**Grainger County Media Specialists’**

**Handbook of Procedures**

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**LIBRARY MEDIA SELECTION POLICY FOR GRAINGER COUNTY SCHOOLS**

**PHILOSOPHY**

The school library media center implements classroom activity and is an integral part of the curriculum paralleling it at all points in all departments. The center exists primarily for educational purposes. It offers enrichment for the students and resource materials for the faculty. Its materials are selected from all forms of media available for the interest vocabulary, maturity, and ability levels of all students within the school served.

The school library media center provides additional materials to attract students to reading, viewing, and listening as sources of pleasure and recreation over and above needed subject content.

**GENERAL POLICY**

The legal responsibility for materials in school library media centers rests with the School Board. Responsibility for the final selection shall be delegated to professionally trained librarians who know the course of study, the methods of teaching and the individual differences of the pupils in the schools for which the materials are provided, such selection to be in accordance with the statement of specific policy given below. The selection of school library media shall be in accordance with the following objectives:

1. To enrich the curriculum
2. To further the development of youth intellectually, emotionally, culturally, socially, and

Spiritually

The School Board subscribes in principle to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the American Association of School Librarians’ School Library Bill of Rights, a copy of which is appended to and made a part of this policy.

**PROFESSIONAL DUTIES**

“School library information centers shall create an environment that allows efficient access to both print and electronic resources. Schools must be organized to allow the library program to operate a flexible schedule that allows students and teachers to access resources at the point of need.” (TRR 0520-1-3-.07 [1.b]

All school library information centers shall remain closed at the beginning of the school year for a time period adequate to prepare for the upcoming school year. Such time is needed for, but not limited to, cleaning and sending equipment to the classroom, sorting summer mail, unpacking, inspecting, and processing new materials which have arrived during the summer, preparing the facility for the new school year, and planning with teachers. The last two weeks of the school year will be reserved for the librarian information specialist to conduct inventory, prepare requisitions for purchase, inventory reports, and end-of-year reports.

All library information specialists and paraprofessionals shall be permitted at least one period a day for performing professional duties.

**GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS**

Instructional materials selection shall be a cooperative continuing process in which administrators, teachers, librarians, and students should participate with the final selection left to the librarians. The basic factors influencing selection shall be the curriculum, the reading interests, abilities, and backgrounds of the students using the centers, and the quality and accuracy of available materials.

            In developing the collection, the following factors relating to the needs of the individual school should be considered:

* curriculum needs
* teaching styles
* existing collection (age and strength)
* student interests, needs, and abilities
* networking arrangements, current technology, and future technology plans
* community characteristics (what is acceptable in one community may not be acceptable in another)
* budget allotments

Recommended lists shall be consulted in the selection of materials, but selection is not limited to their listings. Some tools are *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *Hornbook*, “Booklist”, and Wilson Catalog.

Additional suggestions will come from: visits to book exhibits and displays; examination of bookstore stock, publishers, samples, reading lists from other school systems, texts and courses of study approved for use within the local system; teachers, students, Parent Teacher Associations, other education organizations, and individuals of the community. All suggestions must be evaluated with special care according to the criteria set forth in paragraph one (1) above.

Systematic weeding is a form of selection. The School Board also delegates to the librarians the responsibility for regularly evaluating the library media collection and for removing materials which have become outdated, too worn or damaged to repair efficiently, or which no longer meet the criteria set forth above. The advice of teaches in specific subject areas should be sought. The method of disposal shall be left to the discretion of the librarian after marks of ownership have been appropriately voided.

No material shall be excluded because of the race, nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer, or of its style and language.

1. Every effort will be made to select materials that present all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times, international, national, and local material of sound factual authority shall not be prescribed or removed from the media center.
2. Material containing realistic passages are not excluded if the dominant these contributes positively to an understanding of life or the portrayal of a character.

The school media center considers the child’s spiritual development the primary responsibility of the home and the Church but with the realization that the spiritual development of a person is all important to the individual, the school media center supplies general information on religious subject. Material on the customs, traditions and outstanding persons of religious faiths are occasionally purchased.

