



## Collection Management Policy

### I. Purpose

This Collection Management Policy (the "Policy") sets the Roeliff Jansen Community Library's policy and procedures governing:

- Selection
- Procurement
- Cataloging
- Evaluation
- Removal

of "Library Resources" as defined in this Policy.

The purpose of this Policy is to position the Library to assure its community, and relevant oversight authorities, that the Library's collection management practices meet the needs of the community served by the Library, uphold the Library's mission, and comply with relevant law and regulations.

### II. Definitions

Because the management of Library Resources by a NY Regents-chartered library is controlled by law, regulation, and Regents' policy, this Policy uses the following precise terms, drawn from those laws and regulations, to define specific concepts critical to orderly and compliant collection management:

**(the) Library:** The Roeliff Jansen Community Library, which is a free association library chartered by the Regents in 2004.

**(the) Charter:** The most recent version of the document that creates the Library, as approved by the Regents.

**Area of Service:** The precise, geographically defined community served by the Library, as described in its Charter and Plan of Service and any contractual or policy arrangements.

**Trustees (or the "Board"):** The members of the Library's governing board, responsible for setting Library policy and hiring the Library Director.

**Library Director:** The professional hired by the Trustees to lead the Library and supervise all other Library employees. The minimum qualifications of a library director are set by 8 NYCRR 90.8, and include educational and continuing education requirements set by 8 NYCRR 90.7.

**Library Resources:** As defined by 8 NYCRR 90.3, "Library Resources" means "the print and nonprint materials owned by the library and any other services provided by the library to the resident borrowers of the Library's Area of Service." In this Policy, Library Resources held by the Library are collectively referred to as the "**Catalog**" or "**Collection Materials**."

**Collection Management:** The overall term for the selection, procurement, cataloging, evaluation, and removal of Library Resources.

**Selection [of Library Resources]:** The process by which Library Resources are chosen by Library staff (see "Selection Criteria" below), based on the Library's budget and through use of vetted materials.

**Selection Criteria:** The criteria determined by the Director and other Library staff, based on the goals and identified community needs in the Library's Long-Range Plan adopted by the Board, which must be met by the Collection.

**Procurement:** The process by which selected Library Resources are purchased. Procurement is governed by a combination of law, regulation, and Library policies, including the Library's Purchasing and Procurement Policy. For certain purchases, it may also be governed by grant terms required by funding sources.

**Cataloging:** The process by which purchased items are formally added into the Library's collection. "Cataloging" includes how selected materials are listed in the ILS and in what section of the Library they are placed (where they are "shelved").

**Evaluation:** The process by which collection materials are periodically reviewed to ensure they remain physically intact, relevant, and meet "community needs" as required by 8 NYCRR 90.2(6).

**Request for Re-Evaluation:** The formal process by which any trustee, Library employee, or individual served by the Library who resides in the Area of Service may request re-evaluation of a Library Resource being included in the Library's Catalog, per the library's Selection Criteria.

**Long-Range Plan:** A community needs-based, board-approved, written long-range plan of service developed by the Library Trustees and staff. As required by 8 NYCRR 90.2, the Library's Long-Range Plan includes the goals and identified community needs that must be met by the Library's Collection.

**Annual Report (to community):** An annual report to the Library's community setting forth the Library's progress in meeting its mission, goals, and objectives, as outlined in the Library's Long-Range Plan. This requirement became law in 2021.

**Annual Report (to Education Department):** An annual report to the State Education Department, required by 8 NYCRR 90.1 and the NY Education Department's Division of Library Development.

**Record Retention Period:** How long different records pertaining to actions under this Collection Management Policy are retained, after which they are purged. As the Library is an association library, the Trustees set this policy.

**Donated Materials:** Books or other materials that are donated to the Library. These items are not immediately added to the Collection; they are evaluated according to the same Selection Criteria that are applied to purchased material. Donated Materials that do not meet the Library's Selection Criteria will be disposed of at the discretion of the Library.

**Accession:** "Accession" is a term not defined by law or regulation in New York, but is used by libraries, museums, and archives to refer to collection development where the origins ("provenance") of the item is relevant. This policy does not address "accession."

### **III. Collection Management**

#### **A. Selection**

The Selection Criteria of the Library, as informed by the Long-Range Plan approved by the Trustees, are attached as Appendix "A."

