



TORRINGTON LIBRARY

ENGAGING • ENRICHING • EMPOWERING

Collection Development Policy

Philosophy

It is the goal of the Library to provide a balanced physical and digital collection for all ages. The Library's collections are developed and managed to meet the majority of the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the library's service area. (reworded).

While popular demand is a significant basis for selection, many works of scholarship and literature are keystones of modern knowledge and culture but may not necessarily be high demands. It is the Library's policy to select, along with popular demand items, books and other materials of permanent value regardless of whether or not they will be widely used.

The Library has a responsibility to provide books and other materials presenting diverse points of view concerning the problem and issues of our time. However, ownership of library materials does not in any way constitute an endorsement by the Library of the idea and viewpoints expressed within those materials.

Purpose

This policy sets broad guidelines for the selection of books and other library materials that correspond to the library's mission. It may also be used to inform the public and staff about principles upon which selections are made. Basic to the policy are the *Library Bill of Rights* (appendix A) and *Freedom to Read* (appendix B) statement as adopted by the American Library Association.

The policy is directed toward building and maintaining, within the limits imposed by available funds and space, a collection of library materials representing a compressive range of interest, tastes, viewpoints, values and levels of ability. The intent is that the collection be balanced in order to serve the greatest number of library users, and potential library users, within the community.

Types of Materials

The Library provides access to information in a wide variety of print and non-print formats. Presently, the Library's resources include, but are not limited to: books, periodicals, newspaper, pamphlets, government documents, microforms, video and audio books, in currently available formats, computer software, and online database. The Library may also purchase access to information through additional database, information services and online services. In the future, different forms of information resources will be considered as new technologies become available.

General Selection Criteria

Authority and responsibility for selection of books and other materials is delegated by the Library Board of Trustees to the Library Director's designated staff whose knowledge includes familiarity with all types of materials, familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of the existing collections, and awareness of the needs of the community. Suggestions from Library patrons are welcome and are given serious consideration.

The selection of books and other materials is characterized by flexibility, open-mindedness, and responsiveness to the changing needs of the community. Materials are evaluated as complete works and not on the basis of a particular passage or passages. The over-all value of an item, rather than freedom from defects, is the chief criterion in selection.

A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection solely because it represents a particular aspect of life, because of frankness of expression, or because it is controversial. Works which present an honest picture of some problems or aspect of life are not excluded because of coarse language or frankness. Materials, which trade on a taste for sensationalism or pornography, may be added when some specific social, psychological, or literary factor justifies their purchase.

All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are evaluated by the following standards. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any single criterion be decisive.

- Present and potential relevance to community needs.
- Suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience.
- Importance as a document of the times.
- Reputation and/or significance of author, publisher, or producer.
- Positive review in one or more appropriate professional journals.
- Positive critics' and staff members' reviews.
- Contribution of the material toward strengthening the existing collections and/or expanding its scopes.
- Budgetary limitations.
- Local author or illustrator.
- Availability of similar materials through interlibrary loan.
- Format is appropriate to library use and is not easily damaged.
- Insight into human and social condition.
- Author or illustrators is already represented in the collection.
- Relevance to library programs and presentations.
- Value of the material for educational, informational, cultural, and recreational purposes.
- Popularity by library users as sustained by numerous requests.

Materials of a controversial nature will be eligible for inclusion in the collection if one of the above criteria are met.

Selections of books and other library materials are not made on the basis of any anticipation approval or disapproval by specific individuals or groups, but solely on the merits of the works in relation to building the collection and serving the needs and interests of the library users and

the community as a whole. While the Library is aware that one or more persons may take issue with the selection of a specific items, the Library does not have to remove from the collection items purchased in accordance with the criteria specified above, nor will materials be marked in such a way as to indicate approval or disapproval. Items are not separated from the general collections except for purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

Children's Room

The Children's Room provides books and other materials for children of varying ages and abilities from infancy through sixth grade. The primary objective of the collection is to provide books and materials that excite and promote a child's desire to read. The Parent Resource Center provides materials that help parents, teachers and other caregivers to understand and support the physical, emotional and intellectual development and well-being of children.

Juvenile materials are selected with the same care and judgement as adult materials and are kept on open shelves where they are available to all children. Children may borrow materials from the adult collection when limited resources on a topic are available in the Children's Room. Ultimate responsibility for children's reading mater rests with their parents or guardians.

Young Adults

Young Adult books and other materials are those most suited to the abilities and interests of library users from grade 7 through 12. Young Adult materials are selected with the same care and judgement as adult materials.