All gift material shall be accepted with the distinct understanding that it may be used in accordance with the decision of the librarian in consultation with the faculty. Materials that obviously would not be acceptable shall be refused outright. It may be suggested to prospective donors that cash donations are more helpful in most instances than books chosen without relation to the school media center collection. A list of desired materials or of authors may also be supplied to direct choices. Gift material shall be acknowledge and credit given in library records.

The principles of the freedom to read and of the professional responsibility of the staff shall be defended in order to maintain the school’s responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

1. The final decision for controversial reading matter shall rest with the School Board after following the procedures for handling objectionable materials set forth below.
2. No parent or group of parents should have the right to determine the reading matter for students other than their own children.
3. The School Board does, however, recognize the right of an individual parent to request that his child not have to read a given book provided a written request is made to the appropriate building principal.

**PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING OBJECTIONABLE MATERIAL**

When the suitability of a particular material is questioned, the following procedure should be applied:

1. The person receiving the complaint should be courteous but make no commitments.
2. The complainant should be invited to visit the school principal, there to receive a copy of a Request for Reconsideration form.
3. The complainant should return the completed form for reconsideration to the school principal.
4. The material in question shall be reviewed by a Media Review Committee composed of:

* Director of Schools
* Building Principal
* School’s librarian
* Teacher from the school in the questioned subject area
* One person from the school community appointed by the principal
* One student appointed by the principal, if the situation involves grades 5-12.

The Materials Review Committee shall consider the material with the specific objections in mind. The report of this committee shall be completed within 14 school days and submitted directly to the Director of Schools who will in turn submit it for approval to the School Board. The Decision of the Board shall be sent to the complainant and the librarian of the school in question and the committee’s report and the action of the Board shall be sent to all schools in the system. No material shall be removed from use until the School Board has made a final decision.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO MEDIA REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Keep in mind the principles of the freedom to learn and to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual material. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.

Study thoroughly all materials referred to you and read available reviews. The general acceptance of the material should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and local holdings in other schools. Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other, and the opinions based on the material as a whole.

Your report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, will be presented to the Director of Schools who will forward it to the School Board for action.

**MAINTENANCE OF MEDIA AND EQUIPMENT**

The basis of a good audiovisual program is maintenance.  Equipment in the library information center should be recorded on an [inventory](http://www.cms.acs.ac/Media/inventory.htm).

Once an accurate inventory has been established, a card file or notebook could be set up. This file could contain a card for each item of equipment listing all relevant information. In addition, this card could serve as a record of cleaning, lamp changes, minor adjustments, repairs, and service checks.

If the equipment cannot be repaired by the media specialist he/she file a work order through the Grainger County Schools website. Equipment should be marked with a repair tag. If the equipment is beyond repair the library media specialist should discard the equipment after consulting with his/her administrator.

            The primary task required in properly maintaining audiovisual materials and equipment is cleaning the item. Needed supplies are available from commercial supply houses as well as distributors of audiovisual equipment and supplies. Ideally, equipment should be cleaned at least once a year.

**USE OF COMPUTER RESOURCES**

The library information center provides access to computer equipment, programs, databases, and the Internet for informational and educational purposes. These are collectively known as “computer resources.” Students, teachers, administrators and staff are expected to use these resources correctly as outlined in the Grainger County Board of Education’s Acceptable Use policy statements.

Before using the library or school computers, all students or students’ parents/guardians are required to sign the Acceptable Use Policy by which the user signifies his/her understanding of the rules and policies governing the use of computers in the educational setting in Grainger County schools.

**LIBRARY SKILLS AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

            The instructional program is conducted at two levels, formal and informal.  Informal Instruction is the spontaneous teaching that occurs when answering an individual student’s request, which might include supplying directions, assistance in locating reference materials, or giving a brief impromptu book talk.  Informal instruction is certainly the most valuable type because it directly satisfies an individual student’s need.  The problem with informal instruction is that it is time-consuming and repetitious.

            Formal instruction is the presentation of preplanned lessons to a group of students.  The presentation should include unit goals, effective presentation of material to be learned, and the opportunity for feedback and evaluation.

