfiction”, “Young Adult Fiction”, “Mystery”, and “Reference”. Items within the nonfiction collections are further divided by subject. Professional reviews recommending age appropriateness of material aid Librarians in selecting and placing material.

All of the Library's collections are available to customers of all ages. The location of items in a collection is determined by the classification scheme, professional reviews, and the Librarians' expertise. It is the responsibility of the parents, not the Library staff, to monitor Library use by children.

VII. LICENSED DATABASES, PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS

The library defines licensed databases as online databases available only through a subscription. The subscription may allow for remote access through patron authentication. The databases extend the Library's collection by providing timely access to news and trends as well as access to important archival material. They are used to enhance and supplement the reference collection. In some instances subscription online databases replace print reference materials.

Licensed databases, periodicals and newspapers will be purchased for the following purposes:

- To supplement the Library's collection
- To respond to patron requests
- To keep the Library's collection up to date with current opinions and news
- To provide information not necessarily available in book format
- To satisfy recreational needs
- To provide Library staff with current material selection aids and up to date professional news and trends

The Library considers licensed databases, periodicals and newspapers subject to the same selection and weeding criteria as hard copy materials (see section IV above)

VIII. WEEDING

Weeding is an integral part of the Collection Development process. Discarding materials is necessary to meet the following objectives:

- To use shelf space efficiently
- To place quality before quantity in building a viable collection

- To provide current, accurate information by discarding out dated materials
- To promote a regular program of replacement buying

Weeding of materials will be based on the following criteria:

- Content: outdated, obsolete or inaccurate materials
- Condition: worn out or damaged; incomplete sets
- Usage: materials that have not circulated for 2 or more years
- Format: Outmoded non-print formats.

Weeded materials are not automatically replaced. The decision to replace withdrawn or lost items depends on several factors. These include, but are not limited to:

- Availability of the item to purchase
- Whether another format or a similar item might better serve the same purpose
- Whether the item is easily available through inter-library loan
- The existing coverage of the subject matter
- The popularity of the item

IX. GIFTS POLICY

The South Plainfield Free Public Library welcomes financial gifts, bequests and memorial donations for the purchase of books and other materials for the Library.

Monetary gifts will only be accepted without imposed restrictions in order to maximize the use of the donation. No conditions may be imposed by the donor after the Library's acceptance of a gift.

The Library will occasionally accept donations of books or other resources if the items are in line with the selection criteria listed above. Books and other materials not used by the Library will either be donated to the Friends of the Library for their annual sale, or will be put out for free for the public to take. Neither the Library nor the Friends of the Library will appraise gifts or assume the cost of appraisal for any donated items.

X. RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The South Plainfield Public Library is dedicated to maintaining a collection of materials that represent differing points of views on public issues, as well as diverse general reading interests. The inclusion of material in the Library's collection does not indicate an endorsement of a particular belief or viewpoint put forth by an author. Library materials will not be marked in any way to show approval or disapproval of the contents. Items will not be sequestered except for certain reference materials ("Ready Reference") which are kept at the Reference Desk so they are easily accessible for the librarian on duty. These items are available for use in the library and may be requested at the Reference Desk.

The South Plainfield Public Library provides the public with a procedure to request the withdrawal of an item from the Library's collection. The reconsideration process is always used in conjunction with the Library's policy on access to materials as put forth in ALA's *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Freedom to Read Statement*.

When a patron objects to an item in the Library's collection, the senior professional staff person on duty should take the patron aside and establish the full nature of the complaint. The Librarian or administrator should use discretion, restraint and encourage a calm discussion. Whenever appropriate, the staff member should refer to the Materials Section Guidelines put forth in this document. If the patron decided to pursue the request for reconsideration the staff person should:

- Provide the patron with a copy of the Library's Collection Development Policy
- Provide the patron with a copy of the "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration" form (Appendix A) of this document
- Inform the patron that a completed and signed request for reconsideration form is required to ensure that the Library Director has a full explanation and understanding of the issue. The form must be signed by the complainant for the request to be reviewed.
- Inform the patron that the Director will consider seriously the request and reply in a confidential and timely manner

The staff member will submit the completed form to the Library Director along with any supporting material.

Upon receipt of the request and accompanying pertinent materials, the Library Director will review them carefully. If the patron is satisfied with a phone response from the Library Director, the form will be filed and the matter considered closed. If the patron requires a written response and determination of the matter, the Library Director will send the patron a letter indicating that a written final report will be forthcoming.

The Library Director will then proceed to weigh all materials in hand and may consult with other professional staff members. The Library Director may request that those staff members submit their opinions in writing. It is the Library Director's responsibility to keep the patron informed of the progress of his/her request for reconsideration.

Finally, the Library Director will prepare a written response to the patron. The response will include the Library Director's decision as to the place of the material within the collection as well as an explanation of that decision.

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

SOUTH PLAINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY

YOUR NAME _____

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT: _____ MYSELF

_____ ORGANIZATION (please specify): _____

_____ OTHER (please specify): _____

MATERIAL ON WHICH YOU ARE COMMENTING:

_____ BOOK

_____ AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL

_____ MAGAZINE

_____ CONTENT OF LIBRARY PROGRAM

_____ NEWSPAPER

_____ OTHER: _____

TITLE: _____

WHAT BROUGHT THIS TITLE TO YOUR ATTENTION: _____

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.

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



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.

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](#)



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 guarantees 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.