

Collection Policy

Approved by the Board, 8/28/2023

Updated 11/27/23

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the selection of Library materials and maintenance of the Library's Collection in accordance with the Library's mission, vision and long-range plan. The Saxton B. Little Free Library adheres to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Free Access to Minors, the Freedom to Read, and the Freedom to View (see appendices).

The Library's mission statement, vision statement and long-range plan are the guiding forces for all activities including collection development. Fundamentally, the Saxton B. Little Free Library provides and promotes excellent services, programs, and materials that inform, educate, and enrich all citizens.

Responsibility for Selection

The responsibility for selecting materials for purchase and withdrawal is delegated by the Library Board of Directors to the Library Director and, under their supervision, to other staff members who are qualified for this activity by reason of training and/or experience.

Criteria for Selection

Materials are selected to create a well-balanced collection. The Saxton B. Little Library does not advocate any particular beliefs or views. Library materials are diverse in topic, format, and other considerations. Each type of item must be considered in terms of its own merit and the audience for whom it is intended. No single set of selection criteria can be applied to all cases.

In general, the selection of materials for all ages will consider, but not be limited to, the following criteria: timeliness; accuracy; clarity; presentation; readability/sound quality/visual quality; interest; and value based on literary, artistic, or scholarly excellence. Also taken into consideration will be authoritative bibliographies, standard and professional reviews, professional selection guides, budgetary limitations, availability, and demand.

It is the Library's goal to build a balanced collection comprising materials of popular interest as well as materials of permanent worth. Specific acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular, or controversial in nature. The Library's acquisition of such items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression.

In serving youth, the Library's role is to also provide supplementary materials to enrich the resources otherwise available to them. Textbooks will not be purchased unless they constitute the best available source of information on a subject. The public library should not be expected to fulfill the needs of or replace the functions of the school library.

Wherever possible, the Library makes electronic information available in the Library and remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. The Library will make every effort to provide assistance and ensure that the public learns how to use its electronic databases.

Selections are made with the goal of choosing the best and most useful materials in fields as needed by the community. Attention is paid to issues of the diversity within the collection, with the intent to accommodate the widest scope of materials.

Requests for Purchase

Patron requests and recommendations are considered but not an absolute criterion. When the Saxton B. Little Library cannot fill a patron's request through permanent acquisition, resource sharing with other libraries will be utilized as much as possible.

Withdrawing Materials

Materials are evaluated on an on-going basis for accuracy, currency, enjoyment, enrichment, and physical condition. Items are withdrawn when their individual value to the library's collection no longer exists. Possible reasons for a loss of value include but are not limited to: lack of circulation/interest; outdated information; or poor condition. Withdrawn materials will be sold at Library book sales, donated to other charities, or discarded as appropriate.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The responsibility for what is borrowed and by whom is the responsibility of the borrower. Responsibility for use of materials by children and adolescents shall rest with their parent or legal guardian. While a person may reject materials for himself or herself and for his or her children, he or she shall not exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others. The selection of materials for the adult collection is not impacted by the possibility that children may obtain materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate.

Any borrower who objects to the presence of material may formally express their concern and questions regarding this item's presence in the collection by completing the "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" form. The Library Director and Library Board shall review all statements of concern in the timeliest manner possible. While the item is under review it will remain in the collection. The person filing this form will receive a formal written response regarding the disposition of the request at the end of the review process.

Donation of materials

The Library accepts donations of materials in usable condition. Materials may be added to the Library's collection as prescribed in the Collection Development Policy. Materials not added to the collection are accepted on behalf of the Friends and are typically included in book sales to benefit the Library.

Statement of Concern About Library Materials Form

The inclusion of an item in the Saxton B. Little Free Library's collection does not imply the Library's endorsement of the author, publisher, or subject matter. The Library provides materials representing a wide variety of opinions and perspectives, which can apply to important, complex, and controversial questions, including unpopular and unorthodox viewpoints. Language, situations, or subjects that may be offensive to some community members do not disqualify material, the value of which is determined in its entirety and measured against the selection guidelines described in the Collection Development policy by the Library in its sole discretion.

The Library recognizes parents and legal guardians as the parties responsible for the reading and viewing habits of their children. The selection of materials for the adult collection is not impacted by the possibility that children may obtain materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate.

Saxton B. Little Free Library welcomes residents' expression of opinion concerning materials purchased. Anyone who wishes to request that a specific item be reconsidered for inclusion in the collection is asked to complete the following form and return it to the Library Director. Once received, the Library Director will review the item in its entirety and within the framework of this policy. When a decision has been made regarding the retention or removal of the material, the Director will inform the individual in writing. Appeals may be requested by submitting a written request to the Library's Board of Directors. All Board decisions are final. Materials under review remain in the collection during the reconsideration process.

Please return the completed form to SBL's Library Director, at director@columbiactlibrary.org or:

Attn: Library Director
Saxton B. Little Free Library
319 Route 87
Columbia, CT 06237

Your name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Do you represent yourself? _____

Do you represent an organization? _____

If yes, what is the name of the organization? _____

Information about the Item for which you have concerns:

Material's Title: _____

Author/Artist (if applicable): _____

Format (i.e. book, DVD, audiobook, eBook, etc.)

What brought this item to your attention?

Have you read Saxton B. Little Library's current Collection Development Policy? _____ YES _____ NO

To what in the item do you object? (Please be specific and include page numbers. Use additional pages if necessary.)

Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work? _____

If not, which portion did you read or view?

Do you know of any reviews? (Please cite source, date, and page.)

What title(s) would you suggest be added to the collection instead?

What is your ideal outcome from this complaint?

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Only signed forms will be considered. The Library Director will acknowledge receipt of the form within two weeks and will begin the review process. Please read the accompanying policy for further detail. A copy of the request form without identifying patron information will be mailed to the American Library Association and the Connecticut Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committees.

APPENDIX A: THE 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, age, 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: ACCESS TO LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR MINORS: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association supports equal and equitable access to all library resources and services by users of all ages. Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users is in violation of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, emancipatory or other legal status of users violates Article V. This includes minors who do not have a parent or guardian available to sign a library card application or permission slip. Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness should be able to obtain a library card regardless of library policies related to chronological age.

School and public libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and resources to meet the diverse interests and informational needs of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of providing library services and should be determined on an individual basis. Equitable access to all library resources and services should not be abridged based on chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, legal status, or through restrictive scheduling and use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. A library's failure to acquire materials on the grounds that minors may be able to access those materials diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users. Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, social media, online applications, games, technologies, programming, and other formats.¹ Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.² Libraries and their library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." This includes students and minors, who have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use.³

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services."⁴ Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents

and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor's access to materials.⁵

Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the communities they serve have free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

1 *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant's Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011).

2 *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975): "Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors." See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S.503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

3 "[Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted June 19, 2002, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 2014; and June 24, 2019.

4 "[Libraries: An American Value](#)," adopted on February 3, 1999, by ALA Council.

5 "[Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019.

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 *under previous name* "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

APPENDIX C: 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.

APPENDIX D: FREEDOM TO VIEW

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:

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.

To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.

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.

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.

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 by the ALA Council January 10, 1990