

## Whitehall Public Library Policies

Title	Collection Development and Management
Date Approved	3/10/2010
Amended	4/12/2023, 5/8/2024
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### **Purpose:**

The Whitehall Public Library will provide and maintain its collection in order to support the educational, leisure reading, viewing and listening as well as the general reference needs of the community. This policy describes the nature of the Library's collection and provides guidance and direction to the Library staff in the development and maintenance of the collection. The Library will build and maintain a collection which serves Library users of all ages, educational levels, and backgrounds, providing opportunities for continuous learning, personal enrichment, and relaxation through books and other materials. The Library recognizes that the freedom to read is essential in a democracy, and it subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights and to the Freedom to Read Statement adopted by the American Library Association, found in Appendixes A and B.

### **Statement of Policy:**

The Board of Directors approves the Collection Development Policy. The responsibility for administering this policy rests with the Library Director.

It is at the discretion of the Library Director to delegate selection responsibilities to assigned Library staff members. The selection of Library materials shall be made within the framework of the following guidelines.

### **General Selection Criteria:**

The Library recognizes that its service area incorporates individuals of all ages who represent a multiplicity of racial and ethnic backgrounds, economic and educational levels, and physical and mental abilities. The Library strives to build collections that mirror and support this diversity. The collections include materials and resources that reflect a variety of political, economic, religious, social, minority and sexual issues and identities and support intellectual freedom by providing free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.

The Library does not sanction particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given item equivalent to an endorsement of the author's or publisher's viewpoint.

The selection of materials is governed by the Library's mission and values, its assessment of the community's present and future needs, its recognition of and cooperation with other libraries in the consortium, and the limitations of space and budget.

**Fiction Criteria:**

Works of contemporary fiction, classic works, and novels of enduring value are included in the collection. Fiction is selected according to the following criteria: popular demand; reputation of the author and publisher; availability of professional reviews; appropriateness to the library's users; importance as a document of the times; relationship to the existing collection and to other titles and authors dealing with the same subject; interest and originality of plot and character development; style of writing; quality of illustration; literary merit; inclusion in standard library bibliographies; availability of similar material within the community and other area libraries; the physical qualities of the book; cost; and whether a title is part of an existing series.

**Nonfiction Criteria:**

The Library acquires materials of both permanent and current interest in all subjects, based upon the merits of a work in relation to the needs, interests, and demands of the community. While a single standard cannot be applied to each work, the following general criteria are to be considered when selecting materials for purchase: authoritativeness of the writer and reputation of the publisher; availability of professional reviews; accuracy of information; impartiality of opinion, or clearly stated bias; timeliness of data; adequate breadth and depth of coverage; appropriateness and relevancy of subject to the Library's users; popular demand; historical value; availability of similar material within the community and other area libraries; organization and style appropriate to the material and to the Library's users; quality of illustrations; special features, such as bibliography and index; durable binding and paper; and value for price.

**Periodicals (Serials) Criteria:**

Periodicals are publications issued and received on a regular basis and form an important part of the Library's collection. The Library does not subscribe to highly specialized and technical periodicals nor to professional journals other than those in the field of library science. With the availability of online full-text magazine articles, the periodical collection no longer requires extensive back collections. The Library's print collection is more of a browsing collection. Periodicals are selected according to the following criteria: Cost, requests by Library users, local or regional interest, expansion of a subject area to help balance the general collection, and circulation statistics (when renewing subscriptions).

**Reference Criteria:**

Reference materials, whether in print or computer-based formats, are those designed by the arrangement and treatment of their subject matter to be consulted for definite items of information rather than to be read consecutively. They can provide quick, concise, and current information or they may serve as an index to other materials in the collection. Since they are typically used frequently by the public and Library staff to answer specific questions, books in the reference collection are, therefore, designated for use within the Library.

In selecting for the reference collections, the primary criteria are the Library users' information needs and the format in which that information is available. Decisions to purchase are based upon content, currency, and ease of use. In addition to the general selection criteria mentioned above, the following must be considered in acquiring materials for the reference collections: favorable reviews or inclusion in basic reference collection guides; reputation of the author or publisher; currency of information; value for the price; and the expense of ongoing maintenance.

**Audio Materials Criteria:**

- Recorded Books - Recorded instructional, educational, fiction and nonfiction titles that parallel most areas of the general collection are made available. At present, recorded books are purchased primarily in the compact disc format, however, emerging technologies may be considered as well. Preference will be given to unabridged audio books, but abridgments may occasionally be purchased when the unabridged format is unavailable. In addition to the general criteria for selection, the following criteria must

be considered when selecting recorded books: authority and competency of producer; artistic merit and reputation of the reader; technical quality (i.e. sound-quality and cost).

