

Muscoda Public Library

Materials Selection and Challenge Policy

Philosophy

The Muscoda Public Library shall attempt, within financial limitations, to provide a living collection of books and other library materials sufficient in number and variety to meet the needs and interests of all residents of the community and surrounding area. The library subscribes to the principle of intellectual freedom and shall exercise rigid impartiality in book selection practice.

Responsibility for Selection

The responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the Library Director. Accountability to the Library Board and the public for the entire collection rests with the Library Director.

Criteria for Selection

The goal of selection is to develop a broad collection that meets the needs of the community. One or more of the following principles is taken into consideration in deciding which materials to purchase for the library:

- Current and anticipated needs of the community
- Accuracy and currency of content
- Contemporary significance
- Historical value
- Price, format, and ease of use
- Favorable reviews in library and popular journals (although an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting an item for which demand is anticipated)
- The relation of the item to the existing collection
- Requests from library customers
- Contribution to diversity or balance
- Availability through other sources
- Inclusion in standard bibliographies or indexes
- Receipt or nomination for major awards or prizes
- Presentation of unique or controversial points of view
- The reputation of the author, artist, or publisher
- Budget

The library welcomes suggestions for purchase from library patrons. The library recognizes an obligation to attempt to obtain requested items either through purchase or interlibrary loan.

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Specific policies for designated areas:

Print Materials - Adult

- Fiction:** Books in English of a wide interest for the general public which include classics from all periods of literature as well as popular reading materials will be acquired. Since it is the right of the library to protect the rights of mature readers, no book will be eliminated from consideration because of language, violence or frank sexual episodes so long as the use of these elements is an integral part of the plot or character.
- Non-Fiction:** Materials will be selected on a wide range of subjects. Every effort will be made to provide accurate, timely information.
- Religion:** Expertly written material which presents the fundamental concepts and beliefs of various religions is found in the collection, as the library endeavors to maintain a well-rounded collection on major religions and their sacred writings.
- Health and medicine:** The Muscoda Public Library acquires standard and popular materials in the areas of health, nutrition, hygiene, diseases, and medicine aimed at the general public.
- Law:** The library may purchase popularly aimed materials dealing with either the philosophy of law or specific areas of law such as taxation, family law and real estate. Laws for the Village of Muscoda and the State of Wisconsin are provided. The budget does not allow for purchase of laws and regulations of the United States or other states.
- Government and economics:** Outright propaganda is avoided, while a balanced collection on American government is encouraged.
- Genealogy:** The collection is limited to how-to materials in the areas of genealogy. The Library will make every attempt to collect materials on the history of Muscoda and Grant County. No family histories will be acquired except through donation by the author.

Print Materials - Young Adult

- The Muscoda Public Library acquires materials of interest to middle to senior high school age that are not of a curricular nature, although they may supplement the curriculum of local schools. These materials are designated separately.

Print Materials - Juvenile

- The Muscoda Public Library acquires materials which are suitable in interest and comprehension to children from preschool to sixth grade that are not of a curricular nature, although they may supplement the curriculum of local schools. An effort is made to purchase materials with the most durable bindings, covers, or packaging. Paperbacks are purchased only when necessary.
- Fiction:** Books in English of a wide interest for the general public which include classics from all periods of literature as well as popular reading materials will be acquired.

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- **Non-fiction:** Materials will be selected on a wide range of subjects. Every effort will be made to provide accurate, timely information. Areas identified with heavy usage for school assignments will be purchased as budget constraints allow.

Print materials in languages other than English

- Materials in languages other than English at all levels will be acquired as the need arises. These materials are intended for English speakers learning other languages, as well as those for whom English is a second language.

Audio Visual Materials

- **Videos/ Films:** The library maintains a collection of video programs of both educational and entertainment nature. The library may maintain film collections in DVD, digital or other formats in both the adult and juvenile collections. Materials acquired for the juvenile collection will be suitable in interest and content to children from preschool to sixth grade. The Library will use the ratings provided by the movie industry as one means of determining the suitability of a title. The juvenile collection will consist of G-rated movies and PG movies whose intended audience is children under 12 or families. The adult collection will consist of PG, PG-13 and R rated movies. NC-17 and X rated titles will not be purchased.
- **Recorded Sound:** The Library will purchase musical recordings for both the adult and juvenile collections. Recordings acquired for the juvenile collection will be suitable in interest and content to children from preschool to sixth grade. Artists or groups which appeal to adults and pre-teenage children will be placed either in the YA category or in the adult collection based on content. Non-musical recordings, which supplement the book collections, are selected according to the general criteria. Recordings are collected as compact disks, digital or other formats.