Selection Criteria are set by the Director.

Selection Criteria are maintained as a schedule to enable ease of amendment and flexibility with respect to evolving community needs.

It is expected, but not required, that Selection Criteria as set forth in Appendix "A" may be updated more frequently than this Policy. Such revision does not require approval by the Board.

**Records management:** records pertaining to Selection of Library Resources are kept for 0 years after no longer needed.

#### **B. Procurement**

The Procurement of selected Library Resources by the Library is governed by the Library's Purchasing and Procurement Policy.

At all times, the Director and the Board distinguish between Selection and Procurement. "Selection" is how Library Materials are chosen; "Procurement" is how they are purchased using Library funds (for example, Donated Materials are not procured).

**Records management:** records pertaining to Procurement of Library Resources are kept for 1 year.

#### **C. Cataloging**

The procedures for Cataloging the Collection of the Library, as informed by the Library's Long-Range Plan, are attached as Appendix "B."

The procedures for Cataloging are set by the Director, as informed by the Long-Range Plan approved by the Trustees, and the Director's familiarity with current relevant standards as set by the Library and the library and information management profession.

The procedures for Cataloging are maintained as a Schedule to enable ease of amendment and flexibility to evolving community needs.

It is expected, but not required, that the procedures for Cataloging may be updated more frequently than this Policy. Such revision does not require approval by the Board.

As required by 8 NYCRR 90.2, the Library provides a circulation system that facilitates access to the Library's Collection as cataloged after selected materials are acquired.

**Records management:** As the final cataloging is set out in the Catalog, records pertaining to the procedures for Cataloging are kept for 0 years. Printed manuscript or published library catalogs are kept permanently; continuously updated library catalogs (such as databases) are kept until updated.

## **D. Evaluation**

### 1. Routine Evaluation

As required by 8 NYCRR 90.2(6), Library Resources in the Library's Collection are routinely evaluated to ensure the Collection meets community needs; to ensure routine evaluation, the Library Director oversees such evaluation per the schedule attached as Appendix "C."

The Director reports to the Board on the routine evaluation of Library Resources not less than annually.

Routine evaluation decisions are often affected through a process referred to as "Weeding." The Library's procedures for Weeding are included in Appendix "C."

**Records management:** records pertaining to Routine Evaluation are kept for 0 years after no longer needed.

### 2. Request for Re-Evaluation

A trustee, employee, or person served by the Library who resides in the Area of Service (a "Request-Maker") may request that the Selection or Cataloging of a Library Resource or Resources be re-considered.

To initiate a Request for Re-Evaluation, the Request-Maker may fill in the "Request for Re-Evaluation" form attached as Schedule "D." **Only the factors listed in the form are a suitable basis for a filing such a request.**

The procedure for removal based on a Request for Re-Evaluation is addressed in Section III.E.3 of this Policy.

Materials shall generally only be subject to Re-Evaluation under this sub-section "2" once every 5 years. For repeat requests within 5 years, unless the Selection Criteria have changed with respect to the subject Materials, the prior determination shall be supplied.

**Records management:** records pertaining to a Request for Re-Evaluation are kept for 6 years. In addition, because such records deal with serious constitutional issues and may have value for future research, the Library shall appraise such records for historical significance prior to disposition.

## **E. Removal**

Per Education Law Section 260, "*prior to the discarding of used or surplus books or other such reading materials by trustees of a chartered public, cooperative or free association library which receives over ten thousand dollars in state aid, the Trustees shall offer to donate such books or materials to a not-for-profit corporation or political subdivision located within the area of the library system or offer to sell such books or materials to the general public.*" Also as required by law, the Trustees shall retain any proceeds received from the sale of such books and materials for the purpose of maintaining and improving library service within the system.

### **1. Removal of damaged or technologically obsolete items**

Upon finding that a Library Resource is too damaged to be useful or has become technologically obsolete to the point where it can no longer function in the manner intended, the item will be removed from the Collection.

**Records management:** records pertaining to Removal of damaged or technologically obsolete items are kept for 0 years.

### **2. Removal based on Routine Evaluation**

Upon finding, after Routine Evaluation, that a Library Resource no longer meets the then-current Selection Criteria (see Appendix "A") of the Library, the item will be removed from the Collection.

