

London Public Library  
Collection Development Policy

**COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**  
**Table of Contents**

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 Purpose of the Collection Development Policy
- 1.2 Purpose of the Library
- 1.3 Library Mission Statement
- 1.4 Library Goals
- 1.5 Clientele to be Served
- 1.6 Intellectual Freedom Statements

2. MATERIALS SELECTION

- 2.1 The Selection Process
- 2.2 Criteria for Selection
- 2.3 Responsibility for Selection
- 2.4 Format of Materials
- 2.5 Limits of the Collection

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Library Cooperation
- 3.2 Interlibrary Loan Policies and Procedures
- 3.3 Gift Donation and Memorial Policy
- 3.4 Weeding and Discarding Policy
- 3.5 Replacement and Duplicates Policy
- 3.6 Public Requests
- 3.7 Reconsideration of Library Materials
- 3.8 Reevaluation of Collection Development Policy

## **General Information:**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Collection Development Policy**

The purpose of the Collection Development Policy is to give library staff and patrons a clear understanding of the criteria involved in the acquisition and management of the library's materials for the fulfillment of its general mission statement. It will also clearly define the library's service area, demographics and specific formats that make up the library's circulating and non-circulating materials.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Library**

The purpose of the library is to provide traditional and contemporary library services, materials and programs to the residents in the London City School District in an unbiased and professional manner.

### **1.3 Library Mission Statement**

The London Public Library provides traditional and contemporary library services to all.

### **1.4 Library Goals**

To remain a vital informational center to the residents of London, OH and its school district

- To provide contemporary and popular materials in a variety of formats according to customer demand, market trends and availability
- To provide a diverse selection of materials and informational resources to meet the general needs of the community's informational needs
- To utilize technologies for library services and programs in accordance with its technology plan
- To expand or add library collections as community needs increase or change.
- To provide a collection of high quality and service through regular inventory, weeding and repairing services
- To evaluate the library's collection development policies and procedures on a bi-annual basis to ensure the quality of workflow, service and product

### **1.5 Clientele to be Served**

The London Public Library is located in London, Ohio which is the county seat of Madison County, primarily a rural area. Its current service area is the London City School District with 2023 statistics showing that 14,421 individuals live within the district's borders.

The library's demographics reveal there are roughly 10,947 registered card holders.

## **1.6 Intellectual Freedom Statement**

The London Public Library adopts, endorses, and is guided by the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and the interpretation of that document including: The Freedom to Read Statement, the Freedom to View Statement, the Statement on Free Access to Libraries for Minors, The Statement on Labeling and Rating Systems; The Statement on Expurgation of Library Materials; and The Statement on Diversity in Collection Development in conjunction with the Ohio Revised Code, Federal laws such as Children's Internet Protection Act, and local guidelines. Copies of the ALA documents mentioned are appended.

The London Public Library offers a collection that is diverse in nature and does not in any way try to support specific ideas, beliefs or viewpoints through its selections. The goal of the library is to have a broad collection of materials while offering the latest releases and contemporary fiction and non-fiction titles. Library cardholders have complete access to all library materials regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. *"Parents and guardians are responsible for their youngster's selection of library materials,"* as stated on each library card. Access to the internet and information online is addressed in the library's *Use of OPLIN and the Internet* policy.

## **Materials Selection II:**

### **2.1 The Selection Process**

In order to ensure that the London Public Library maintains a relevant and consistent collection that reflects its mission statement and the general needs of the community, the library will follow a process of selection. The library recognizes that selection of its materials is a "discerning and interpretive process" based on human understanding, professional resources and community insight. The library's collection is broken up into several sub-collections which are maintained by designated library staff members. These designated staff members will utilize community input, market trends and professional tools to assist in evaluating materials for each sub-collection. The selection of available materials for the library's collection should also follow the guidelines as stated in the library's "goals" as mentioned in section 1.4 of this document.

