

## I. Collection Management Policy

### A. Scope

The library selects materials in support of its mission. The emphasis of the collection is on acquiring materials of wide-ranging interest to the general public and offering choice of subjects, perspectives, and formats that meet most library needs within current budget limitations. Collection development is founded on the principles espoused in the American Library Association's

- Library Bill Of Rights,
- Freedom To Read Statement,
- Freedom To View Statement, and
- Diversity In Collection Development. (Appendix A)

### B. Responsibility for Selection

1. The ultimate authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials rests with the Library Director and, under their direction, may be delegated to the professional staff that are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience.
2. Responsibility for a minor's use of library materials rests with his/her parents or legal guardians.
3. Library materials are not labeled as to content and materials are not sequestered except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

### C. Selection Criteria

All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are evaluated by the following criteria. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any single criterion be decisive, and the order of the selection criteria does not indicate relative importance.

Criteria used for selection include the following:

1. Reviewed in professional and reputable review sources
2. Importance of author and/or subject matter to the collection as a whole
3. Timeliness or lasting importance of the content to the community
4. Current and anticipated needs and interests of the community
5. Scope and/or treatment of subject matter
6. Authority and credibility of author/artist and/or publisher
7. Availability of material on the subject within and outside the district
8. Affordability
9. Format; suitability of physical form for library users, readability, clarity of print, illustration, and ease of use

10. Nomination for major literary awards
11. Provides selection aids and/or resources for education professionals
12. Multiple copies will be purchased in response to popular demand limited by budgetary restrictions and the anticipated value of the material
13. No attempt is made at completeness of any author/artist/series and/or publisher
14. Within the limits of space, budget and availability, materials will be chosen to represent a variety of opinions on subjects that may have valid differing points of view
15. The library does not have the means to purchase textbooks for specific educational institutions.

#### D. Local Authors Policy

1. To support, encourage, and foster access to local talent, the library will maintain a Local Author Collection. The mission of the Local Author Collection is to continually improve library service to the public by providing free access to books by local authors, enriching the community with books created by local authors, and promoting individual achievements in authorship. This collection features donated books from local authors.
2. Items included in the Local Author Collection must meet the following guidelines:
  - a. Authors must reside in Montgomery County, or their work must be based in the area.
  - b. The library will accept one copy of each title. Authors may donate up to three titles per year.
  - c. Materials must be bound and formatted in a way that enables circulation, ease of use, and durability. The library will only accept physical formats. Items must be in new condition.
  - d. Donated materials become property of the library and are subject to the library's Collection Management Policy, including weeding procedures.
  - e. Regardless of genre, all items in this collection will be labeled as "LOCAL" and include the name of the author.
3. To donate materials for this collection, please complete the Local Author Submission Form (Appendix C) and include it with the donated item.

#### E. Request for Purchase of Materials

1. If a patron requests library material that is not owned by this library system. Patrons should complete the Request for Purchase Form in the library for consideration - Appendix C, which will be reviewed by the Library Director and staff in a timely manner.

2. If the requested items are less than 12 months old and meet our selection criteria, the library will consider the item for purchase following the selection criteria.
3. If the requested items are more than 12 months old, the library will also consider them for purchase, but may instead seek to borrow them from a holding library outside our system, through Inter-library loan.
4. If the patron requestor is not satisfied with the response, a written appeal may be filed within 30 days with the Upper Merion Township Library Board of Directors. The Library Board will make the final decision and the patron will be informed in writing.

#### F. Online Resources & Technology

With new technologies developing at a rapid rate, digital and other formats will be considered with the following criteria in mind:

1. relevance to the existing collection
2. permanence of the format
3. budgetary and space limitations
4. patron demand
5. compatibility with available equipment

The library will select materials by the following criteria:

1. replaces standard printed texts
2. provides greater accessibility and currency
3. provides new resources of information in an efficient and economical manner
4. provides ease of use and access
5. demonstrates the ability to be accessed remotely, via passwords, or barcodes
6. is backed by on-site or immediately available technical support (including updates and training)
7. is validated by the reputation of vendor, publisher or supplier
8. enhances the existing collection

#### G. Material Replacement

While the library attempts to maintain copies of standard and important works, it does not automatically replace all lost, missing or damaged materials. In making a decision as to whether or not to replace an item, the Library Director and staff will consider whether:

1. the item is available for purchase
2. another item or format might better serve the purpose

3. there is sufficient demand to replace the item
4. newer, updated, or revised materials might better serve the purpose
5. the item has historic value
6. another library can provide that item (interlibrary loan)
7. the number of copies in collection
8. existing coverage of the subject within the collection
9. cost of mending versus replacement

#### H. Material Deselection (“Weeding”)

Materials no longer suitable for or useful in the collection are weeded out. Materials should be reviewed if they:

1. are in poor physical condition
2. are not local history (archival)
3. have not circulated in a number of years
4. are outdated in content (nonfiction)
5. have been superseded by a new or revised edition (nonfiction)

The basis of the weeding plan is based on *The Weeding Handbook: A Shelf-by-Shelf Guide* by Rebecca Vnuk. Materials that are weeded out of the collection are to be sold by the library, given away, donated, or recycled. Proceeds from the sale of items will be put back into the library’s budget.

