

## MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

### **Purpose and Scope:**

The Cheshire Public Library seeks to provide free and equal access to information through its shared collection of physical and digital items for all ages. This policy provides information on the selection and evaluation of materials in digital and print formats. It also addresses our collection maintenance, weeding of materials, and gifts to our collection. Our selection criteria focus on meeting the needs of our users and community by offering materials of cultural interest that enrich, educate, and entertain. Our collection is provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. Collection development decisions are rooted in representing diversity in all facets, including socio-economic, religious, political, racial, and ethnic. Some acquisitions may include items that may be unpopular or controversial in nature. The Library's acquisition of a particular item should not be construed as the Library's endorsement of or objection to a particular ideology. Rather, selection is based on capturing a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints and ensuring an inclusive collection.

The Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom adopted by the American Library Association as expressed in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements. No Library material shall be removed, because of origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such material. All Library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Conn. Gen. Stat. §46a-64 (2019).

The Cheshire Public Library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, as well as the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

## **Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials:**

Responsibility for the selection, maintenance, replacement, and weeding of materials rests with the designated professional staff under the overall direction of the Director. The Library's Consortium-level collections may be governed by an additional set of collection criteria. Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides residents with access to the widest array of library and educational materials. The Library Director is ultimately responsible for the selection of materials. Professional staff of the Library, in making selections, does so in a manner based on principle rather than personal opinion. Selection is inclusive rather than exclusive. Variety and balance of viewpoints are sought whenever available. Library materials shall only be excluded for legitimate professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and maintenance policy. Any librarian or staff member who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

## **Selection criteria:**

- Price, format, and availability
- Reviews in professional journals
- Evident popularity and community interest
- Evident need in subject areas
- Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject
- Accuracy of the content
- Authority of the author
- Currency and timeliness of content

**Youth Materials:**

The Youth Services department seeks to meet the needs of children and teens aged birth to 18 by providing materials specific to their educational, recreational, and developmental needs. Selections are made based on the criteria listed above.

**Children's Collection:**

Cheshire Public Library's children's collection (which includes print books, digital books, audiobooks, and DVDs) consists of age-appropriate items for children ages birth through 11 as well as materials on child-rearing for parents and caregivers. Items are age appropriate and intended to help children with early literacy and learning needs.

**Teen Collection:**

Cheshire Public Library's teen collection (which includes print books, digital books, and audiobooks) consists of age-appropriate items for preteens and teens ages 12 through 18. These items provide a transition from children's to adult literature. The collection will also contain special interest topics for adolescents, including, but not limited to, sex education, drug abuse, popular culture, and mental health.

**Digital Collections/Databases:**

The Library has a large selection of electronic materials, including items that are part of our consortium's shared collection. These materials include databases, e-Books, and e-Audiobooks. Wherever possible, the Library makes electronic information available in the Library remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. The Library will make every effort to aid and ensure that the public learns how to use its electronic databases.

Born digital items are those materials created in a digital format. They are distinct from analog items that are subsequently digitized, such as paper manuscripts or photographs. To accept born digital items, the Library addresses:

- Copyright and licensing
- Redaction of personally identifiable information
- Any restrictions on use or circulation
- Maintenance and evolution of accepted formats

Some materials available in the digital collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for children or teens. Only each child and their parent or caregiver can decide what material is suitable for that child to read. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to ensure appropriate access to digital collections. The fact that children may possibly access materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate does not affect the selection of databases and digital platforms.

The Library's consortium-level collections may be governed by an additional set of collection criteria. For information regarding digital items in our shared collection, please see Appendix B.

### **Controversial Materials:**

The Library recognizes that some materials may not be considered appropriate by all patrons. Selections will not be made based upon anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the overall Library patron community.

Some materials in the children's and teen collections might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all youth. Only each child/teen and their parent or caregiver can decide what material is suitable for that child/teen to read. Materials may be reassigned among these sub-collections based on the age appropriateness of the content. Selection of adult material will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

The removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive is prohibited.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no cataloged book or other item will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft.

### **Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

The Library recognizes not all users will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Therefore, some materials selected for the collections may seem controversial and even distasteful to some Library users. It is the right of the individual not to read, view or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of any Library user or users to deny access to Library materials to others. The freedom to choose from a broad range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged. When evaluating library materials the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements from the American Library Association are used as guiding documents.