### **2.2 Criteria for Selection**

Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the selecting of materials for the Library collection and in providing access

to materials through resource sharing. The inclusion of any material in the London Public Library collection does not signify the endorsement or approval of said material by the library staff, administration, or the Board of Trustees, either collectively or individually. Because its ability to purchase and store materials is limited by the size of both the budget and the building, the library has established criteria for the addition and retention of library materials. These criteria may be applied to all formats and include, but are not limited to:

- Relevance to the library's vision, mission, goals, and to the community served
- Educational significance
- Recommendations by professionals
- Public demand
- Insight into human and social conditions
- Availability of material to purchase from suppliers
- Availability of material in other area libraries
- Timeliness or permanent value
- Competence, popularity and reputation of the author and/or publisher
- Cost and availability of funds
- Accuracy
- Representative expression of controversial or minority points of view

An item will not be added to or barred from the collection solely because of:

- An author's race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or political or social views
- A work's depictions or descriptions of violence or sexual activity
- A work's controversial content
- An author or work's endorsement or disapproval by any individual or community group

To accomplish this, selecting librarians rely on a number of professional tools for selection including library and publisher journals, reviews, etc. as guides for inclusion of materials into the collection.

### **2.3 Exclusion of Materials**

No material will be excluded because of race, nationality, disability, age, sexual orientation, political, social or religious views of the originator. By providing free and open access to diverse information and viewpoints, the Library may serve as a cornerstone of the principles of a democratic society. From time-to-time materials may be purchased for the Library that some users might find shocking and/or inappropriate; however, if such materials meet the standards of this Collection Development Policy, the interests and standards of the community and are of relevant value, the Library is justified in purchasing such materials. Disapproval of an item by an individual or group should not be the means by which that item is denied to all individuals or groups.

Library materials are not marked or labeled in any way that indicates approval or disapproval of their contents. Labels or ratings that provide assessments such as "This material contains

language that some may find offensive” are not applied to the item by the Library. Library materials are selected in their entirety and not subject to modification or alteration by the library staff. The responsibility for monitoring a minor’s reading, listening or viewing rests solely with the parent or legal guardian. Selection of library materials is not restricted by the possibility that a child may obtain materials that a parent or guardian consider inappropriate.

### 2.3 Responsibility for Selection

The designated staff for each sub-collection is the *secondary collection developers* (SCD) for the library’s collections. They will be responsible for interpreting, accessing and seeking recommendations, referrals, and reviews on specific titles and passing them onto the library director or library services manager who will then order the materials from the appropriate vendors. The director and the library services manager are the *primary collection developers* (PCD) for the London Public Library. They will oversee the development of all sub-collections to make sure that each collection is being developed in accordance to the Collection Development Policy.

### 2.4 Format of Materials

- **Books:** The London Public Library purchases both non-fiction and fiction titles that cover a broad range of subjects and genres for adults, teens and children. Formats include traditional hardcover, paperback and online digital the Digital Downloads Collaboration. These titles also include reference materials and are subject to meet criteria as defined in the library’s Collection Development Policy. The library does participate in some standing orders of popular materials but primarily selects items through the SCD staff members. Select titles may consist of multiple copies (see Weeding and Duplicates in section 3.4).
- **Periodicals:** The London Public Library subscribes to a broad range of magazines, journals and newspapers for informational and entertaining purposes. Newspapers are selected primarily on locality and popularity. The library only holds two weeks of newspapers before sending them to a recycling process.
- **Audiobooks:** The London Public Library purchases only select popular fiction and non-fiction titles as determined by a PCD. Currently, the library only purchases audiobooks in CD format, and online digital the Digital Downloads Collaboration. The library will only purchase one title per format.
- **Movies:** The London Public Library purchases a broad selection of recreational and educational movies for adults and children based on market trends, pop culture and popularity. These movies are purchased in DVD/Blu-ray formats and may consist of multiple copies (see Weeding and Duplicates in section 3.4). The library will only purchase materials rated G, PG, PG-13, R and Unrated.
- **Music Discs:** The London Public Library purchases a diverse selection of musical titles

in CD. Titles will be based on market trends, pop culture and popularity. The library will only buy musical titles that do not have Parental Advisories Labels. However, an exception may be made under the discretion of a PCD if there is a popular musical title that does not have a clean version available but still adds artistic value to the collection.

- **Large Print:** The London Public Library purchases select popular titles of adult fiction and non-fiction in hardcover or paperback formats based on market trends, pop culture and popularity.
- **Electronic Databases:** The London Public Library subscribes to a variety of online databases in addition to the databases provided by the Ohio Public Library Information Network. Each database must meet a general need that is not already available through the OPLIN selection.

