

Materials Selection Policy

This Library Material Selection Policy for Calvert Library has been based upon the work of a tri-county (Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Libraries) committee appointed by the Boards of Library Trustees, which included representation of both board and staff.

The content of this policy has been influenced by the American Library Association's Bill of Rights as well as the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements which are appended to this policy.

Any library material selected in accordance with this policy shall be held to be selected by the Board of Library Trustees.

Approved by Board of Library Trustees: May 18, 1982

Reaffirmed: February 15, 1995

Updated: September 12, 2017

I. Library Objective

The overall objective of the public library is to provide library resources and services necessary to meet the educational, recreational, and informational needs of the public in order to promote the communication of ideas, an enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives.

II. Responsibility for Selection

Final authority for the determination of the policies in this document is vested in the library's Board of Trustees. The authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials is delegated by the Board to the Library Director, and under his/her direction, to the staff who are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience.

Advice of specialists in the community is requested in fields in which staff members do not have sufficient expertise. Suggestions from readers are welcome and are given serious consideration within the general criteria for selection. The final decision for purchase rests with the library.

The responsibility for the use of library materials by children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians.

III. Criteria for Selection

The evaluation of materials is characterized by flexibility and a responsiveness to the changing needs of the citizens in Calvert County. These changing needs require that materials be evaluated initially and on a continuing basis. As a result, materials, which may not have been recommended for purchase originally, may, in fact, later be purchased. Materials are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular passage or passages. A work will not be excluded from the library's collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because of frankness of expression. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children and adolescents. Materials selected primarily for children and adolescents will be marked accordingly.

General Criteria for Selection:

1. Availability and suitability of the material's format.
2. Suitability of the subject, style, and reading level for the intended audience.
3. Attention given by critics, reviewers, professional material selection aids and the public.
4. Reputation of the author, publisher, or producer.
5. Quality of design and illustration.
6. Relevance to the present and potential needs of the community.
7. Demand for the material.
8. Relationship to existing materials in the collection on the same subject.
9. Availability and accessibility of the same material in the State Library Network.

Purchase of those materials that meet one or more of the above criteria may be limited due to budget constraints.

IV. Collection Maintenance

Discarding

The discarding of materials is selection in reverse. Systematic withdrawal of materials which are no longer useful in maintaining an active, accurate, current collection is necessary. Library materials are discarded for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Irreparable damage
2. Obsolescence
3. Insufficient use
4. Lack of space available for housing materials

Replacement

Lost, damaged and worn-out materials are considered for replacement based on the following three factors:

1. Existence of adequate coverage of the subject in the library collection
2. Public demand for the specific title
3. Availability of the specific title

Gifts

Gifts of books and other materials are accepted with the understanding that they may be used in the collection or disposed of according to the needs of the library. New titles acquired in this manner are subject to the basic standards of selection. Replacements and duplicate copies are added to the collection if needed. The costs of processing and the availability of shelving space are also factors in

determining the acceptance of gifts. The library does not provide evaluations of gifts for tax deduction or other purposes

V. Complaints about Library Materials

Materials representing various points of view are acquired. Where there are differing opinions or theories, the library will provide materials on all view points if they conform to the general criteria for selection. No material will be excluded because of the race, nationality, sexual orientation, religious or political views of the writer. The library recognizes the diversity of community needs and interests and that the choice of library materials by a user is an individual matter. While one person may reject materials for himself/herself, he/she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to materials by others. Responsibility for the reading of children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians.

Once an item has been accepted as qualifying under the selection policies and criteria, it will not be removed at the request of those who disagree with it, except under the order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

There is a formal procedure for the reconsideration of materials (See Material Reconsideration Procedure)

VI. Intellectual Freedom Endorsements

The Board of Library Trustees of Calvert County adopts the following statements from professional organizations regarding Intellectual Freedom:

1. [Freedom to Read](#)
2. [Freedom to View](#)
3. [The Library Bill of Rights](#)
4. [Resolution 1981 – 32 of Maryland State Board of Education](#)

The above statements are appended to this policy.

