

Collection Development Policy

Adopted: January 13, 1983

Amended: March 12, 1992, April 10, 2014, January 19, 2017, November 15, 2018

Introduction

The Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library (“the library”) serves a diverse community of individuals of various economic, religious, social, and political backgrounds. The goal of the library is to provide materials in a variety of formats for information, education, and recreation.

In a free society, information on all points of view should be available to all individuals. The public library provides free access to materials and ideas and is responsible for selecting materials that reflect varied viewpoints and tastes. The existence of a particular viewpoint in the collection is an expression of the library’s policy of intellectual freedom, not an endorsement of a particular point of view.

This policy is designed to guide library staff in selecting materials and making withdrawal decisions, to acquaint the public with the principles of collection development, and to be consistent with “The Freedom to Read,” “The Freedom to View,” and “The Library Bill of Rights” statements of the American Library Association previously adopted by the Library Board of Trustees.

Goals of Selection

Selection is made based upon the following five goals:

1. Popular topics and titles – to offer current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a wide variety of formats.
2. General information – to provide information on a broad array of topics related to school, work, and personal life.
3. Lifelong learning – to develop a collection to support our patrons’ personal growth and development throughout their lifetime.
4. Local History and Genealogy – to provide a collection of printed materials and other resources that chronicle the history of the greater Mishawaka area as well as genealogy research tools.
5. Cultural awareness – to offer materials and resources to help patrons to gain an understanding of their own cultural heritage and the cultural heritage of others.

Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility of the collection rests with the Library Board of Trustees, who have delegated this responsibility to the Library Director, who has further delegated collection development to the Collection Services Department.

Selection Criteria

Library staff will utilize their professional judgment, training, and expertise in choosing materials for the library collection (print, non-print, and digital) which meet our goals of selection and stay within our published budget.

The following criteria are used to evaluate and select items for the collection:

1. Current or anticipated appeal; popular demand
2. Critical reviews
3. Enduring value
4. Current, historical, or local significance of the author or the subject
5. Relevance to the existing collection; content
6. Importance of subject matter
7. Representation of diverse points of view
8. Timeliness; date of publication
9. Price, availability, and budget
10. Support of library programs and initiatives
11. Suitability of format

Heritage Center Selection Criteria- The Heritage Center is the library's area to house, catalog, and make available its collection of materials of local historical and genealogical interest.

Materials are added to the Heritage Center collection in the following priority order:

1. Mishawaka
2. Penn and Harris Townships
3. St. Joseph County, Indiana
4. Indiana
5. Areas from which, or through which, Mishawaka's population migrated
6. Other areas of genealogical interest and supporting materials

Digital Selection Criteria- The selection of Digital content is the responsibility of the Collection Services Coordinator. The same selection criteria applies to digital content as to all other formats.

Reconsideration of Materials

The library believes that individuals may reject for themselves or their children materials which they find unsuitable but should not exercise censorship on others. Parents who wish to limit or restrict the reading of their own children must personally oversee their selections.

Despite the care taken to select the best materials and the qualifications of the selectors, objections to a selection may be made. When this happens, the principles of *The Freedom to Read* and the professional responsibility of the staff must be defended.

If a complaint is made, the procedures are as follows:

- Patrons who wish to request material be removed or reclassified will be asked to submit a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form" (see Appendix D).
- A committee of professional librarians will review the material in its entirety, taking into account the same criteria used for selection as well as journal reviews and any other supporting documentation.
- The committee will make a recommendation to the Library Director, who will make a final decision on the material.
- This decision will be communicated to the patron, who may appeal the decision in writing to the Library Board of Trustees.
- The Trustees will, at a regular or special meeting:
 - Consider the request based upon whether the item as a whole meets the library's selection criteria
 - Render a decision on the item
 - Communicate the decision to the patron via official letter
- The questioned material will not be removed from the shelf during the reconsideration process.

Collection Maintenance

Professional library staff regularly review the collection to ensure its content continues to meet community needs, is up-to-date, accurate, clean, and accessible. De-selection of materials (commonly known as weeding) is an integral part of collection maintenance.

A systematic evaluation of the collection by staff is conducted according to the C.R.E.W. (Continuous Review Evaluation and Weeding) guidelines. This process identifies items for replacement, retention, or de-selection. Materials that are worn, obsolete, unused, superseded, or duplicated are removed. Factors such as copyright date, circulation counts, and timeliness of the material are also taken into account when making weeding decisions. The library will retain those materials that continue to have enduring or permanent significance to its mission and overall collection goals.

Appendices:

- A. Freedom to Read**
- B. Freedom to View**
- C. Library Bill of Rights**
- D. Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form**

Appendix A – 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

Appendix B – Freedom to View

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.

Appendix C – 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 that 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.

Section 2: Appendix D – Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Your name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone _____

Do you represent: yourself? _____ An organization? _____

If an organization, what is its name? _____

Title _____

Author _____

Book _____ Periodical _____ Movie _____ CD _____ Book on tape _____ Other _____

Publisher _____ Publication date _____

Did you review the entire item? _____

To what specifically do you object? (Please be specific. Cite pages, sections, or timestamps.)

Why?

For what age group would you recommend this work?

Challenged materials will be reviewed by a committee of professional librarians and, at the discretion of the Library Director may be:

- Maintained in the current collection
- Moved to a more age appropriate collection (Adult, Young Adult, Children's)
- Removed from the collection

You may appeal this decision, in writing, to the Board of Trustees (ATTN: Board of Trustees, Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library, 209 Lincolnway East, Mishawaka, IN 46544)

Signed _____ Date _____