

## **Wells Public Library Collection Development Policy**

### **I. Collection Goals**

The Wells Public Library is a popular materials library and maintains a varied and up-to-date collection. It attempts to acquire materials of both current and lasting value. Since one library cannot afford all the materials available, it must employ a policy of selectivity.

The goal of the Wells Public Library is to select, organize, preserve, and make freely and easily available to all individuals in the community printed and other materials which will aid them in the pursuit of information, education, research, recreation, culture, and in the creative use of leisure time. The primary goal of collection development is to provide the best possible collection with the financial resources available. The decision to select any item for the collection is based on demand, anticipated need, and the effort to maintain a wide and balanced collection.

The library strives to maintain materials representing all sides of an issue in a neutral, unbiased manner. Selection of materials by the library does not mean endorsement of the contents of views expressed in those materials. The existence of a particular viewpoint in the collection is an expression of the library's policy of intellectual freedom, not an endorsement of that particular point of view. The library provides service to all within the framework of its rules and regulations and does not knowingly discriminate in its material selection regarding race, creed, sex, gender, sexual orientation, occupation or financial position.

The Wells Public Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in the "Library Bill of Rights" and "Freedom to Read Statement" (see Appendix 1), documents issued by the American Library Association. Included in these statements is the commitment to honor the rights of an individual to use the library regardless of age, race, religion, national origin, or social or political views. Accordingly, the staff of the library provides equal service to all Library users. Children and adults are equally free to use the entire library and to borrow all materials in the circulating collection.

### **II. Selection Responsibility**

The ultimate responsibility for materials selection and the development of the library collection rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees. The actual selection of materials is accomplished by professional library staff who are qualified by reason of education, training, and experience.

Library materials are selected after consulting professional review media. Among the selection tools used by librarians are professional library journals, trade journals, subject bibliographies, publishers' promotional materials, and reviews from reputable sources. Librarians should also be aware of materials reviewed in national newspapers and magazines, local publications, the broadcast media, and from reputable sources available via the Internet.

In addition, staff members consult with each other to review the needs of the community as documented in circulation statistics and requests.

### **III. Selection Criteria**

Materials are selected to meet patron needs and reflect a variety of viewpoints and opinions. Criteria for consideration include popular demand, literary merit, enduring value, accuracy, authority, local interest, social significance, importance of subject matter to the collection, timeliness, cost, scarcity of information on the subject, availability elsewhere, and quality and suitability of format. At all times staff selectors should select material that will build a well-rounded collection, which includes varying viewpoints and opinions that will meet supplementary study needs.

**Fiction** – The Library maintains a representative collection of novels and works of fiction to satisfy a wide range of tastes. Ideas of literary merit vary greatly with individuals. Therefore, the Library purchases fiction in many categories.

**Non-Fiction** – The Library attempts to provide a large general collection of reliable materials embracing the broader fields of knowledge. Legal and medical works will be selected to the extent that they are useful to the lay person.

**Juvenile** – Materials are selected to encourage children and families to discover the joy of reading. In order to meet the varied abilities and interests of children, the collection includes materials covering a wide range of knowledge and reading levels.

A Young Adult Collection has been developed for the purpose of meeting the recreational reading and informational needs of the middle school and high school age population. The fiction collection consists primarily of YA fiction from many genres.

Responsibility for the choice of reading material for minors rests with their parents or guardians.

Selection of materials for the library collection is not restricted by the possibility that minors may obtain materials their parents consider inappropriate, nor are children limited to the children's collection.

School libraries serve the curriculum needs of the students. While not duplicating these resources or attempting to follow all the changes in curriculum, the library does recognize the need to provide a wide variety of cultural and recreational reading matter for students and to provide some basic school-related materials for students seeking to complete their assignments outside school hours.

**Media** – The Library recognizes its responsibility to provide access to information, cultural enrichment and recreation through as wide a variety of media as possible. Media is evaluated by the same criteria as printed materials. As new technologies for various age levels are developed, the Library will investigate the appropriateness of new media formats and will acknowledge the need for experimentation.

**Textbooks** – Providing textbooks and curriculum material is generally held to be the responsibility of the schools. Textbooks should be purchased for the collection when they supply the best or only information on a specific subject.