**INSTRUCTIONAL LITERACY STANDARDS**

The State of Tennessee currently has no adopted standards for library information centers. The library information specialists of Grainger County have, therefore, adopted the nine information literacy standards for student learning as set forth by the American Library Association.

**Information Literacy**

**Standard 1: The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively.**

Indicator 1: Recognizes the need for information

Indicator 2: Recognizes that accurate and comprehensive information is the basis for intelligent decision making.

Indicator 3: Formulates questions based on information needs

Indicator 4: Identifies a variety of potential sources of information

Indicator 5: Develops and uses successful strategies for locating information

**Standard 2: The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently**

Indicator 1: Determines accuracy, relevance, and comprehensiveness

Indicator 2: Distinguished among fact, point of view, and opinion

Indicator 3: Identifies inaccurate and misleading information

Indicator 4: Selects information appropriate to the problem or question at hand

**Standard 3: The student who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively.**

Indicator 1: Organizes information for practical application

Indicator 2: Integrates new information into one’s own knowledge

Indicator 3: Applies information in critical thinking and problem solving

Indicator 4: Produces and communicates information and ideas in appropriate formats

**Independent Learning**

**Standard 4: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and pursues information related to personal interests.**

Indicator 1: Seeks information related to various dimensions of personal well-being, such as career interests, community involvement, health matters, and recreational pursuits

Indicator 2: Designs, develops, and evaluates information products and solutions related to personal interests

**Standard 5: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.**

Indicator 1: Is a competent and self-motivated reader

Indicator 2: Derives meaning from information presented creatively in a variety of formats

Indicator 3: Develops creative products in a variety of formats

**Standard 6: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.**

Indicator 1: Assesses the quality of the process and products of personal information seeking

Indicator 2: Devises strategies for revising, improving, and updating self-generated knowledge

**Social Responsibility**

**Standard 7: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.**

Indicator 1: Seeks information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures

Indicator 2: Respects the principle of equitable access to information

**Standard 8: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and practices ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.**

Indicator 1: Respects the principles of intellectual freedom

Indicator 2: Respects intellectual property rights

Indicator 3: Uses information technology responsibly

**Standard 9: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.**

Indicator 1: Shares knowledge and information with others

Indicator 2: Respects others’ ideas and backgrounds and acknowledges their contributions

Indicator 3: Collaborates with others, both in person and through technologies, to identify information problems and to seek their solutions

Indicator 4: Collaborates with others, both in person and through technologies, to design, develop, and evaluate information products and solutions

Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning. Chicago: American Library Association, 1998.

**MANAGEMENT**

**Scheduling**

            Traditionally, two methods of scheduling have been used throughout the county.  Elementary schools have utilized a fixed schedule, in which classes are assigned a particular library time on a periodic basis.  This schedule allows opportunity for continuity in library instruction needed in the lower grades.  Time for individual use by teachers and students should also be provided.

            In the secondary schools, teachers and students are scheduled in the library on a flexible or as-needs-demands basis.  This promotes cooperative planning between teachers and the media staff, and achieves the goal of making media center instruction an integrated, cohesive part of the school’s curriculum.  A plan book is kept for scheduling purposes

            Each of the county school’s informational centers open each day to provide students and teachers some time to use the facilities before the official beginning of the regular school day. Most centers close at the end of the regularly scheduled class day.

**Circulation**

Objectives:

* To facilitate the use of materials and equipment
* To insure the accessibility of materials and equipment to the users

Factors to consider in establishing a circulation system:

* Age and experience of users
* Responsibility and developmental level of user
* Possible damage to media
* Expensive or irreplaceable media
* Special purpose materials

Policies:

Each library information center should establish a written policy and obtain approval from the school administration. Inform users of the policy through handbooks and orientations. All students and staff should be informed about loan privileges, procedures, and responsibilities at the beginning of each school year.

The policy should be flexible based on the needs of the individual school but should include:

1. Hours of operation

2. Length of circulation of various materials. This could depend on the size of the collection, format of the materials, and the demand placed on the collection.

a. Books: Consider one (5 school days) or two weeks (10 school days)

b. Reference and reserve materials: If you wish to check them out,

the circulation period could be limited to overnight use or only one class period

c. Audiovisual materials and equipment: Usually limited to in-school use and can only be checked out by a faculty member who assumes responsibility until the item is returned.

d. Periodicals: If you wish to check them out, depending on demand, could circulate overnight, one class period, or even a week. Be consistent.

