



95 Harbor Road, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724
www.cshlibrary.org 631.692.6820

BOOK SELECTION POLICY

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LIBRARY

It is the objective of the Cold Spring Harbor Library to provide all residents of the community from pre-school age through adulthood with the best possible collection of books, periodicals and other resource materials insofar as the budget, physical facilities and staff permits. The Library Board of Trustees believes that the freedom to read and reach decisions independent of coercion or censorship of any kind is an important and basic privilege of all the Library's patrons. Therefore, the Cold Spring Harbor Library Board of Trustees endorses the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read statement as adopted by the American Library Association Council. Copies of these statements are attached.

AUTHORITY

The Library Director is responsible to the Library Board of Trustees for policy implementation and for selection and development of the collection. The Library welcomes comment from members of the community on book selection, but ultimate determination of materials to be added to or deleted from the collections rests with the Library Director and the staff.

SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Selection procedures for adult, young adult, and juvenile materials will involve the search for the best that is available, within budget limitations, relying on a variety of selection aids and the considered judgment of the staff.

In selecting materials, the contribution they make to the education of the reader, their aesthetic or inspirational value, and their usability will be considered. Also, the Library will attempt to make a comparison between new materials under consideration and those already published. Many works important in our culture contain isolated elements to which some individuals may object. Our selection will be guided by the value or impact of the work as a whole – the impact of the entire work transcending the specific words, phrases, or incidents of which it is made.

The Library has set up no arbitrary single standard of literary quality. An attempt is made to satisfy a public that varies in education, interests, tastes and reading skills. Great works of literature should be a permanent part of the Library collection. Therefore, a representative selection of books of this caliber should be on the shelves whether or not there is a current demand for this type of reading. Books of wide appeal will be preferred to those of highly specialized or technical nature.

YOUNG ADULT MATERIAL

The guidelines followed in the selection of materials for this age group (12-15) shall adhere to the overall selection policy of the Library, but consider the specific interest, growth and reading abilities of the young adult.

JUVENILE MATERIALS

In selecting material for children, the Library's main objective is to provide a collection of books that satisfies the diverse informational, recreational, and cultural reading needs of children from pre-school age through the sixth grade. We hope this will result in a love of reading and the Library.

TEXTBOOKS

The Cold Spring Harbor School District supplies textbooks for student use within the Library.

INTERLIBRARY LOANS

The Library staff will borrow materials, if available, from other libraries in the county, pursuant to Suffolk Cooperative Library System's procedures, or from the State if the Library's holdings do not meet the specific requirements of the patron.

GIFTS

Materials offered to the Library as gifts may be accepted or rejected by the Library's Director. Acceptance shall be on the basis that the library is free to keep or dispose of such materials as it may seem fit. When determining whether a gift item is to be added to the collection, the same standards are applied that are used in the normal selection of an item for purchase.

EXCLUSIONS

A given piece of material may not be included in the Library's collection because it does not meet the Library's standards for selection in a given area, the Library already has adequate coverage on the subject, budget limitations, or the material in question is too scientific, technical, or specialized for the general readership of the community.

Adopted May 3, 2021

American Library Association'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.

American Library Association'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.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Patrons who would like specific materials in the Library to be reviewed should complete this form. Please return it with a covering letter addressed to:

President, Library Board of Trustees
Cold Spring Harbor Library

AUTHOR _____

TITLE _____

TYPE OF MATERIAL: Hardcover book _____ Paperback _____ Other _____

PUBLISHER (if known) _____ Copyright date _____

Request initiated by _____

Telephone _____ Address _____

Complainant Represents:

_____ himself/herself

_____ (name of organization)

_____ (identify other group)

I. What is objectionable in this book? (please be specific; cite pages)

II. In your opinion, what might be the result of reading this book?

III. For what age group would you recommend this book? _____

IV. What is good about this book? _____

V. Did you read the entire book? _____

VI. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics? _____

VII. What do you believe is the theme of this book? _____

VIII. In your opinion what should the Library do with this book? _____

IX. What book of equal literary quality would you recommend to convey as a valuable picture and perspective of our civilization?

Date _____ Signature of Complainant _____