

## Collection Development Policy

*Mission: The Amesbury Public Library, under the authority of its Board of Trustees, provides safe space for lifelong exploration and learning, public understanding, freedom of expression, and experiencing beauty and wonder through the best possible resources, facilities, and services for our community.*

*Vision: The Amesbury Public Library fosters connection in the community through learning, inclusivity, respect, responsible stewardship, kindness, and joy.*

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### **Purpose of Collection Development Policy**

The collection development policy defines our goals and principles for the selection and evaluation of materials. It guides staff in maintaining our collections and making responsible decisions when acquiring new materials.

As the community changes, Amesbury Public Library (APL) reassesses and adapts its collection to reflect new and differing areas of concern and interest. This policy is periodically reviewed to ensure that it reflects up-to-date collection practices and the evolving needs of our user communities.

### **Principles for Selection**

The APL uses the American Library Association (ALA) Library Bill of Rights, with the various attendant amendments, and the ALA Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements (Appendices A, B, C), as the basis for the Library's book selection policy.

### **Allocation of Funds**

In order to meet state standards of accreditation, the Library is required to spend a minimum of 15% of its total budget on materials.

### **Responsibility for Selection**

The Library Board of Trustees considers and adopts a Collection Development Policy, which they authorize the Library Director to administer. The Library Director designates professional staff to develop selection and acquisition procedures and to make purchasing decisions. The Library Director allocates the materials budget annually.

### **Materials Selection Process**

Materials selection decisions are made within the limitations of available space and funding, and within the scope of this policy. Selection presumes liberty of thought and intellectual freedom.

All materials, whether purchased, donated or accessed via subscription, are considered as a whole work in terms of the criteria below. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be added to the collection:

- In keeping with the Library's Mission and Vision

- Contribution to the diversity and scope of the collection
- Authority and accuracy of factual premises
- Relevance to the needs and interests of the public
- Popular appeal
- Format suitable for Library use
- Quality of production
- Commercial availability
- Attention of critics, reviewers, and subject specialists
- Prominence, authority and/or competence of author, creator, or publisher
- Impact on materials expenditure plan
- Timeliness
- Relevance of format and content to the intended audience
- Effectiveness and suitability of format in communicating the content
- Availability from another Library source (i.e., MVLC, Commonwealth Catalog, Interlibrary Loan)

Duplicate copies may be acquired based on the professional collection development librarian's assessment.

### **Scope of the Collection**

The Library's collection is dynamic and evolves over time to keep pace with changing community needs, technological advancements, and societal trends. Consortium-wide, statewide, and nationwide interlibrary loans provide access to a broader range of resources for our patrons than our building can contain.

#### Youth Service:

To encourage life-long exploration, the youth service collection provides materials in a variety of formats to satisfy and stimulate the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the youth of Amesbury from infancy through grade twelve, as well as the needs of the educators who work with them. The Library will in no way restrict access to the Library collection for children of any age. Materials in all formats are selected with regard to the stages of emotional and intellectual maturity of children and teens, as well as to reflect the diversity of our world and community.

#### Adult:

The adult collection's primary purposes are to meet people's informational, cultural, and recreational needs, to promote lifelong learning and enjoyment, and to provide access to a diversity of narratives, information, and viewpoints. To this end, the adult collection includes materials in a variety of formats to support the needs and interests of as many community members as possible.

### Third Party E-Resources:

APL may purchase or subscribe to digital material platforms created and curated by third-party vendors. These platforms may include content such as, but not limited to, scholarly articles or research, historical newspapers, e-books, e-audiobooks, digital magazines, digital music, and digital TV/films for all ages. The library does not limit access to these platforms based on age. These third-party digital collections are intended to complement and enhance the library's physical collections, as well as to extend access to those residents of Amesbury who may not be able to access the library's physical collections for any reason.

### Local History Collection:

Please refer to the Local History Collection Development Policy.