**Why materials are lost**

* The library is used for non-library activities, including after school hours usage
* Rules and regulations may be considered too rigid by users
* Time consuming and complicated circulation system
* Teachers do not notify the library information specialist of materials in demand
* Not enough time allowed for users to check out materials
* “Accidental” borrowing
* Atmosphere too relaxed
* Attempting to escape the need for renewal and fine paying
* Student withdrawal, transfer, or drop outs
* Summer visitors

**Suggestions to prevent the loss of materials**

* Circulation desk should be located near the exit
* Could station someone at the door to check students as they leave
* Work to teach students the good habits of library citizenship
* Keep rules simple and to a minimum
* Be fair and consistent
* Have a copy machine available (charge appropriately to cover cost)
* Work diligently with your guidance department to be sure no transcripts or records are sent for a student who has withdrawn, dropped out, or transferred to or graduated to another school. (Tennessee Administrative Rules, Rule 0520-1-3-.03(13) Withholding of Student Grades for Debts Owed to the School. (a)  Local education agencies are authorized to withhold all grade cards, diplomas, certificates of progress or transcripts of a student who has taken property which belongs to a local education agency, or has incurred a debt to a school, until such student makes restitution in full.) (Fines imposed on all students for late-returned library books; parking or other traffic fines imposed for abuse of parking privileges on school property; or reasonable charges for lost or destroyed textbooks, library books, workbooks, or any other property of the school, )

State Board Rules and Regs. 0520-1-3-.03  Part 14 d.

**Student Withdrawal**

Each student in Grainger County Schools will check out using an approved form from classes at  the end of the year and when they transfer to another school within the system or leave the system (this includes graduation).  This form will indicate library materials and fines which the student still owes.

        In accordance with Tennessee State Law, the records of that student will be held and not forwarded to another school until library debts are cleared. Tennessee State Law states that library books are the property of the state of Tennessee and library fines are accrued debts and not subject to fee waivers.  Students owing books/fines lose credits for classes until the debt is cleared, at which time the credits will be reinstated.

      When students withdraw from the school during the year and if no form is already used, the librarian may suggest the office have a check-out form or use the checkout form on the following page. A copy of this form can be filed at the school and a copy placed in the permanent record until the materials are returned or paid for. If the student stays in the school system, the information will be given to the Information Specialist in the new school in an attempt to recover lost material

|  |
| --- |
| Name of School \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Student’s Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Teacher \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Book/s  Periodicals \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Other Media \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Amount owed for fines or lost books:  $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    This student is cleared at the Media Center.  Signature of Librarian \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**APPENDIX A**

**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

School \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Material: Book Periodical Pamphlet Film Filmstrip Cassette Video DVD Other (please circle one or write the type of material) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Publisher or Producer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The following questions are to be answered after the complainant has read, viewed, or listened to the school library material in its entirety. If sufficient space is not provided, attach additional sheets. Please sign your name to each additional attachment.

1. Did you read the entire book?
2. To what in the material do you object? Please be specific.
3. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this material?
4. What do you feel might be the result of a student using this material?
5. For what age group would you recommend this material?
6. Is there anything good in this material? Please comment.
7. Please recommend other school library material of the same subject and format.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Complainant Date

**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.

Adopted June 18, 1948.  
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,  
inclusion of “age” reaffirmed January 23, 1996,  
by the ALA Council. <http://www.ala.org/work/freedom/lbr.html#rights>

**APPENDIX C**

**FREEDOM TO READ**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label “controversial” views, to distribute lists of “objectionable” books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens 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 citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

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 need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

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 or unpopular with 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.

1. *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.

1. *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.

1. *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.

1. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it 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 the citizen. 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.

1. *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.*

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.

1. *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 citizens 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; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

A Joint Statement by:  
[American Library Association](http://www.ala.org/) and  
[Association of American Publishers](http://www.publishers.org/)