

## **Material Selection Policy**

### **OBJECTIVE**

The Itasca Community Library (ICL) strives to provide outstanding library service and to ensure that qualified personnel provide and maintain expertly selected resources to serve the needs of the community. The library serves all community members regardless of age, background, political or social views. Material selectors maintain an unbiased perspective to guarantee that the collection represents all significant viewpoints. The ICL supports the Library Bill of Rights, ALA Freedom to Read, and the ALA Freedom to View statements (appended to the end of this policy).

### **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The Itasca Community Library (ICL) Material Selection Policy provides the library staff with guidelines for the selection of materials while also informing the library's users of the principles and criteria upon which the library makes decisions regarding the selection and maintenance of the collection.

### **SELECTION OF MATERIAL**

Material selection is shared among a trained and qualified staff within the framework of the policy determined by the Library Board of Trustees.

Materials provided to patrons of all ages are intended to broaden the vision, support recreational reading, encourage and facilitate reading skills, supplement educational needs, stimulate and widen interests, lead to recognition and appreciation of literature, and reflect the diversity of the community. The reading and viewing activity of children is ultimately the responsibility of parents, who guide and oversee their own children's development. Selection of library material will not be limited by the possibility that it may come into the possession of minors. Itasca Community Library does not intrude on that relationship.

The library recognizes that materials selected for the collection may be controversial and that any given item may offend any individual. Selections will be made, not on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to building the collections, and to serving the needs of library users in accordance with the library's stated goals.

#### **A. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

Tools used for selection include: reviews from reputable sources, such as professional journals, trade journals, subject bibliographies, and media promotions. One or more of the following criteria will be considered for items selected for the Itasca Community Library.

- Accuracy, currency, and objectivity
- Attention of the media and public
- Authority or popularity of the author, publisher, or producer
- Clarity and readability
- Comparison to other books owned in the subject area

- Literary merit or artistic value Need or value to the existing collection
- Price
- Quality and suitability of physical format for library use
- Relevance to community needs
- Reviews by popular press and library professional publications
- Scarcity of material on the subject
- Space limitations
- Suitability of content for age level

## **B. LIMITATIONS**

The library does not acquire school textbooks or professional and technically oriented resources.

## **C. FORMATS**

The library maintains a flexible approach towards new material formats, in relation to new forms and styles of expression. Materials in new formats are selected based on the “Criteria for Selection.” Formats no longer in demand may be phased out.

## **COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

Itasca Community Library believes that a high quality library collection must be kept up-to-date by judicious weeding, which removes outdated and worn items, while preserving, and when necessary and possible, replacing, classics and items of lasting value.

The library reviews the collections on an ongoing basis with the goal of maintaining the quality and vitality of library resources. The process of collection management incorporates the use of output measures, circulation reports, database use statistics, and other information of continuous collection evaluation.

Discarded materials become surplus property and may be sold by the library for fund raising purposes or discarded in another manner at the library’s discretion.

## **MATERIALS RECONSIDERATION**

The usage and enjoyment of library materials by users is a matter of individual choice. Responsibility for monitoring the usage of materials by children and adolescents rests with their parents and/or legal guardians. The Itasca Community Library supports freedom and endorses the Freedom to Read (American Library Association) intellectual statement. While a person may reject materials for him/herself and for his/her children, he/she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

The library carefully investigates and considers suggestions from patrons to consider the removal or reclassification of any material in the library collection. Patrons may challenge materials by completing the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form. Please note, the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form and the written response to it

becomes part of the public record. A title will be reviewed only once within a five year period unless the content has undergone major revisions.

### **REPLACEMENT & PATRON SUGGESTIONS**

The ICL does not routinely replace all lost, damaged, or worn items. Replacement of materials is determined on several factors. Some considerations may be the number of copies in the collection, existing coverage of the subject field, contemporary material of greater value, and public demand.

Any Itasca cardholder has the opportunity to suggest the purchase of a title for the library's collection. However, final decision to purchase is at the discretion of the selector based on the material selection criteria outlined above.

### **GIFTS, MEMORIALS & DONATION OF MATERIALS**

ICL accepts monetary contributions toward the purchase of materials. ICL reserves the right to decide the disposition of all gifts received. Gifts accepted for addition to the library's collection become the property of ICL and will be placed where most appropriate. The library does not accept gift subscriptions to magazines or newspapers unless they are a part of the library's "Adopt a Magazine" program. The library reserves the right to utilize gifts as it sees fit and to dispose of gifts which are unsuitable or unneeded in the collection.

When a cash gift is received for the purchase of materials or other resources, whether as a memorial or for any other purpose, the general nature or subject area of the item(s) to be purchased may be specified by the donor. Selection of specific titles will be made in accordance with the needs and selection policy of the library.

ICL welcomes donations of books and most other materials, but it does so with the explicit understanding that such materials will be added to the collection only if they are needed and meets the selection criteria that apply to library purchases. Donations will not be returned to the donor.

Materials not utilized in the library's collection will be transferred to the Friends of the Itasca Community Library, a non-profit organization, for use in their book sales. The proceeds from the Friends of the Library book sales are donated to the library in support of its mission, programs, and to enhance the library's collections.

There may be special circumstances that require the library to suspend acceptance of donations. For that reason, if you are considering making a donation, please check with the library prior to bringing in your materials.

## THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

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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 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

## THE 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.

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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**

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 guarantees 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.

Approved 10/17/17