

**Mary E. Bartlett Memorial Library  
Brentwood, New Hampshire**

**COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND  
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION POLICIES**

**Mission:** The Mary E. Bartlett Memorial Library (the “Library”) is a nonprofit municipal entity of the town of Brentwood, New Hampshire. The Library strives to inform, enrich and empower each person in the community by: promoting access to a vast array of ideas and information, serving as a community resource for lifelong learning, self-improvement, and self-expression, defending an individual’s right to access information in the interest of intellectual freedom, and becoming a place where the community can meet its educational, informational and recreational needs.

**Objectives of the Collection**

The Library collection supports the mission of the Library to be a community resource center providing quality, high-demand materials, programs, information and technology. The Library acquires and makes available materials that inform, educate, entertain and enrich individuals within our community.

The Library is responsible for providing materials to residents and taxpayers of all ages, backgrounds, and opinions. The Library collection taken as a whole will be an unbiased and diverse source of information and materials representing as many viewpoints as possible. Subjects will be covered in sufficient depth and breadth to meet anticipated and expressed individual and community needs.

The Library neither encourages nor discourages any particular viewpoint. No material will be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political or social views of the author. Selection of materials by the Library does not mean endorsement of the contents or the views expressed in those materials.

The Board of Trustees considers reading, listening, and viewing to be individual, private choices. The Board believes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for patrons to exercise their constitutional rights. While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves or their own minor child(ren), the freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening and viewing choices of their own minor child(ren). The Library does not stand in the place of parents (*in loco parentis*).

The Library collection will be organized, labeled/classified, and maintained to help people find the materials they want. Any labeling, sequestering, or alteration of materials because of controversy surrounding the author or the subject matter will not be sanctioned. Access to Library material shall be controlled only to the extent necessary to protect it from damage or theft.

The Board recognizes that Library resources are not unlimited. Selection of materials must be consistent with budget allocations. Resource sharing with other libraries, and electronic and other methods of information

access, are valid and necessary ways of meeting patron needs.

## **Responsibility for Selection**

The responsibility and authority for selection of all print and non-print material rests ultimately with the Library Director. The Director may delegate the selection and weeding of materials in selected areas to other members of the Library staff. Patron requests for specific materials may be considered as long as materials meet the criteria for selection.

The Library encourages public suggestion of items and subjects to be considered for the collection. Serious consideration will be given to purchasing patron-requested materials when these requests meet collection objectives. Remaining requests may be met through resource sharing with other libraries, electronic retrieval, or other means.

## **Selection**

Factors considered when adding specific material to the Library collection include, but are not limited to:

1. Present collection composition
2. Community relevance
3. Individual merit of each item
4. Budget
5. Current or historical significance of author or subject
6. Timeliness
7. Public interest
8. Level of demand
9. Audience for material
10. Diversity of viewpoint
11. Acquisition accessibility

Materials are purchased for a variety of age groups as a reflection of the community and in a variety of formats. Anticipated usefulness or popularity, based on the Library's past reading trends and informational needs, and on national interest or reading preferences (as indicated, for example, by the New York Times, and Book Sense best sellers' lists) will guide collection development.

Material is judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not by a part taken out of context. Material selection may be based on current reviews and professional Library and literary opinion as shown in journals, standard bibliographies, and other publications in the field. Some of these include Booklist, Publisher's Weekly, Book Page and others available through online resources.

The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting or adding a title. The Library Director will consider demand, the need to balance the Library collection in a specific subject area,

books discussed on public media, and requests of Library patrons.

All materials must promise a reasonable correlation between cost and actual or potential value to the community.

Due to limited budget, the Library cannot purchase all materials that are requested. The InterLibrary loan system will be used to obtain materials from other libraries, for the use of Library patrons, for materials that are beyond the scope of our collection.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that full information on issues of public concern may require access to information sources, which exemplify those concerns. Individual items, which in and of themselves may be controversial or offensive to some patrons or staff, may appropriately be selected if their inclusion will contribute to the balance and effectiveness of the Library collection as a whole.

Titles, which are obviously and exclusively written for pornographic or sensational purposes, will not be selected. Potentially objectionable language and vivid descriptions of sex and violence when dealt with realistically within the context of a book, movie, or other work of art, will not be criteria for rejecting the material.

The responsibility for a child's choice in reading materials belongs with the parents and legal guardians of the child. Library materials selection will not be determined by the possibility that materials with controversial content may come into the possession of children.

### **Types of Materials**

*Databases:* The Library subscribes to several general multi-subject databases as well as many subject-specific databases ranging in content from article citations to primary texts. They are intended to supplement or replace print materials. Careful consideration is given to accessibility of the electronic databases both in the Library and remotely. Ease of use for the general public, frequency of updates, community interest, reliability of the database, indexing, amount available of full text documents, and cost are also considered. Existing database subscriptions are reviewed annually for retention based on usage statistics and relative value.

*Local Authors & Resources:* Every attempt is made to acquire titles by local authors that are published by mainstream publishers. Self-published titles (e.g., via print-on-demand, vanity or subsidized presses) are not purchased for the collection unless there is a compelling reason to do so (valuable local content, high local interest). Local authors are welcome to donate their works to the Library.

