



**Acushnet Public Library  
232 Middle Road  
Acushnet, MA 02743**

## **I. Collection Development Policy**

### **A. The Library's Function**

*The mission of the Acushnet Public Library is to inspire lifelong learning and strengthen the entire community, through its materials, programs and services, in a welcoming space that is open to all.*

To that end, the function of the Acushnet Public Library is to make readily available library materials selected in response to both the diverse recreational and educational needs of all community members; to offer youth an active Library program designed to stress the value of reading and knowledge; and to deliver information to the community. While nonresident use is certainly encouraged, the primary focus of the collection is to meet the needs of the people of Acushnet. It is recognized that those needs are not static, and the Library continually evaluates its collections to ensure that they are responding to the people they serve.

### **B. Purpose of the Policy**

The collection development policy is intended to support the Library's mission statement and outlines general priorities for building and maintaining appropriate collections which implement library objectives.

This policy is intended to: 1) guide selectors in choosing material for the collection; 2) guide the Library Director in expending available funds; 3) inform the public about principles upon which selections are made and 4) provide guidance in the management of library materials. The ability to develop collections is, of course, related to the availability of budget funds, staff and space.

This policy will be reviewed every 5 (five) years or as needed.

## **C. Philosophical Foundations**

Fundamental to this Collection Development Policy is the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement (see Appendix A) adapted by the American Library Association.

## **D. Responsibility**

Collection development and management activities rests with the Library Director, who operates within the policy framework determined by the Library Board of Trustees and who guides all staff in such activities.

## **E. Types of Materials**

This policy applies to all types and formats of items deemed appropriate to aid the Library in its mission. These may include a variety of print and non-print media. These decisions depend on many factors, including cost, storage, availability and applicability to users.

## **F. Library Cooperation**

Recognizing that it is not feasible to be able to purchase and house all items published, the Library will develop and maintain cooperative arrangements (e.g. regional library system, consortia) that will enhance its ability to obtain for individual users through interlibrary loan items not included in its collections because they can no longer be purchased, are too technical, or are otherwise inappropriate for the Library.

To that end, the Acushnet Public Library is a member of the SAILS Library Network and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS).

## **II. Selection Principles**

### **A. General Selection Criteria**

When making decisions, selectors will consider the following criteria:

1. current relevance or interest
2. requests from the public
3. author's significance or reputation
4. importance as a historical record, timeliness or permanence
5. relevance to existing collections; scarcity or abundance of other material or balance of different points of view
6. cultural significance and critical acclaim
7. cost in relation to the individual title and to the overall collection
8. physical quality of format for intended use
9. availability elsewhere through interlibrary loan or other cooperative arrangements

10. literary merit
11. materials of local significance

In general, first priority for items selected will be those with the highest potential of meeting the needs of the largest number of people. Duplication of material will be determined by patron demand, importance of item and budget.

The purchase of controversial items by the library does not constitute endorsement of the views expressed. No title is excluded on the basis of moral, racial, religious or political prejudice.

## **B. Specific Considerations for Minors**

### **1. Children's Materials**

Materials for children are selected using the general criteria outlined above. The goal is to provide recreational and informational materials to broaden the children's areas of knowledge, imagination and interest.

The scope of children's collections will cover preschool through the sixth grade. Materials selection will consider a wide range of genres, interests and reading abilities. Nonfiction subject areas should be covered with as great a depth and breadth as title availability allows. The materials are readily available for all who need them. The library will purchase multiple copies of the summer reading list titles in print and other available formats provided the school district furnishes the list prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> and the budget allows for multiple copy purchasing.

The library recognizes that in its selection for children and young adults, the decision about suitable material cannot be based on age alone. While some books are too mature for some children, they may be ideal for other children of the same age. Only parents or legal guardians can decide what information children can utilize at a specific stage of development. Neither the Library nor anyone else has the right to make these decisions for other people's children.

### **2. Young Adult Materials**

Selected materials are intended to assist the teenaged individual in achieving a successful transition from childhood to adulthood by providing the resources that will encourage intellectual, emotional and social development. Emphasizing contemporary trends in young adult fiction, the collection should also include current information which appeals to the diverse interests of this age group, while considering the varying reading and developmental levels. To fulfill these needs, the collection will inevitably include materials on controversial and sensitive topics. Because of the wide range of maturity and reading levels among individual teens, the suitability of any particular item must be determined on an individual basis by the teen and his/her parent or legal guardian. Since the

resources of the adult collections are readily available and offer a more complete reference capability, the young adult is encouraged to utilize the holdings of the entire library.

Young adult collections will focus on seventh through twelfth grade levels, but they will not be exclusive. The Library will purchase multiple copies of the summer reading list titles in print and other available formats provided the local school districts furnish the lists prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> and the budget allows for multiple copy purchasing.