## **2.5 Limits of the Collection**

Though the library strives to select a broad range of materials covering as many subjects, as well as genres and formats as possible, it is bound by space, as well as budgetary restraints. In light of these restrictions the library will continue to evaluate the purpose, feasibility and structure of each collection as community needs or market trends shift in effort to assure that it is providing the best selection of materials available to its community members. Recognizing that the library is unable to hold the endless volume of materials available to patrons, it will actively participate in an interlibrary loaning process to assist in the provision of materials (please see Interlibrary Loan in section 3.2).

## **Other Considerations III:**

### **3.1 Library Cooperation**

The London Public Library recognizes that in order to fulfill its mission statement it must work alongside other organizations on a local, state and in some cases national level. The library will facilitate a general level of cooperation or sharing of its collections through various satellite programs as designated by the Outreach Coordinator and Library Director. The library will also work with local school systems to understand the informational needs of their students for future collection development, as well as temporary collections for specified school assignments and programs. The library will also work with local organizations to recognize specific informational needs that may be provided through its collections and future development.

### **3.2 Interlibrary Loan**

Materials may also be requested from libraries within the CLC (Central Library Consortium), and outside of the CLC through SearchOhio or OhioLINK. The borrowing of items through these consortia agreements is subject to the rules and practices of the lending organization.

### **3.3 Gift Donation and Memorial Policy**

The London Public Library welcomes donations of materials to be added to its collections. All items will be evaluated by the same criteria that new/purchased materials adhere to, including the library's *Donated Materials Policy* for entrance to the library's collections. If a donated item does not meet the criteria or is not viable for the library's collection, it will be donated to the Friends of the London Public Library to be placed in the book sale. Individuals making a donation will be asked to fill out a *Library Donation Form* at which time a price will be issued (by the donor) on the value of each donation. The library also graciously accepts memorial gifts to be added to the collection. Requests for a memorial gift must be handled by the library Director. Once a gift has been accepted by the library, it will issue a memorial plaque to be placed on the inside of the front cover.

### **3.4 Weeding and Discarding Policy**

The library recognizes that weeding plays a vital role in the process of managing library collections. Below is a list of criteria that will be used to assist library staff in evaluating materials during the weeding process. Only staff members designated by the library director can weed the library's collections.

Basic Criteria:

- Item is damaged beyond general repair
- Multiple copies of an item are no longer needed to maintain general circulation
- The information provided in the item is no longer current or accurate
- The item has a low circulation rate
- A collection has been phased out due to format availability or to make room for new emerging collections or formats

### **3.5 Replacement and Duplicates Policy**

The library will only replace a lost or damaged item if the item is deemed vital to the general diversity of the collection and/or if the item still has a high circulation rate. If the item is no longer accurate but the subject matter is vital to a diverse collection, an updated version or alternate item of the same subject matter will be purchased. The library will only purchase up to six copies of the same title for DVD movies and three copies of popular fiction that have a high



circulation rate or holds list. The rate for obtaining additional copies is 1 copy per 10 holds. All other items will only be purchased as single titles.

### **3.6 Public Requests**

The library is open to public requests for specific materials, as long as the request falls into a current library collection. Each request must be submitted by filling out a *Materials Request* form found at the library's service desk. All requests will be subject to the same criteria that all materials must follow to enter the library's collections. Once the item has been reviewed by a PCD or SCD, the individual will be notified of the library's decision to purchase or not to purchase the item. The requesting patron will also be added to the item's holding list if indeed the library has decided to purchase the item.

### **3.7 Reconsideration of Library Materials**

The library follows a thorough process of evaluating library materials to ensure a diverse and contemporary collection that meets the general needs of its stakeholders. It in no way endorses any particular viewpoint or belief as mentioned or perceived by the materials made available in its collections. The library serves a diverse public, and, on occasion, a patron may believe that a specific title or source should not be in the collection. If the patron would like the library to reconsider the title or source, he or she must fill out a "Request for Reconsideration of Material" form. Forms are available at the library service desk. Because items are evaluated as a whole, a title will not be reconsidered unless the patron making the request has read/viewed/heard the entire item. A reconsideration form submitted without the name of the person making the objection will not be considered. The Library Director and/or Library Board will only consider objections to library materials which come from residents of the service area of the London Public Library who hold a current, valid library card.