Relations to Schools

The Library is designed to complement curriculum study. The Library fosters cooperation and coordinated efforts with the schools such as providing the Teacher's toolbox resource accessible through the Library's website. It is not the responsibility of the Library to supply textbooks or curriculum material used in the local schools, nor multiple copies of a title sufficient to meet the simultaneous need of every student in a class.

Local History

The Library maintains a local history collection and will acquire local and state historical materials as space and budget allows.

Gifts

- Gifts shall meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. The Library shall retain unconditional ownership of all donations and shall make the final decision on acceptance, use or disposition.
- The Library cannot give a dollar valuation for gifts of materials, but will provide the donor with a statement verifying the number and type of materials, donated and accepted, upon request. The appraisal of the gift for tax purposes shall be the responsibility of the donor.
- When the library receives a cash gift for the purpose of materials, whether as a memorial or for any other purposes, the general nature of the subject area of the materials to be purchased shall be based upon the wishes of the donor. However, the library staff, in

accordance with the needs and selection policies of the library, shall make the selection of specific titles.

- Special collections and memorial collections shall not be shelved as a separate physical entities and collections shall be accepted only with the donor's understanding that such collections shall be integrated into the general collection. A gift plate may be used for memorial identification.
- Current magazine subscriptions may be accepted with the approval of the Library Director.
- Gift material may be added or withdrawn as deemed necessary and without consulting the original donor.

Interlibrary Cooperation

The Torrington Library, a full member of the State Library system, serves a population with many highly specialized interests. The state inter-library loan systems will be made available to accommodate our patrons' special interests. Because access to specialized and technical materials is available through interlibrary loan, the Library will concentrate its resources on broad subject coverage and aim to meet the needs of larger segments of the population.

Library Programs

The Library provides a wide variety of special programs and events for patrons of all ages. Staff will apply the standards identified in this policy when selecting program and event speakers and topics.

Collection Maintenance

The Library has an obligation to discard books and other materials that are obsolete or in poor condition, as well as duplicate copies of titles no longer in demand. Weeding the collection is the responsibility of the Library staff. Worn out materials are to be replaced if needed. Weeded materials are offered for sale at the Library's Used Book Corner or Annual Book Sale, or are discarded.

As materials become worn, dated, damaged or lost, replacement will be determined by the Library Director or designated staff members who will determine whether or not:

- The item is still available and can be replaced.
- There remains sufficient need to replace the item.
- Updated, newer or revised materials are available to replace them.
- The item has historical value.
- Another lending source could better provide that or a comparable item.

The Library Board will be consulted, at the discretion of the Library Director, regarding the disposition of materials thought to have historical or intrinsic value.

Reconsideration of Materials

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter, Responsibility for the reading material children and adolescent's rests with their parents or legal guardian. While a person may reject materials for themselves or for their children, they cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

Patrons requesting reconsideration of material must complete a *Statement of Concern about Library Resources* (appendix C) form and submit it to the Library Director. The request will be considered by the Library Director, the staff, and the Board of Trustees. The decision, based on the principle in this materials selection policy, will be forwarded to the patron.

The Library Board of Trustees reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

New Policy Adopted May 22, 2024 by Library Trustees

Appendix A: Freedom to Read Statement & The Library Bill of Rights

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 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 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

Appendix B: Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

*Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948;
February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.
Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.*

Appendix C: Statement of Concern about Library Resources

The Torrington Library Board of Trustees has authorized the use of this form. The person who has a concern about a resource in the library's collection may fill it out and return it to the Library Director who will evaluate the original reasons for the purchase. The Library Director will then respond to the person making the objection. If there are any remaining objections, they may be brought to the attention of the Library Board of Trustees.

The freedom to read, along with the freedom to hear and to view, is protected by the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution and shall not be restricted or abridged based on the content or viewpoint expressed in the materials in the Torrington Library collection.

Patron Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Type of Resource:

- Book Movie Audiobook Magazine
- Video Game Digital Resource Newspaper
- Other _____

Title: _____

Author/Editor: _____

Publisher: _____

Date of Publication: _____

Have you examined the entire resource? Yes No

Have you read, listened to or viewed the entire resource? Yes No

If not, what parts have you examined?

What brought this resource to your attention?

To what do you object? Please be as specific as possible, including citations and quotes:

Who would be negatively impacted by this material and how (citations and evidence required):

For what age group would you recommend this resource? _____

Explain the purpose of this material:

What positive qualities does the material present?

How has the material been assessed in professional review sources (include citations)?

Explain how the material fails to meet Intellectual Freedom standards:

What would you replace the material with (include titles and professional reviews of replacements):

Why do you believe you should be able to restrict the reading choices of CT state library community?

Patron Signature _____ Date: _____

*To be considered each form must be signed and filled out in its entirety.

Return to:
Torrington Library
Attention Library Director
12 Daycoeton Place
Torrington, CT 06790