Interlibrary Loan

Because of limited budget and space, the Library cannot provide all materials that may be requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan may be used to obtain materials for patrons in lieu of purchase. Note that statewide agreements require patrons to wait until an item has been available for six months to request from systems outside of the Southwest Wisconsin Library System.

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Gifts and Donations

The Muscoda Public Library does and will gratefully accept donations of items appropriate for library use with the understanding that they may or may not be added to the collection. Items donated to the Muscoda Public Library must be given unconditionally and will be used or disposed of at the discretion of the Library Director. The same selection criteria shall apply to gifts as to purchased materials.

The following items are not accepted: textbooks, magazines, Readers Digest condensed books, paperbacks released more than 10 years ago, tattered and/or old dirty hardcover books, and old computer equipment including printers.

Library staff cannot and will not assign donation value for tax purposes. Staff can confirm type and quantity, but not value.

Memorial gifts of items or money are also accepted with suitable memorial plates placed in the book, if desired. Specific memorial items can be ordered by the Library Director after consultation with the patron regarding genre or subject matter if the request meets the criteria established in this policy. Item selection will be made by the Library Director if no specific title is requested.

Controversial and/or Challenged Materials

The Muscoda Public Library recognizes that some materials may be controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy.

Parents/legal guardians are solely responsible for reviewing and approving reading selections of minor children and can only decide what is appropriate for their child(ren). Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft. Library staff do not and cannot act in the place of parents.

The Library recognizes that some materials may lead to requests for removal from the collection; therefore, a "*REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS*" (see Appendix) has been developed to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Based on this selection policy, once an item has been approved for purchase, it will not be automatically removed upon request.

Only patrons of the Muscoda Public Library who reside in the Riverdale School District and hold a valid library card in good standing will be allowed to challenge materials. Other parties are not able to challenge materials of this library. Challenges are limited to one per household per year. Only items owned by Muscoda Public Library can be challenged.

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The “*REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS*” must be completed and returned to the Library Director who will review the request in relation to this Materials Selection Policy. The Director will communicate the decision, along with the reasons for it, in writing to the individual who initiated the request. During the review process, the material under consideration will remain in circulation.

If the individual desires further action, they may appeal in writing, requesting a hearing before the Board of Trustees. If a hearing is granted, the individual will be notified of when they may address the Board. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of each presentation at the hearing. The Board will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with stated policies and procedures of the Library. On the basis of this determination, the Board may vote to uphold or override the decision of the Director. Because each request for reconsideration is unique, no timeline for a decision is provided.


The Library Board endorses the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement which are included as an appendix to this policy.

Administration of This Policy

The Library Director is responsible for the administration and interpretation of this policy.

Adoption

This policy has been adopted by action of the Library Board of Trustees on the 26th day of July, 2006, and reaffirmed on the 16th day of December, 2024.



JoAnn Wiederholt, Library Board President

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REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Please attach additional pages if more space is needed.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **ZIP Code:** _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Do you represent yourself or an organization? ☐ Self
☐ Organization: _____

1. What type of resource are you requesting reconsideration of?
☐ Audio Recording ☐ Book ☐ Database
☐ Digital Resource ☐ DVD ☐ Magazine
☐ Newspaper ☐ Other: _____

2. Title of Item: _____

3. Author/Producer: _____

4. Have you read our Collection Development Policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Has the item won any awards? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. What brought this resource to your attention?

7. Have you read, watched, or examined the entire resource? If not, what section(s) did you read/view?

8. What concerns you about this resource? Please summarize your concerns along with references to specific page/chapter numbers.

9. Are there resources you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

10. What action are you requesting the committee consider?

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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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.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>
November 18, 2024

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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

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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.*

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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

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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.

To read the full Freedom to Read Statement, visit
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