**Records management:** records pertaining to Removal based on Routine Evaluation are kept for 0 years.

### **3. Removal based on Request for Re-Evaluation**

If a "Request for Re-Evaluation" form is properly submitted and either the Director, or the Board of Trustees upon appeal, determine that the Library Resource it pertains to should be removed from the Collection, it will be removed from the Collection and the Catalog by the Director (or their designee).

All Requests for Re-Evaluation will be evaluated per the Library's Plan of Service, this Policy, and the following excerpts from the American Library Association's Code of Ethics:

*1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.*

*II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.*

*VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.*

*VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.*

Decisions shall be communicated using the Appendices "E," "F," and "G," with modifications as determined by the issuing authority.

**Records management:** records pertaining to Removal based on Requests for Re-Evaluation are kept for 6 years and may be kept longer based on a determination of operational or historic significance.

#### **IV. Access to This Policy**

To facilitate community understanding of the Library's services, operations, and governance, this Policy and its Appendices shall be posted on the Library's website and a copy shall be provided when a person or authority inquires or raises a concern related to Collection Management.

#### **V. Review and Update of This Policy**

This board-approved written policy for Collection Management shall be reviewed and updated by the Trustees at least once every five years (as required by 8 NYCRR 90.3 (b)(4), OR earlier if required by law, OR if a law, regulation, or policy impacting it changes.

**Approved by the Board of Trustees, November 21, 2023**

#### **Table of Appendices and Authorities**

Appendices	Appendix A: Library's Selection Criteria Appendix B: Library's Cataloging Procedures Appendix C: Library's Routine Evaluation of Collection Materials Schedule & Procedures Appendix D: Library's Request for Re-Evaluation Form and Procedure Appendix E: Template for Director Determination of Request for Re-Evaluation
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	<p>Appendix F: Template for Board Resolution pertaining to Trustees' Determination of Appeal of Request for Re-Evaluation</p> <p>Appendix G: Template for Trustees' Determination of Appeal of Request for Re-Evaluation</p>
<p>Related policies and documents</p>	<p>ALA Library Bill of Rights</p> <p>ALA Freedom to Read Statement</p> <p>ALA Freedom to View Statement</p> <p>ALA Code of Ethics</p> <p>Roeliff Jansen Community Library Purchasing and Procurement Policy</p>
<p>Controlling laws and regulations</p>	<p>New York Education Law Title I, Article 5, Part 2</p> <p>8 NYCRR 90.1, 90.2, and 90.3</p>

## **Appendix “A”**

### **Selection Criteria**

#### **Philosophy**

The Roeliff Jansen Community Library is committed to providing all individuals in the community with carefully selected materials for their informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs.

The Roeliff Jansen Community Library supports the ALA Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements. The Library provides resources to understand various important, complex, and controversial questions, including unpopular and unorthodox positions. The Library recognizes that individuals within the community have diverse interests, backgrounds, cultural heritages, social values, and needs. The Library further recognizes that the Library serves all of the people within the community regardless of age, race, national origin, or political or social views.

The Library strives to maintain materials representing all sides of an issue in a neutral, unbiased manner. Selection of materials by the Library does not mean endorsement of the contents or views expressed in those materials. The existence of a particular viewpoint in the collection is a reflection of the Library’s policy of intellectual freedom, not an endorsement of that particular point of view. Language, situations, or subjects that may be offensive to some community members do not disqualify material that, in its entirety, is judged to be of value. Materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents, and no materials are sequestered, except to protect valuable items from injury or theft. Selection of adult collection materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that the items may be utilized by minors.

The Library does not deny minors access to any materials in the collection. Responsibility for the reading materials of children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. While individuals may reject materials for themselves or their own minor children, they cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

The guidelines established by the American Library Association in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read statement, and Freedom to View statements (appended) are integral to our collection development.

#### **Responsibility for Materials Selection**

The authority and responsibility for the selection of Library materials are delegated by the Library Board to the Library Director. While this responsibility may be shared with other members of the Library staff, the Director has the authority to reject or select any item.

#### **Selection Guidelines**

The main points considered in the selection of materials are:

- Individual merit
- Popular appeal/patron demand
- Local interest and needs
- Suitability of material for patron base
- Educational and informational value
- Existing Library and system holdings
- Cost and budgetary constraints



Standard bibliographies, reviews in professionally recognized periodicals, book lists, and reading lists are a primary source for materials selection.