#### I. Reconsideration of Library Materials

A patron who wants the library to reconsider keeping a specific title in the collection may fill out the Material Reconsideration Form, Appendix D.

1. Once the form is submitted to the library, the director will meet with all librarians to address the concern and review the material and the selection process.
2. The patron will be informed of the decision in writing within four weeks.
3. If the patron is not satisfied with the response, a written appeal may be filed within 30 days with the Upper Merion Township Library Board of Directors.
4. The Library Board will make the final decision and the patron will be informed in writing.

#### J. Gifts & Donations

1. Gifts must meet the same Selection Criteria as materials purchased by the library.
2. Gifts of books and other library materials are accepted under the provision that their use or disposal is subject to the discretion of the Library Director.

3. The donor relinquishes all rights to donated material.
4. The library reserves the right to refuse any donations of materials.
5. Suggestions of specific titles or subjects are welcomed when memorial/honor donations are given but the final decision, based on the needs of the library collection, rests with the library.
6. The library does not appraise or provide evaluations of gift materials for tax deductions or other purposes, but will acknowledge receipt of gift materials in writing if requested by the donor.

## **APPENDIX A - AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION DOCUMENTATION**

### *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 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

## *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 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*

### *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

## *Diversity In Collection Development: An Interpretation of the Library Bill Of Rights*

Throughout history, the focus of censorship has fluctuated from generation to generation. Books and other materials have not been selected or have been removed from library collections for many reasons, among which are prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, sexual forms of expression, and other potentially controversial topics.

Some examples of censorship may include removing or not selecting materials because they are considered by some as racist or sexist; not purchasing conservative religious materials; not selecting materials about or by minorities because it is thought these groups or interests are not represented in a community; or not providing information on or materials from non-mainstream political entities.

Librarians may seek to increase user awareness of materials on various social concerns by many means, including, but not limited to, issuing bibliographies and presenting exhibits and programs. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all materials legally obtainable should be assured to the user, and policies should not unjustly exclude materials even if they are offensive to the librarian or the user. Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article II of the Library Bill Of Rights: "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." A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers. Collection development responsibilities include selecting materials in the languages in common use in the community the library serves. Collection development and the selection of materials should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures.

There are many complex facets to any issue, and variations of context in which issues may be expressed, discussed, or interpreted. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be fair, just, and equitable and to give all library users equal protection in guarding against violation of the library patron's right to read, view, or listen to materials and resources protected by the First Amendment, no matter what the viewpoint of the author, creator, or selector. Librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of materials based on personal bias or prejudice, and to select and support the access to materials on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs, interests, and abilities of all persons in the community the library serves. This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Toleration is meaningless without tolerance for what some may consider detestable. Librarians cannot justly permit their own preferences to limit their degree of tolerance in collection development, because freedom is indivisible.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990.

*Upper Merion Township Library Request For Reconsideration Form*

1. Author: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Title: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Publisher (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Format:

Hardcover  Paperback  CD  DVD  Electronic  Magazine  Newspaper  
 Display  Link on Library's website  eBook  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. In what section of the library is the material located?  Adult  Children's  Young Adult

6. How was the item brought to your attention? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Did you read, view or listen to the entire work?  Yes  No

8. What is your objection to the material? Be specific; cite pages:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Is there anything positive about the material?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What, in your opinion, is the theme of the material? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you know what literary critics and reviewers think of this material?  Yes  No

12. What do you feel might be the result of reading/viewing this book?

\_\_\_\_\_

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13. For what age group would you recommend this material? \_\_\_\_\_

14. In its place, what material would you recommend that would convey a valuable picture and perspective of the subject treated?

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15. What would you like your library to do with this material? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Are you familiar with the American Library Association Bill of Rights? \_\_Yes\_\_ No

17. Are you familiar with the American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

18. Are you familiar with the American Library Association Freedom to View Statement?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print or type Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Organization or Group Represented If Any \_\_\_\_\_

Address Completed form to: Library Director  
Upper Merion Township Library  
175 W. Valley Forge Rd.  
King of Prussia, PA 19406