### **Objections to library materials:**

The Cheshire Public Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider displays, programs, or materials to individuals residing in Cheshire. Please see our [Material Review and Reconsideration Policy](#) for more information.

### **Interlibrary Loan:**

Interlibrary loan is the process by which a library requests materials from another library outside of our consortium. There is no charge to request a search for materials, and the service is available to all current Cheshire residents. The Library will attempt to obtain materials it does not own, and/or does not intend to add to its collection, via interlibrary loan. The Library does not purchase or request textbooks via interlibrary loan.

### **Local Author Collection:**

The library will maintain a local author collection. Items to be included in the collection are subject to the selection criteria listed above.

### **Collection Maintenance:**

The library maintains a schedule of evaluation of Library materials for both our print and digital collections to ensure that items are accurate and relevant. There is an established procedure for librarians to continually review Library and other educational materials within a public library using professionally accepted standards. These include but are not limited to the following criteria:

- Materials relevance
- Materials are dated or obsolete
- Physical condition of the material
- Low circulation
- Availability of duplicates or copies of the material
- Continued demand for the material
- Availability of more recent, age-appropriate, or grade level material

Items withdrawn for reasons of condition, loss, or damage will be considered for replacement.

Efforts will be made to dispose of withdrawn materials as follows:

- sale by the Friends of the Library
- donation to nonprofit organizations that are willing to pick up all materials
- disposal of heavily worn or damaged materials in appropriate waste/recycling receptacles

## Gifts and donations:

Gifts or donations of books, periodicals, recordings, or any other materials, including those from local authors, are accepted only if there are no conditions placed upon their use, and they are found to be appropriate for the Library's collection based on the selection criteria stated in the Materials Selection Policy. Gifts of materials that are not suitable to the collection will be given to the Friends of the Cheshire Public Library for book sale fundraisers or returned to the donor upon request. Library staff are unable to provide appraisals of the value of donated materials.

Monetary contributions to the Cheshire Public Library are accepted.

- Monetary gifts must be submitted for acceptance and appropriation by the Cheshire Town Council.
- Contributions can be made payable to the Cheshire Public Library Gift Fund.

# Appendix A: Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement and The Library Bill of Rights

## 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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

## 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*

## 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: Library Connection Digital Collection Policy and Request for Reconsideration of Materials Policy.

The LCI Shared Downloadable Collection primarily emphasizes:

- **Popular Materials:** The LCI Shared Downloadable Collection provides popular fiction and non-fiction in all formats and for all ages.
- **Lifelong Learning:** The LCI Shared Downloadable Collection provides a non-fiction collection in all formats of timely resources in a variety of subjects for all ages.

### General Criteria

To ensure a balanced collection, the following criteria are used by all selectors.

- Popular interest or demand
- Relation to existing collection and other material on the subject
- Published reviews
- Patron requests
- Date of original publication (not date of digitization)
- Suitability of materials for meeting the needs of the patrons
- Unabridged editions unless not available -- then abridged
- Budget restraints

### Selection Tools

Standard selection tools, for example Library Journal and Booklist, will be used to develop the collection.

### De-selection Criteria

The non-fiction collection will be reviewed once a year for outdated material.

## **Patron Requests**

All patron requests will be considered at individual libraries following normal procedures. LCI is under no obligation to fill any particular request if it does not meet the criteria set out in this policy.

## **Request for Reconsideration of Materials**

The LCI Shared Downloadable Collection supports intellectual freedom and has adopted the following statements as policy: ALA Freedom to Read Statement, ALA Library Bill of Rights, and the “Freedom to View” statement of the American Film and Video Association. A patron questioning materials in the shared collection should contact the Library Director of their home town library, who will give the patron a copy of this policy and review it with them. A library patron who still has questions regarding material in the LCI Shared Downloadable Collection may submit a complaint in writing, on a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form (see appendix), to the Director of their library, who will present it to the Collection Development Team. The Team will review the request for reconsideration at its next scheduled meeting and notify the Director of the library of their decision. The patron may request that the Team’s decision be reviewed by Library Connection’s Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board will review the request for reconsideration and make the final decision. Once a title has been reviewed by the Library Connection Board no further challenges to this title will be considered.