- Recorded Music - The Library strives to provide a collection of music on compact disc representing a broad variety of musical genres and taking into account the demand and interests of Library users. Selections include both instrumental and vocal recordings. The following criteria are considered when selecting music: authority and competency of producer; artistic merit; technical quality; and cost.

### **Digital Video Disc (DVD) Criteria:**

The Library's goal is to provide a balanced collection which includes instructional, educational, and popular feature films. The following selection criteria are considered for digital videodiscs: favorable reviews; appropriateness of the subject to the collection; appropriateness to the interests and skills of the intended users; technical quality (i.e. clarity of picture and sound quality); authority and competency of the producer; artistic merit and reputation of the performers; Library user demand; and cost.

### **Electronic Resource Criteria:**

Electronic resources include, but may not be limited to, educational and instructional CD-ROMs, CD-ROM games and games for Nintendo DS. The following criteria will be considered for electronic resources: cost; Library user demand; favorable reviews; appropriateness of subject to the collection; and technical and artistic quality.

### **Formats:**

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate format for Library use. Although much of the Library's collection is offered in the traditional print format, valuable information is increasingly available in audio-visual and electronic formats. In addition, the Library may consider the circulation of "non-traditional" items including but not limited to American Girl dolls, novelty Cake pans, exercise equipment, Wi-Fi hotspots, laptops, and tablets.

New formats are considered for the collection when industry reports, national survey results, and local requests indicate that a significant portion of the community has the necessary

technology to make use of the new format. The following factors must be taken into consideration when deciding whether to add a new format to the collection: availability of items in the format; cost per item; and the Library's ability to acquire, process, and circulate the items in the specific format. Older formats are discontinued when customer needs and technological advances result in obsolescence.

### **Self-Published Titles:**

Self-published titles are held to the same criteria as any other work the library evaluates for the collection. Any title accepted becomes exclusive property of the library. The library reserves the right to deselect the title at any time.

### **Community Participation:**

Library users are encouraged to suggest titles and/or subjects that they would like to see in the collection. Suggestions can be made to any staff member or through the Suggest a Book form on the Library website. In such cases, the selection criteria outlined in this policy will be considered.

### **Gifts and Donations:**

Gifts and donated materials are subject to the same thoughtful review as purchased materials. Timeliness, usefulness, out-of-print status, and condition are among the criteria considered. The Library reserves the right to decide which items are added to the collection or to dispose of gifts as it deems appropriate. The Library also reserves the right to decline gifts (see Gifts and Donations Policy).

### **Deselection:**

Deselection of Library material is an integral part of effective collection development. An active and continuous deselection program is essential in maintaining a viable and useful collection. Materials are withdrawn from the Library's collection through systematic deselection or because of loss or physical damage. The continuous review of Library material is necessary as a means of maintaining an active collection of current interest to Library users.

Statistical tools, such as circulation reports, collection turnover rates, withdrawal reports and other collection development reports, provide useful data. The following categories of materials should be considered for deselection: worn or mutilated items; duplicate copies; materials which contain outdated or inaccurate information; superseded editions of specific titles; and materials no longer of interest or demand. Library books with commemorative book plates will not be withdrawn within five years' time unless the book is excessively worn or its information outdated.

### **Replacement:**

While the library attempts to maintain copies of standard and important works, it does not automatically replace all materials withdrawn due to loss or physical damage.

### **Materials Not Collected:**

Due to finite resources and limited demand, the Library does not actively collect the following materials:

- Rare Books: The Library does not collect rare material that requires special handling.
- Foreign Language: The Library does not collect materials in foreign languages. However, English as a Second Language (ESL), introductory and instructional materials in foreign languages is collected in a variety of formats.
- Textbooks
- Dissertations and Theses
- Obsolete formats

### **Materials Reconsideration:**

There may be occasions when a Library user may be concerned about a particular item in the Library's collection. If a Library user wishes the Library to reconsider material that is in the collection, a Materials Reconsideration Request form is available. Once the form is completed and returned to the Library, it will be reviewed by the Library Director, using the selection criteria outlined in this policy. The Library Director will provide a written response.

If the Library user is not satisfied at this level, he/she will be invited to attend the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors. The Board, after hearing the complaint

and considering the material, will notify the patron in writing of their decision. Final authority rests with the Library Board of Directors.

Whitehall Public Library  
Materials Reconsideration Request

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

WPL Call Number \_\_\_\_\_

Book       Sound Recording       Magazine       DVD       Other

Why do you feel this item should not be in the collection?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Where did you hear about this item?

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Did you read, hear, or view the item in its entirety? \_\_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_\_No

What specific pages or section of the item illustrate your point?

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Would you regard the item as appropriate for any age group? If so, which?

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Other comments that would be helpful to the committee reviewing this request?

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## **Appendix A:**

### **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.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

## Appendix B:

### 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.

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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.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