**Requests** – All requests and suggestions will be considered using the selection principles described in this policy. Patrons who wish to request that the library purchase a specific title are invited to complete a "Consideration for Purchase" form available at the library or on the library's website, [www.wellslibrary.org](http://www.wellslibrary.org). If it is decided that the library will not purchase the item, the patron has the option of requesting the item through interlibrary loan. Please refer to our Borrowing Policy for more information on interlibrary loan procedures.

**Labeling Materials** – Labeling and/or special shelving of materials may be used for some collections but will not be used for the purpose of restricting access or pre-judging content.

**Donations and Gifts** – The library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection using the same standard of selection used to decide purchases. For more information please refer to the library's "Gifts Policy" and "Guidelines for Accepting Donations of Materials."

**Self-Published Books** – The library receives numerous requests from out-of-area and local authors to add their books which they have self-published, or published at their own expense. Although this type of publishing is experiencing rapid growth, these books often do not meet the requirements outlined in the above Collection Development Policy to be candidates for the permanent collection. They typically have not received reviews in standard published sources, and may not meet the criteria that the library normally sets for inclusion in its collections. The library wishes to support local authors while maintaining the standards needed in its permanent collections.

**Selection Conditions:**

- Authors must be local residents, or the book must take place in the Wells-Ogunquit area.
- Each book must be approved by the staff member responsible for that area before being accepted for placement in the collection.
- Authors may donate a copy of their books; books will not be purchased unless they have been reviewed in standard sources.
- Self published family histories or other similar genealogical materials will be added to the Reference collection at the discretion of the Reference Librarian and Director.
- Items will rotate out of the collection and may be withdrawn after one year unless they have circulated regularly.

#### **IV. Collection Evaluation and Assessment**

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. The Wells Public Library staff routinely examines the collection and removes materials which are no longer of value. Materials may be withdrawn on the basis of the following:

- Condition - worn, damaged, or soiled items.
- Currency - materials containing obsolete or inaccurate information or materials in an obsolete format.
- Demand - items no longer used.
- Duplicates - One of many copies of a formerly popular title.

Replacement of materials withdrawn or lost is not automatic. The decision to replace is influenced by:

- Availability of copies in the system.
- Popular interest.
- Adequacy of coverage in the subject area.
- Significance in subject area.
- Cost and availability.
- Materials removed are disposed of at the discretion of the staff.

#### **V. Reconsideration of Library Materials**

The Library Board considers all materials selected under this policy to be constitutionally protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. If a patron claims that a particular item is not constitutionally protected, the burden of proof rests with the patron.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the right of individuals to question materials in the library collection. Whenever a patron objects to the presence or absence of any library material, the complaint will be given hearing and consideration. All complaints to staff members will be referred to the Library Director who will share the complaint with the appropriate staff member who will then discuss the matter with the complainant. If not satisfied, the patron will be given a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form to complete. This completed form will be given to the Library Director who will then meet with the professional staff to evaluate the material in question and consider the merits of the completed request form. The professional staff will consider whether the material meets the selection criteria outlined in this policy. A decision will be made regarding whether or not to add or withdraw the material within a reasonable amount of time, with written reasons for the decision conveyed to the patron. If the patron is dissatisfied with the staff's decision or the written reply, he or she may appeal the decision to the Board at a regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board, after receiving public testimony from the patron, other interested parties, and from the Director, will decide whether or not library policies have been followed and whether to add or withdraw the material in question.

Materials subject to complaint shall not be removed from use and circulation pending final action. If a court having jurisdiction over the library decides that any material in the collection is unprotected by the Constitution of the United States, such material will be removed immediately. Material under court consideration will remain available to patrons until a final ruling is made.

#### **Appendices:**

- Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom to Read
- Freedom to View
- Free Access to Libraries for Minors
- Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

#### **Right of Appeal:**

Appeals to this policy may be made according to the "Policy on Appeals of Library Decisions Involving Library Policies."

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees: September 8, 2010  
Revised, August 14, 2013

## **Appendix 1: 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; June 28, 1967; and January 23, 1980, inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.**

## **Appendix II: Freedom to Read**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We therefore affirm these propositions:

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

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

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

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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

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

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

**This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers. Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.**

### **Appendix III: Freedom to View**

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional 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**

#### **Appendix IV: 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 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 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.

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 in the library. 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. 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 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 who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children. 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.

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.

<sup>1</sup>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 [422 U.S. 205, 214] 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 *Tinker vs. Des Moines school dist.*, supra. Cf. *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. vs. Barnette* 319 U.S. 624 (1943)."

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