

# **Gafney Library**

## **Collection Development Policy**

### **A. Introduction**

In accordance with its mission, the Gafney Library provides materials and resources to the community to support lifelong learning, literacy, and personal cultural enrichment. The Collection Development Policy serves as a guide for professional staff who select materials, as well as inform the public of the principles upon which the Gafney makes decisions regarding selection, maintenance and use of its materials and resources.

The Gafney Library's Collection Development Policy adheres to the principles outlined in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, the Freedom to View Statement, and the Access to Electronic Resources Statement (attached).

### **B. Materials Selection Criteria**

The library collection grows and changes in response to the needs of its community and provides resources that meet current world and local needs. Factors to be considered in selecting material to add to the Library collection include but are not limited to:

- Existing library holdings
- Patron demand
- Community interest and significance
- Individual merit as determined by documentation, awards, professional reviews and/or subject area experts.
- Budget allowance
- Quality of the physical format (ex. is it in good shape?)

### **Responsibility for Selection of Materials**

The Library Director (Director) shall be responsible for the selection, withdrawal, and disposal of all books and related materials, acting on delegated authority from the Board. Such materials may be sold, distributed to other nonprofit institutions, or destroyed.

### **Additional Points considered in material selection**

- Due to limited budget and space, the Gafney cannot purchase all materials that are requested. Interlibrary Loan may be used to obtain materials from other libraries in New Hampshire for patron use.
- Objectionable language and vivid descriptions of sex and violence when dealt with realistically within the context of the resource will not be criteria for rejecting the resource.
- The sole responsibility for children's choices in library resources rests with parents and legal guardians. Gafney resources will not be limited by the possibility that controversial issues may be available to children. Material is judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not by a part taken out of context.
- The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand. Consideration is, therefore, given to requests of library patrons and items discussed on public media.
- The Gafney will cooperate with schools and other institutional libraries but cannot perform the function of meeting curricular needs. Collections of books may be loaned to teachers or school librarians. Books may be put on reserve for students at the request of a teacher.
- The Gafney will not store materials that are not outright gifts.

### **C. Access to Materials**

Library materials will be maintained on open shelves or displays freely and readily accessible to Library patrons, except due to protection from damage, space or needed repairs. All Library patrons are free to select or reject materials for themselves. Individual or group prejudice cannot restrict the freedom of use and/or access to others.

The Gafney Library has a youth library area to accommodate use by children and families, however children are not limited to use of the children's collection. Selection of Library material is not restricted by the possibility that items may come into the possession of children.

### **D. Challenged Resources**

The Board believes that censorship is an individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject material of which one does not approve, one cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

The Board adheres to the Library Bill of Rights, and Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association in the selection process of Library resources. The Board subscribes to the principles set forth in:

- Library Bill of Rights
- ALA Freedom to Read Statement
- ALA Freedom to View Statement
- Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors
- An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Copies of these items are in the appendix of this document.

Patrons requesting material be withdrawn from, relocated, or restricted within the collection may complete a Request for Reconsideration of a Library Resource Form available from the Director.

The challenged resource will remain in the collection while it is being reviewed. The request shall be reviewed by the Director and the resource will be evaluated based on the complaint. The Director will issue a written decision within sixty (60) days of receipt of the form. This decision may be appealed to the Board. In the event of an appeal of the Director's decision, the inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular monthly Board meeting as long as the request for appeal is received in writing seven (7) days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Board will issue a written decision to the requesting patron within sixty (60) business days of the meeting. The decision of the Board is final.

## **E. Withdrawal of Materials**

As part of the Gafney's mission, the Library strives to provide current material, accurate information, and an accessible collection in good condition. Systematic removal of material, referred to as weeding, is essential to maintaining the quality of and usefulness of the Library's collection. Materials that no longer meet the mission of the Library are identified, withdrawn and discarded according to accepted professional practices. The collection is reviewed regularly using several standard methods of weeding.

*(Attachments: Library Bill of Rights, ALA Freedom to Read Statement, ALA Freedom to View Statement, Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights)*

## **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 that 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; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996

## 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.



## 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

## Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

“Libraries: An American Value” states, “We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services.” The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources.

Article I of the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights* states, “Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.” Article II further declares, “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.”

Freedom of expression, although it can be offensive to some, is protected by the Constitution of the United States. The “Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*” states:

Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user’s right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator’s viewpoint or personal history. Library workers should not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection-development decisions.<sup>2</sup>

This applies with equal force to library resources and services provided to students and minors.<sup>3</sup>

The Supreme Court has held that the Constitution requires a procedure designed to critically examine all challenged expression before it can be suppressed.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, libraries should develop a procedure by which the governing body examines concerns and challenges about library resources. This procedure should be open, transparent, and conform to all applicable open meeting and public records laws. Challenged resources should remain in the collection, and access to the resources remain unrestricted during the review process. Resources that meet the criteria for selection and inclusion within the collection as outlined in the institution’s collections policy should not be removed. Procedures to review challenges to library resources should not be used to suppress constitutionally protected expression.

Any attempt, be it legal or extralegal, to regulate or suppress resources in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged. Attempts to remove or suppress materials by library staff or members of the library’s governing body that are not regulated or sanctioned by law are considered “extralegal.” Examples include actions that circumvent library policy, or actions taken by elected officials or governing board members outside the established legal process for making legislative or board decisions. Actions taken by library governing bodies during official sessions or meetings pursuant to the library’s collection development policy, or litigation undertaken in courts of law with jurisdiction over the library and the library’s governing body, and actions taken by legislative bodies are considered a “legal process.”

Content filtering is not equivalent to collection development. Content filtering is exclusive, not inclusive, and cannot effectively curate content or mediate access to resources available on the internet. Filtering should be addressed in an institution's policy on acceptable use of the internet. Acceptable use policies should reflect the *Library Bill of Rights* and "Internet Filtering: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*," and be approved by the appropriate governing authority.

<sup>1</sup> "[Libraries: An American Value](#)," adopted February 3, 1999, by the ALA Council.

<sup>2</sup> "[Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the \*Library Bill of Rights\*](#)," adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 *under previous name* "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 25, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> "[Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the \*Library Bill of Rights\*](#)," 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.

<sup>4</sup> *Bantam Books, Inc. v. Sullivan*, 372 U.S. 58 (1963).

Adopted June 25, 1971, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; January 28, 2009; July 1, 2014; and January 29, 2019.

## **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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.”<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant’s Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011).

<sup>2</sup> *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).

<sup>3</sup> “[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.

<sup>4</sup> “[Libraries: An American Value](#),” adopted on February 3, 1999, by ALA Council.

<sup>5</sup> “[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.