The 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.

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

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

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.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

RESOLUTION

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

June 24, 1981

Resolution 1981-32 Re: Public Libraries

Book Selection Policy

WHEREAS, The freedom to read is essential to our democracy;

And

WHEREAS, Public libraries have a responsibility to make available to the public books and other material offering the widest diversity of knowledge and ideas, views and expressions, so that citizens may choose freely from among a broad range of conflicting ideas; and

WHEREAS, It is in the public interest for libraries to reaffirm this principle in policies and procedures for the selection of library material and for dealing with complaints and requests for the removal of material by individuals or groups; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education endorses the Freedom to Read principle and requires boards of library trustees of each public library system to adopt policies that will affirm and guide the effective implementation of this principle, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board directs the Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries to provide assistance to libraries and to report the result to the Board by June, 1982.

Materials Reconsideration Procedure

These procedures are followed when a customer has a serious complaint about an item in the library collection.

1. The customer will receive a copy of the [Materials Selection Policy](#) that contains a Materials Reconsideration Form.
2. The customer will read the Materials Selection Policy. If, after review of the policy, the customer would like to fill out a Materials Reconsideration Form, the customer may do so and return the form to the library.
3. The purpose of the form is to ensure that the Director understands the nature of the complaint.
4. Library staff will seriously consider the complaint. The Director will convene a committee of librarians that will read or view the material to determine whether or not it meets the criteria of the Materials Selection Policy. After the committee makes a decision, the Director will respond in writing.

Appeals Process – Approved by the Board of Library Trustees October 21, 2008

If a customer has received a reply to a Materials Reconsideration Form, or other complaint, in writing and wants to appeal this decision to the Board, the customer must call or write the Library Director to schedule an appearance before the Board. The request for appeal must be received at the Library within thirty (30) days of the date of the reply.

The Board will add the appearance to the agenda during the next meeting unless special guests are already on the agenda or urgent library business does not allow for additional agenda items. If that is the case, the Board will provide time on the agenda during the next available month.

Customers may provide written documentation and may make statements. Statements are limited to twenty (20) minutes. The Board may then ask questions, provide comments, and conduct a discussion. The Board meetings are public, but spectators may not participate in the discussion, only the appellant.

The Board will reply to the customer in writing within forty- five (45) days.

Previously Reviewed Items

In the event that a Material Reconsideration Form is filed on an item that has been previously reviewed by a Director's Panel, as a result of an earlier filing, the Director may at his/her discretion, decline to convene another panel and may reply with a copy of the previous finding attached to a cover letter explaining the circumstances.

If the Board of Library Trustees has heard an appeal of a decision of a Director's Review Panel concerning an item, and rendered a decision thereon, the Board may at its discretion decline to hear another appeal on the same item, and may reply with a letter explaining the circumstances.

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees, November 18, 2008

Reaffirmed: October 17, 2017

Calvert Library
850 Costley Way
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Branch _____ Date _____

Materials Reconsideration Form

We appreciate your concern. Please return this form to the library for reevaluation of materials. You will be contacted by the Director regarding this concern.

1. Author: _____ Book Audio-book

2. Title: _____ DVD/Blu-ray Other

3. Publisher (if known): _____

4. In what section of the library is the material located?

Adult YA/Teen Children

5. How was the material brought to your attention? _____

6. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work? Yes No

7. What is your objection to the material? Be specific; cite pages; etc.

8. What, in your opinion, is the theme of the material? _____

9. Have you seen or heard reviews of this material? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please name source: _____

10. What do you feel might be the result of using this material? _____

11. What would you like your library to consider doing about this material?

Signed: _____

Print or type name: _____

Phone Number (Home): _____

(Work): _____

Mailing address: _____

Email address: _____

Organization or Group Represented, if any: _____