- Suggestions from patrons are welcome and will be considered using the same criteria as all other selections.
- Materials based on need are added to the collection for the purpose of updating and further developing certain subject areas.
- The Library does not support educational curriculums through the purchase of textbooks.
- No attempt is made to purchase all the works by a certain author.

In purchasing new materials, the Library makes a distinction between those that depict prejudice as an aspect of real life and those that offer derogatory stereotypes as valid representations. The latter are not added to the collection. However, materials that authentically portray a period or way of life are accepted even if stereotyping is included. Materials that portray the prejudices of real or fictional characters are also considered acceptable. Materials recognized as classics are acceptable even though they may contain passages widely viewed as objectionable by current standards.

Children's materials are purchased by the same general principles that govern selection of adult materials.

### **Gifts and Donations**

The Library encourages donations of materials to the Friends bookshop. The Library accepts select gifts of books and other materials after determining if they meet the criteria of this policy and should be added to the collection, with the understanding that the items may later be withdrawn from the collection. For significant donations of large collections, non-traditional materials, and historical materials, the Library Director may seek the advice of the Board. The Library will not accept:

- Textbooks
- Outdated encyclopedias
- Magazines
- Condensed books
- Items that are damaged, malodorous, or moldy

The Library will not assign a financial value to donated materials. However, if requested the Library will make available to donors a receipt for 'x' number of items that can be used for tax purposes.

## **Appendix “B”**

### **Cataloguing Procedure**

The Roeliff Jansen Community Library is a member of the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) and participates in MHLS’s shared catalog. MHLS staff are responsible for creating and maintaining title level records. Member library staff create item-level records for the items in their individual collections.

Library staff enter items into the shared catalog using the MHLS’s Resource Sharing Standards (<https://kb.midhudson.org/resource-sharing-standards/#Data>).

Library staff determine the shelf location and call number for items in the Library’s collection.

- Decisions on placement of items in the adult, YA, J, or E collection take into account reading level and subject matter.
- Fiction is cataloged and shelved by author’s last name
- Nonfiction is cataloged and shelved using Dewey Decimal Classification.
- When an item could fall into more than one classification, staff consider what classification makes most sense for the library’s patrons and would likely result in more frequent circulation.

## **Appendix “C”**

### **Routine Evaluation of Collection Materials Schedule & Procedures**

The Library keeps the collection vital and useful by retaining or replacing essential materials and by removing items that are outdated, damaged, no longer in demand, or unneeded duplicates. Frequency of circulation, community interest, and availability of newer or more valid materials are prime considerations. Items dealing with local history are an exception as are certain classics and award-winning children’s books. Fiction that was once popular but no longer in demand, and non-fiction books that are no longer useful, are withdrawn from the collection.

The professional staff of the Library, under the general direction and supervision of the Library Director, will be solely responsible for the “weeding” of the collection. Staff evaluate the collection on an ongoing basis, removing damaged and outdated items as they come to their attention through routine Library processes. Staff also systematically weed specific sections of the collection on a regular basis, checking circulation statistics and currency of information.

Items removed from the collection may be sold, given away, recycled, discarded, or otherwise disposed of at the discretion of the Library.

## Appendix "D"

### Form to Request Re-Evaluation of Library Resource

This Request for Re-Evaluation is governed by the Library's Collection Management Policy and the Library's current procedures for Selection and Cataloging.

For current copies of these documents, visit <https://www.roejanlibrary.org/library-policies/>.

To initiate a Re-Evaluation of a Library Resource, please fill out the form and follow the instructions below:

NAME	
Address	
Library Card #	
Catalog # of Material of Concern	
Title of Work	
Basis of Concern (select all that apply):	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet current Selection Criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Improperly Cataloged (please note specific issue) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not fall within needs of community
Please include any comments you would like the Library to consider:	Comments:
Date submitting form:	
Signature:	

#### Instructions and process:

Please only list **one work** per form.

Please submit this form by either emailing it to [director@roejanlibrary.org](mailto:director@roejanlibrary.org); mailing it to Roeliff Jansen Community Library, PO Box 669, Hillsdale, NY 12529; or faxing it to 518-325-4105.

Your submission will be reviewed by the Library Director within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt.