## **C. Specific Criteria for Selection of Special Formats**

### **1. E-books/audiobooks**

The Library acquires e-books/audiobooks of fiction and non-fiction titles. Criteria for selecting titles are the same as for print materials. Factors that influence selection can include patron demand, the availability of the title and the availability of funds.

### **2. Professional, Technical and Textbook Materials**

The Library does not attempt to be an academic, special or school library. Highly technical, professional or textbook materials are not excluded per se. These types of items are selected and kept if there is a general public demand for them, or if they coincidentally provide coverage in a needed subject area. The Library services students as individual members of the community and by cooperating with community schools, but in no way does it presume to replace the school library.

### **3. Self-published Materials**

In most cases, the Library does not purchase self-published material because it is not reviewed in established review sources, and because the Library is unable to order self-published material through a jobber.

### **4. Americans with Disabilities**

The Library provides or facilitates the selection of materials in special formats that meet the needs of the vision-impaired, the hearing impaired and others whose disabilities impede their ability to make use of other library resources.

### **5. Multimedia**

The Library purchases CDs, DVDs and audiobooks based on its general selection criteria, reviews and patron demand. As with all library materials, parents or legal guardians are ultimately responsible for their child's selection of

materials. The Library does not attempt to act in loco parentis and does not place any restrictions on what card-holding patrons are able to check out.

## **6. Databases and Digital Collections**

The Library purchases databases and interactive multimedia tools, including downloadable and/or streaming content, from a variety of vendors. While general selection criteria guide the Library in purchasing these collections, in many cases, the Library is purchasing access to an array of pre-selected material. Some electronic resources are shared with other Massachusetts libraries and selected based on criteria determined by the Massachusetts Library System.

## **7. Local Government Documents**

The Library collects Acushnet government documents. However, the Library is not a repository for Acushnet government documents. The Library selects those Massachusetts and United States government documents which are most in demand by Acushnet library patrons.

### **III. COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

#### **A. General**

Collection maintenance and evaluation is a continuous activity to keep the collection fresh and relevant. Materials are withdrawn regularly to ensure that all materials meet the general principles of collection development. Materials may be removed from the collection after evaluation because of unnecessary duplication, poor condition, obsolete content or disuse. Space limitations will also be considered. Collections must be purged to make room for new acquisitions and to maintain the integrity of the resources overall.

These guidelines are set forth as an aid to understand the thought process involved in collection management and to establish some ground rules for Library staff involved in these activities. Just because an item meets one or several of the criteria listed below does not necessarily mean that it will be withdrawn. That determination will depend on the many factors outlined in this policy. Staff members engaged in collection management must exercise judgment over all individual items and follow these guidelines only to identify certain possibilities for discarding. Whenever there is any doubt about an item, it should be referred to the Library Director.

The same care, thought and judgment must be exercised in managing library materials as in the selection of them. The following guidelines were adapted from Jeanette Larsen's revised edition of *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* (Austin, TX: Texas State Library & Archives Commission, 2008). Withdrawal of an item may be based on one or several of these considerations, but may also take into account the selection guidelines above.

## **B. Evaluation Guidelines**

1. Removal of superfluous or duplicate volumes. Consider removing (in no particular order);
  - a. unnecessary duplicate titles
  - b. duplicates except for date or place
  - c. inexpensive reprints
  - d. older editions
  - e. highly specialized items when the Library holds more extensive or more up-to-date material on the same subject
  - f. superfluous books on subjects of little interest to the local community
  
2. Evaluation based on poor condition. Consider removing:
  - a. when information is dated
  - b. when material is poorly written
  - c. when information is incorrect
  - d. when improved editions exist
  - e. earlier titles in repetitious fiction series
  
3. Specific classes of books that particularly lend themselves to regular evaluation. Consider removing:
  - a. history material with inaccurate interpretations
  - b. ordinary school dictionaries
  - c. almanacs and yearbooks that have been superseded
  
4. Specific classes of books that have a specific age for evaluation. Consider removing:
  - a. medicine, inventions and business 2 (two) years
  - b. travel books 2 (two) years
  - c. economics and science books after 5 (five) years
  - d. encyclopedias keep current
  - e. almanacs, yearbooks and manuals – keep current
  - f. dictionaries when superseded
  - g. biographical sources when superseded
  - h. directories – keep current
  - i. social science and topical material after 5 (five) years
  - j. fiction best-sellers of ephemeral value after 10 (ten) years

### **C. Process**

Books and materials removed from the collection will be 1) offered to the Friends of the Acushnet Public Library or 2) recycled/discarded/transferred to a book re-seller working in conjunction with the Library.

### **D. Gifts**

Please refer to the Library's Gift/Donation Policy.

### **IV. Request for reconsideration of library materials**

Any person who has concern about material in the library's collection may refer to the Patron Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Policy and may fill out its accompanying form and return it to the Library Director, who will respond in a timely manner.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees, \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix A**

### **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.

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.

### **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.