

## **MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

### **□ GENERAL STATEMENT**

The purpose in building a collection is to make available to all people who use the Library as comprehensive an assemblage of recorded knowledge as possible within the limits of funds available and the needs of the community. The Library recognizes that the needs of the community are of primary importance in selection, and because the community is a conglomerate of individuals, each individual's needs will be considered in conjunction with the majority of the present and potential patronage. A diverse collection is important but no more so than the individual's select needs within the whole of the community. An effort is made to include information representing all sides of controversial issues as such material becomes available. The criteria for the selection of controversial materials are the same as for any other materials. Controversial materials have no distinguishing labels and are shelved in the general collection. Responsibility for the reading choices of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection for the collection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently fall into the hands of children. An open shelf policy will be followed at all times.

### **□ STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This selection policy defines the standards and outlines the responsibility for materials selection for the Bloomington Public Library. Within these guidelines, the librarians use their professional judgment to determine the materials that best meet the objectives of the Library and the needs of its patrons.

### **□ OBJECTIVES IN MATERIALS SELECTION**

The general objectives in materials selection are to carry out the Library's goals of providing the community with materials in a variety of formats to meet informational, educational, and recreational needs.

### **□ RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION**

Overall responsibility for collection development rests with the Library Director who operates within this framework of policies determined by the Board of Library Trustees. In turn, the Library Director delegates or shares the collection development responsibility with Adult Services, Youth Services, Circulation/Technical Services and Computer Services staff.

Suggestions for materials to be purchased are always welcome from any patron.

All requests are given serious consideration within the framework of the policy. An attempt will be made to borrow through interlibrary loan any requested item that is out of print, or that the Library determines does not meet the criteria for purchase.

## □ **CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

The general criteria considered in selecting materials include:

1. Appropriateness to Library's mission and service roles
2. Review recommendations
3. Relationship to existing materials in collection
4. Price, in relation to total budget
5. Format and durability
6. Qualifications of author, producer, creator or publisher
7. Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
8. Currency or timeliness, if applicable
9. Anticipated popular demand and/or community requests
10. Clarity and accuracy of information and/or presentation
11. Availability of materials in other libraries
12. Relevancy of non-book materials

In selection, consideration will be given to the work as a whole. No work shall be excluded because of specific passages or pieces taken out of context.

## □ **SELECTION TOOLS**

Because it is impossible for librarians to examine all items being considered for purchase, they depend on reliable selection aids. The librarians regularly use reviews found in standard sources.

Selection tools include but are not limited to:

1. Professional journals
2. Standard bibliographies
3. Publisher's materials
4. Newspapers, bookseller's materials
5. Notable book lists and published lists of bestsellers
6. Inspection of materials through a variety of professional sources.

## □ **SCOPE OF COLLECTION**

Through careful selection, the Library strives to maintain a diverse collection of quality materials, including items of contemporary significance and permanent value, as well as, a selection of materials concerning social issues and ephemeral items. Circulating materials are supplemented by a variety of in-house use reference materials and electronic databases accessible in-house and remotely. Because the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading skills, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Bloomingdale Public Library is to provide access to high-interest, high-demand, informational, educational, cultural, and recreational library materials and services in a variety of formats and technologies; to stimulate a desire to learn in children and encourage lifelong learning for all ages; and, to be responsive to the needs of the community with useful and timely access to knowledge, information, and resources.

## □ **STATEMENT OF SPECIFIC POLICIES IN SELECTED AREAS**

### ▪ **MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS**

The Bloomingdale Public Library subscribes to the following policy: “Free Access to Libraries for Minors,” an Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (as adopted by the ALA Council, 1981). (APPENDIX A) At the Bloomingdale Public Library, children and young adults have access to all parts of the Library; however, collections in Youth Services serve children from birth through middle school. Materials appropriate for the interests and needs of the ages served are chosen for these collections.

Collections in Youth Services include picture books, beginning readers, juvenile non-fiction, juvenile fiction, periodicals, and a wide range of non-book materials.

The young adult fiction collection is selected especially for the needs and interests of middle school and high school students. Students are encouraged to use non-fiction materials throughout the Library in preparing school assignments or for any other reason.

### ▪ **MATERIALS FOR ADULTS**

The materials in Adult Services are selected primarily to serve the needs of adults and high school students. The collection includes reference and circulating non-fiction books, fiction books, large print books, electronic resources, and a variety of non-book materials

## ❑ **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

Both the Adult and Youth Services Departments include several special collections:

- **Donna Beth Froio Foreign Language and Cultural Collection**

This collection is funded with an ongoing perpetual endowment established by a local resident for the purpose of building a collection for young people in this subject area. The collection materials in one or more foreign languages, as well as materials that reflect cultural experiences from around the world.

- **Literacy**

The Library maintains a Literacy collection materials in the Literacy collection are selected to serve the needs of new adult readers and English language learners.