*Multimedia:* The nature of media and the technical quality of production are factors to be considered in selecting audio, video, electronic and other non-print formats.

*Online resources:* Sites selected from the World Wide Web and linked from the Library's homepage are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials.

*Realia:* As part of the history of Brentwood, realia of the local area or a local personage may be added to the Library collection at the discretion of the Library Director and according to the “Selection Criteria” in this policy.

*Periodicals:* Magazines are collected for informational, recreational and leisure reading. Local interest, appeal, subject matter, demand, and price are considered when adding new titles. Available indexing is considered when determining how long a title is retained. Professional journals are acquired within the Library field. Gift subscriptions are evaluated with the same criteria as purchased subscriptions. These subscriptions are accepted or declined based on the needs of the Library and the judgment of the Library Director.

*Textbooks and academic specific resources:* The Library will not attempt to furnish materials needed for formal courses of study offered by public or private schools. The Public Library has materials for self-study, but it is not primarily designed to furnish reading required for academic study.

### **Collection Areas:**

*Fiction:* The fiction collection includes standard, classic, contemporary, popular and bestselling fiction. Other genres include romance, science fiction, fantasy, western and mysteries. Formats include hard cover, paperback, and audio. The collection reflects the recreational interests of our local readers. Multiple copies may be purchased when there is demand. Patron requests are encouraged and strongly considered.

*Nonfiction:* General interest, consumer-oriented nonfiction titles are collected to satisfy the informational and educational needs of our readers. Long standing topics of interest as well as timely topics and local interest topics are primary candidates for purchase. Primary consideration will be given to those topics which will be of interest and of use to the general public. Priority in selection is given to those materials which reflect ease in usage, have an index and are current. Patron requests are encouraged and strongly considered.

*Reference Collection:* Books which support the routine informational needs of the community are considered for purchase. Those selected have been evaluated for their ease of use, indexing, organization, style, currency, authority, accuracy, impartiality, scope, depth of coverage, relevance, arrangement and cost. A percentage of the reference collection is available for circulation. These titles have been determined to be of interest to a patron to use at home. Titles which comprise a reference set or titles which have an especially high cost are excluded from the Circulating Reference collection.

### **Donations**

The Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that it will evaluate them in accordance with the same criteria applied to purchased materials. Those that do not conform to the general selection criteria are generally not added to the collection. These items are in turn placed in the Library book sale or returned to the donor. The Library Director makes the final decision about whether or not to add a gift/donation to the Library collection. Monetary gifts may be accepted and expended following a public hearing of the Library Board of Trustees and purchases will be made based on this Collection Development

Policy and/or restrictions placed by the donor. The Library will adhere to the requirements of RSA 202-A:4-c and RSA 202-A:4-d with respect to the protocol and public hearing(s) mandated by law. Under 202-A:4-c, III (as revised effective August 29, 2005) the Library Board of Trustees has established up to \$5,000 (the maximum permitted) as the amount which may be accepted without a prior public hearing as to the action to be taken.

### **Withdrawal of Material**

Systematic removal of materials deemed no longer useful or relevant to the collection is essential in maintaining the purposes, quality, and browsability of resources. Weeding is as important as the original selection, and the same criteria are applied. Materials withdrawn from the collection generally are either too worn for continued use or repair, outdated (particularly in rapidly changing fields), or no longer in active use due to changing user interests. Materials withdrawn from the collection are placed in the Library's annual book sale. Unsold materials from the book sale may be given away for charitable purposes or recycled if no other options are available.

### **Request for Reconsideration Procedure**

The Library selects materials based on the criteria specified within this policy. The Library does not advocate particular views or beliefs but attempts to provide free access of a well-balanced collection of topics, age levels and opinions to all members of the community. Each individual has the freedom and responsibility for making choices about what to read. No labels will be assigned to materials beyond those indicating genre.

Should a Brentwood community member or a Library cardholder object to a particular item owned by the Library, the challenger will be offered the opportunity to complete a "Request for Reconsideration of Materials or Programs" form to be submitted to the Library Director. The request shall be reviewed by the Library Director and shall be brought before the Board of Trustees. The material will be evaluated based on the complaint. The Board of Trustees will issue a written decision to the challenger.

Persons still wishing to express concerns to the Board about materials in the collection will be heard during the next regularly scheduled meeting under the agenda item, "Public Input", or at another time designated by the Board for public expression. In the event of an appeal, the decision of the Library Board of Trustees is final.

The Library Board of Trustees endorses the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read Statement, and The Freedom to View Statement. See full text of these documents in the following Appendices.

This policy has been established by the Board of Trustees and is subject to periodic review and/or revision at the discretion of the Board.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees 01/10/2022
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## **APPENDIX A**

### **THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (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.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (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.

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

*A Joint Statement by:*

American Library Association  
Association of American Publishers

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses

The Children's Book Council

Freedom to Read Foundation

National Association of College Stores

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Council of Teachers of English

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

## **APPENDIX C**

### **THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (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:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

**Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council**