You will receive a response in writing that indicates either:

a) your request for Re-Evaluation has been evaluated and no change is required;

OR

b) your request has been evaluated by the Library and the Selection or Cataloging of the item will be changed, which shall be briefly described in the reply.

If the Library determines that no action is needed, and you disagree, you may appeal this determination within fourteen (14) calendar days by submitting a copy of your original Request, and the Director's reply, together with a statement saying "I request an appeal" to the Board of Trustees by mail to President, Board of Trustees, Roeliff Jansen Community Library, PO Box 669, Hillsdale, NY 12529.

The Board of Trustees is an all-volunteer organization that meets no less than 4 times per year. Therefore, any appeal regarding a Request for Re-Evaluation will be finalized within sixty (60) days. Any material under review will remain in circulation until such time as the Library determines it must be removed.

All Requests for Re-Evaluation will be evaluated per the Library's Plan of Service, policies, and the following excerpts from the American Library Association's Code of Ethics.

*I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.*

*II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.*

*VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.*

*VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.*

The Board of Trustees' determination is final.

## Appendix "E"

### Request for Re-Evaluation of Library Resource Form for Notice of Director's determination

Request for Re-Evaluation of Library Resource  
Notice of Director's determination made on [DATE]  
Regarding Request for Re-Evaluation of  
[TITLE, CATALOG NUMBER]  
Submitted on: [DATE]

**RE: Notice of Director's Determination**

Dear [NAME]:

The Roeliff Jansen Community Library received your above-referenced Request for Re-Evaluation on [DATE].

In evaluating your request, I as Library Director have applied the Library's Collection Management Policy, its Long-Range Plan of Service, and the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association.

Based on that criteria, I have determined that [the Library Resource was properly included in the Library's collection] **OR** [the Library Resource was not properly included in the Library's collection, and will be removed/re-cataloged as INSERT].

The Roeliff Jansen Community Library strives to meet the needs of everyone in the community, as required by our Long-Range Plan of Service. If you would like to appeal this determination, you may direct your appeal to the Board of Trustees care of [NAME at ADDRESS].

Sincerely,

[NAME]  
Director,  
Roeliff Jansen Community Library

## Appendix "F"

### Template for Board of Trustees' Resolution pertaining to Trustees' Determination of Appeal of Request for Re-Evaluation

Text of resolution once decision has been reached:

**WHEREAS** the Board timely received an appeal of the Director's decision attached to this resolution from [NAME OF REQUEST-MAKER]; and

**WHEREAS** the Board has evaluated the appeal by applying the factors in the Library's Collection Management Policy, its Long-Range Plan of Service, and the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the appeal is [granted, and the item it pertains to is to be removed by the Director per library policy within 5 business days, and the Board shall notify the Request-Maker of this decision within 5 calendar days] **OR** [denied, and the Board shall notify the Request-Maker of this determination within 5 calendar days] as provided by the Library's Collection Management Policy; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Board re-affirms its commitment to New York State Constitution, the United States Constitution, and the American Library Association Code of Ethics, as adopted by the New York Library Association.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

## Appendix "G"

### Request for Re-Evaluation of Library Resource Notice of Board Determination of Appeal of Decision made on [DATE] Regarding [TITLE, CATALOG NUMBER]

**RE: Notice of Library Board of Trustees' Determination upon Appeal**

Dear [NAME]:

The board of trustees of the Roeliff Jansen Community Library received your above-referenced appeal on [DATE]. On [DATE], the Board met to consider your appeal.

In evaluating your request, the board applied the Library's Collection Management Policy, its Long-Range Plan of Service, and the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association.

Based on that criteria, the board has determined that [the Library Resource was properly included in the Library's collection] **OR** [the Library Resource was not properly included in the Library's collection, and will be removed/re-cataloged].

Thank you for entrusting the board of trustees with your concerns. The Roeliff Jansen Community Library strives to meet the needs of everyone in the community, and this requires careful attention to the needs of all, and the many factors governing selection of library materials.

Your understanding of, and input into, that process is appreciated.

Sincerely,

[NAME]  
President,  
Roeliff Jansen Community Library Board of Trustees

## **ALA 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.**



## ALA 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.**

### **ALA 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:

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.

To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.

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.

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.

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**

## ALA Code of Ethics

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

- I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
- IV. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
- V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
- VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
- VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
- VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.
- IX. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

**Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; January 22, 2008; and June 29, 2021.**