### Textbooks:

Recognizing the responsibility of schools and universities to provide access to required textbooks for their students, the APL does not acquire textbooks required for school curricula.

### **Suggestions for Purchase**

A suggestion for purchase enables Amesbury residents to request that a particular item or subject be purchased by the Library. All suggestions for purchase are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. It is the Library's intent that suggestions for purchase be used to help the Library in developing collections that serve the interests and needs of the community.

### **Gifts and Donations**

The Library reserves the right to keep, discard, sell, or make other appropriate arrangements for disposal of any book or materials that are donated, as determined by its mission and needs. Professional collection development staff review donated materials for potential addition to the Library's collections following this policy.

Donations to the Amesbury Local History Collection follow the "Local History Collection Development Policy."

### **Local Authors**

The Library wishes to recognize the literary efforts of local authors by including their works in the collection whenever appropriate.

Professional collection development staff will review donations of/purchase requests for material, but this does not guarantee their inclusion in the collection. As with all library materials, the Library will apply the same inclusion and retention guidelines as stated in this policy.

Once donated, items become the property of the Library and will not be returned. The Library will accept one copy of a title.

The following are the minimum considerations for works by local authors created in any format:

- Authors must reside in Amesbury.
- The author represents and warrants full ownership/and or legal rights to publish all material, including artwork.
- Materials must be bound and formatted in a way that enables circulation, ease of use, and durability.
- The title and author are clearly visible on the spine.
- The title is in a physical format, i.e., books, CDs, and DVDs. (We do not consider works submitted in electronic format).
- Items must be in new condition.

### **Collection Maintenance**

In addition to acquiring new materials, it is important to remove from the existing collection those items no longer deemed useful or relevant. Professional collection development librarians are responsible for regular evaluation of the existing collection and subsequent withdrawal of items based on a variety of factors. The Library reserves the right to determine how materials are removed.

All materials in consideration for withdrawal are reviewed as a whole in terms of the criteria such as those set forth below. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be withdrawn from the collection:

- Condition of item
- Frequency of circulation of item
- Relevance of item to collection as a whole
- Currency or accuracy of information in an item

### **Intellectual Freedom**

APL does not promote particular beliefs or views, adhering to the principles expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements (Appendices A, B, and C). The library provides resources for various opinions that apply to important, complex, and controversial questions, including unpopular and unorthodox positions. Language, situations, or subjects that may be offensive to some community members do not disqualify material which, in its entirety, is judged to be of value according to the standards for selection as described in this policy.

Responsibility for the reading and borrowing choices of minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of adult material will not be restricted by the possibility that these items may come into the possession of children nor does the Library use any system of coding, rating, or labeling to identify or segregate materials for purposes of censorship.

### **Reconsideration of Library Materials**

If a resident of Amesbury has a concern about an item in the Library, they may submit a completed "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form after having read, listened to, or used the item in its entirety. Forms that do not have all fields filled out and those submitted by a non-Amesbury resident will not be considered.

Forms are available at the Library and digitally (Appendix D). The form can be submitted by email, mail, or in-person to the Library Director. Once a form is received, the Library Director shall evaluate the original reasons for the purchase of the material and submit a written response by mail or email to the requester stating the outcome of the review and evaluation.

If unsatisfied following the formal review and evaluation phase, the requester may present their concerns to the Library Board of Trustees. The final authority regarding removal or retention of library materials ultimately resides with the Board of Trustees.

## Appendix A

### **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.

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

### **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.

## Appendix C

### **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 guarantees 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

**Appendix D**

**Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

I am an Amesbury Resident

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Material for Reconsideration:**

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author/Performer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Item Type (book, audiobook, etc.):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond to the following questions:**

1. Have you seen or read this material in its entirety?

Yes

No

2. What in the work do you object to? Please be specific and cite where appropriate.

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

3. What brought this work to your attention?

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

4. What action are you requesting the Library consider with this work?

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

5. Are there works you suggest that would provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

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

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_