If the material has been previously reconsidered, it will not be reconsidered again. A single patron may not challenge more than three items in a twelve-month period.

After the form has been received, the Director will, along with staff members directly involved with the acquisition of the item in question, will meet to evaluate the request and the Director will issue a response within 14 days. If the initial response is not accepted by the individual who filed the complaint, the Director's decision may be appealed in writing to the Board of Trustees within thirty (30) days of the date of the Director's written response. The letter should be addressed to: President, Board of Trustees, 20 E First St., London, OH 43140. The board will make a decision and inform the patron in writing, usually following the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board Meeting will be conducted in open session, as required by Ohio law, and the Request for Reconsideration form will be made public. Once the board has reviewed the request and initial response, it will issue a final verdict and all decisions at that point will be finalized.

The title under consideration will remain in the collection throughout the process to support the freedom of other patrons to read, view, or listen.

### **3.8 Reevaluation of Collection Development Policy**

The London Public Library will reevaluate the Collection Development Policy during the month of November every two years or as issues arise. The reevaluation process will be conducted by the Primary Collection Developers.

## Appendix A

### ALA's 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.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

## **Appendix B**

### **ALA's Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement, Free Access to Libraries for Minors, Statement on Labeling and Rating Systems, Statement on Expurgation of Library Materials, and Statement on Diversity in Collection Development**

#### **ALA's 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.

### **ALA's 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.

### **ALA's Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services 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, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that 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, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation. Equitable access to all library resources and services shall not be abridged through restrictive scheduling or use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community, and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, nonprint, or digital format. Constitutionally

protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.<sup>1</sup> Librarians and library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether material is not constitutionally protected.

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize librarians or library governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As *Libraries: An American Value* states, “We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services.” Librarians and library 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 should maintain that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children.

Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve.

have free, equal, and equitable 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 library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

See also *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program and Access to Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials*.

See *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975) "Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors." See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S.503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943);

*AAMA v. Kendrick*,. 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; and July 2, 2008.

## **ALA's Statement on Labeling and Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, the ability for library users to access electronic information using library computers does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library.

### **Labels**

Labels on library materials may be viewpoint-neutral directional aids that save the time of users, or they may be attempts to prejudice or discourage users or restrict their access to materials. When labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes, it is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library materials.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language or themes of the material, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the material, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the material. Such labels may be used to remove materials from open shelves to restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Viewpoint-neutral directional aids facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate materials. The materials are housed on open shelves and are equally accessible to all users, who may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion.

Directional aids can have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling.

## **Rating Systems**

A variety of organizations promulgate rating systems as a means of advising either their members or the general public concerning their opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, Web sites, or other materials. The adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems by the library violates the Library Bill of Rights. Adopting such systems into law may be unconstitutional. If such legislation is passed, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Publishers, industry groups, and distributors sometimes add ratings to material or include them as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse such practices. However, removing or destroying such ratings - if placed there by, or with permission of, the copyright holder - could constitute expurgation (see "Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights").

Some find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging materials as objectionable. However, injustice and ignorance, rather than justice and enlightenment, result from such practices. The American Library Association opposes any efforts that result in closing any path to knowledge.

Adopted July 13, 1951, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990; January 19, 2005

## **ALA's Statement on Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Expurgating library materials is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agents, or its parent institution (if any) when done for the purposes of censorship. Such action stands in violation of Articles I, II, and III of the Library Bill of Rights, which state that "Materials

should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation,” that “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval,” and that “Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.”

The act of expurgation denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work is intended to express. This is censorship. Expurgation based on the premise that certain portions of a work may be harmful to minors is equally a violation of the Library Bill of Rights.

Expurgation without permission from the rights holder may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

The decision of rights holders to alter or expurgate future versions of a work does not impose a duty on librarians to alter or expurgate earlier versions of a work. Librarians should resist such requests in the interest of historical preservation and opposition to censorship. Furthermore, librarians oppose expurgation of resources available through licensed collections. Expurgation of any library resource imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008.

### **ALA’s Statement on Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “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.” A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be

proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library's selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all of the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection's diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 *under previous name* "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 24, 2019