- **Local History**

The Library maintains a local history collection. The collection consists of materials relating to Bloomingdale history and resources for genealogy research.

- **Parent-Teacher**

This collection includes materials helpful to parents and teachers.

- **Textbook Collection**

The Library maintains a limited textbook collection of local elementary, middle school, and high school districts. The textbooks are supplied by the school district and are updated when the districts supply the Library with new editions. The Library does not purchase the textbooks, as it is the responsibility of those institutions to provide copies of course materials to their students.

## ❑ **LEASE BOOKS**

The Library maintains a rental plan that supplements the permanent collection and makes available multiple current popular fiction and non-fiction as soon as possible. Titles chosen through the rental plan will meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. Copies or titles will be returned when they are no longer in demand.

## ❑ **NON-BOOK MATERIALS**

The criteria for and the methods of selection of non-book materials are listed in the Criteria for Selection.

## ❑ **COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

### ▪ **WEEDING**

Weeding is an integral part of the collection development process. An active and continuous weeding program is essential in maintaining a viable and useful collection. The Library uses **THE CREW METHOD** guidelines for collection evaluation and weeding. Generally, materials will be weeded if they are in poor physical condition or damaged, if they are outdated, if a new edition replaces them, or if there are any titles no longer in demand.

Items discarded are plainly marked and may be donated to the Friends of the Library or other organizations for sale.

### ▪ **REPLACEMENT OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

An item is not automatically replaced when is withdrawn due to loss, wear, or damage. The need for replacement will be judged by the existence of adequate coverage of the subject and demand for the specific title.

## ❑ **REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

The Bloomingdale Public Library subscribes to the provisions of the Library Bill of Rights, (APPENDIX B) and the Freedom to Read Statement (APPENDIX C) as adopted by the American Library Association, and the Freedom to View Statement (APPENDIX D) adopted by the American Film and Video Association. These documents are considered a part of this policy. All individuals have the right to choose which Library materials they will use. However, no one has the right to restrict the freedom of others to read whatever they wish. No book or other material in question is automatically removed from the collection because of an objection to it.

## □ **PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

Persons who have a complaint regarding the content of any Library material should first contact the appropriate Department Head of the Library in which the material is located. The Department Head should listen to the complaint and provide the complainant with a copy of the Library's Material Selection Policy. If, after a discussion with the Department Head regarding the specific material and the Material Selection Policy, the complainant wishes to pursue his or her complaint further, the complaint form attached hereto as Exhibit 'A' and made a part hereof should be given to the complainant for completion. The complainant should be told by the Department Head that when the form is completed, it will be forwarded to the Library Director with a written report from the Department Head and that within thirty (30) days of the date of receipt of the complaint, the Library Director and Department Heads shall meet, review and discuss the complaint. The committee shall determine whether the selection and retention of the material in question fits the criteria for selection contained in this Policy. The committee will provide the complainant with a written response regarding its decision within thirty (30) days after the date of its meeting.

**EXHIBIT A**

**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher or Distributor: \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Request represents: \_\_\_\_\_ Individual  
\_\_\_\_\_ Organization; List Name \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other; List Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you read or viewed the entire work? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, what parts? \_\_\_\_\_

2. To what, in the material, do you object?  
(Please be specific; cite pages or sections)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What good or valuable features do you find in the material?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you believe is the theme of this work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What do you feel might be the result of reading or viewing this material? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you read any reviews of this material? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you think this material would be more appropriate for a different age group?  
Please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What would you like the Library to do about this material? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Can you recommend another material that would convey as valuable a picture and/or  
perspective of the subject treated? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX A

### FREE ACCESS TO LIBRARIES FOR MINORS

#### *An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS*

Library policies and procedures which effectively deny minors equal access to all library resources available to other users violate the *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, “A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.” The “right to use a library” includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities which fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis. Librarians cannot predict what resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual user based on a single criterion such as chronological age, level of education, or legal emancipation.

The selection and development of library resources should not be diluted because of minors having the same access to library resources as adult users. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community, and restricts access for all library users.

Librarians and governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions on access to library resources in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections from parents or anyone else. The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries do not authorize librarians or governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents or legal guardians. Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children—and only their children—to library resources. Parents or legal guardians who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials or facilities, should so advise their children. Librarians and governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Librarians and governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to provide equal access to all library resources for all library users.

Librarians have a professional commitment to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free and equal access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, format, or amount of detail. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Librarians and governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

Adopted June 30, 1972; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, by the ALA Council.

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## APPENDIX B

### 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.  
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,  
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,  
by the ALA Council.

## APPENDIX C

### THE FREEDOM TO READ

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious

thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single

librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no

freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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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 D

### 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.

Endorsed by the ALA Council January 10, 1990