

Camden County Library District Policy Manual

Section 2. Operating Policies Subsection 19. Selection Policy

SELECTION POLICY

The Board of Trustees of the Camden County Library District believes that the selection of quality materials and their introduction to the community is of primary importance. As far as possible, it is the aim of the Board to make available to all county residents the best in current materials as well as those, which have stood the test of time. In doing this, an effort will be made to achieve a well-balanced collection in accordance with the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association.

Materials should be selected which will stimulate the growth in factual knowledge, library appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards; will provide materials presenting opposing sides of controversial issues so that patrons may develop the practice of critical reading and thinking; will provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage. The selection of materials shall be with the purpose of further developing all county adults, young adults, and children intellectually, socially, and spiritually.

Ultimate responsibility for book selection, as for all library activities, rests with the Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees. Staff members, particularly branch librarians, are to be consulted on the needs of their communities and are encouraged to make suggestions. Requests from readers are encouraged and will be considered. All materials will be selected in accordance with the American Library Association's 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 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 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; 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 takes of the democratic process that the political, moral, or 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 applying 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.

PRINCIPLES OF EVALUATION AND SELECTION

All materials shall have these elements of quality:

1. Relevancy or permanent value.
2. Accuracy
3. Authoritativeness
4. Clear presentation and/or readability.
5. Format

Most materials should appear in one or more of the recognized professional media or approved lists (Library Journal, Publisher's Weekly, Booklist, etc.). No one publication need determine selection, and the critical opinion of reviewers should be checked against each other. Local author selections need not be professionally reviewed to be acquired. Local author selections will be reviewed by staff for selection criteria.

When doubt arises, approval copies should be requested and examined by the Director.

Factors that should influence selection are:

1. Needs of the community – based upon request from local patrons, local merchants, professionals, the curriculum of local schools and institutions of higher learning, and knowledge of backgrounds and reading abilities of patrons.
2. Size of budget.
3. Need to develop a balanced collection.

The library is grateful for gifts of materials. However, gifts of materials will be accepted by the library with the explicit understanding that they may or may not be added to the collection. The decision to include gift materials will be based upon the following considerations.

1. Whether they meet the library's standards of book selection.
2. Whether the physical condition is satisfactory.
3. Whether the library needs the title or added copies for its collection.
4. Whether the material is outdated.

The donor will be asked to sign a release form giving the library authority to dispense with the materials as it will be based on the above criterion.

Appropriateness by age for materials selected for youth

The library collections for patrons under age 18 are split into the “E” collection, which is intended for ages birth to 8 years old, the “J” section which is intended for patrons 9

through 11 years old, and the “YA” collection which is intended for patrons 12 years old and above. There may be some variation in the age appropriateness of each collection. In general, decisions to place particular items in the collections are done by the standard of the average person, applying contemporary community standards nationwide, would find that the material, taken as a whole, has a tendency to appeal to ages birth through 8 years old for “E” materials, 9 through 11 years old for “J” materials, and 12 years old and above for YA materials; and/or the publisher’s suggested age range if available.

Age inappropriate is defined as:

“Pornographic for minors” as defined by Missouri Revised Statutes, Title XXXVIII – Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders; Chapter 573 – Pornography and Related Offenses; Section 573.010.”

This statement is required by Missouri Regulation 15 CSR 30-200.015.

SPECIFIC FORMS

Fiction

Fiction has assumed an important role as an educational/recreational medium. The sound treatment of significant historical, social, and personal problems in books of fiction can contribute to the understanding of human problems and human relations. Fiction is acquired to encourage and develop the reading interests of patrons.

Non-fiction

One or more of the following guidelines will be taken into consideration for the selection of these materials.

1. Accuracy, currency, and authority of data.
2. Representation of varied and/or opposing opinions and beliefs.
3. Authority of author, editor or publisher, etc.
4. Timeliness of subject matter.
5. Balance of collection
6. Price.
7. Available materials in other libraries.

Periodicals

Periodicals are purchased to keep the library collection up-to-date with current thinking, to provide materials not available in books, and to supplement the book collection. Criteria for selection will include:

1. Accuracy and objectivity.
2. Accessibility of content through indexes.
3. Need in reference work.
4. Demand.

Textbooks

Textbooks shall be purchased or housed in the library only if they make a unique contribution to the collection or if the information found therein is unavailable in any more acceptable form.

Audio-Visual Materials

Audiovisual materials shall be purchased so as to broaden the avenues by which patrons have access to information. Criterion for selection will include:

1. Accuracy and objectivity.
2. Quality of craftsmanship.
3. Durability of use and interest
4. Need in library and patron demand

Digital and E-Book Collection Development Policy

The selection of e-books should adhere to the standards put forth in the Camden County Library Collection Development Policy. The e-book collection will be a supplement to the existing print collection and not a substitute for it. The digital collection will not cover all topics, which are present in the physical collection due to the constraints of current digital media.

These limitations restrict the usefulness of technical or repair books, and, thus, they should not be heavily invested in until technology catches up with usage trends. The majority of the collection will be popular fiction and best-selling non-fiction, such as popular science and political works. These works have a transient quality to them which makes it difficult to justify acquiring print copies which will be out of date in a few months.

Popular authors should be heavily invested in as the shorter checkout periods and quicker turnaround will allow the Bestseller Holds List to be worked through more quickly without filling the shelves with multiple copies of works whose popularity will decrease steadily.

The library should collect some classics, but the availability of the Gutenberg Project means that a great deal may be found there, and the library could avoid spending money unnecessarily. However, works which are commonly assigned to the local public school students, especially those in the high school and junior high, should be collected. Information from the public schools should help determine what will most be in demand, and the short checkout will ensure a quick turnaround. This will also prevent students from losing, destroying, or simply forgetting books which other students need.

The popularity and use statistics of the different formats should guide the decision of format when purchasing e-books. This policy should be re-evaluated often as technology progresses. The rest of the digital collection should also be selected with the same care that goes into the physical collection, and the same standards should be applied.

SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

Religion

The library should provide materials which are representative of the many religious and cultural groups and their contribution to our American heritage. Only well-written books that make no attempt to sway the emotions of the patron toward or against anyone's faith or denomination should be included in the collection.

Sex Education

Books or other materials of accurate sex education should be a part of the library's collection. When these materials present a clear picture of life or develop an understanding of people, the virtues should be carefully weighed against any possible harm that might occur because of a particular word or passage in the book.

In compliance with *Sund v. City of Wichita Falls, Tex.*, 121 F. Supp. 2d 530 (N.D. Tex. 2000) U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas - 121 F. Supp. 2d 530 (N.D. Tex. 2000) September 20, 2000, the Camden County Library District will shelve children's books on Sex Education in the appropriate sections in the "E," Juvenile, and Young Adult sections of the collection. To do otherwise would be in violation of the 1st Amendment of the Constitution of the United States as interpreted by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas. In that court case Chief Judge Buchmeyer found:

“By authorizing the forced removal of children's books to the adult section of the Library, the Altman Resolution places a significant burden on Library patrons' ability to gain access to those books. Children searching specifically for those books in the designated children's areas of the Library will be unable to locate them. In addition, children who simply wish to browse in the children's sections of the Library will never find the censored books. Moreover, parents browsing the children's areas in search of books for their children will be unable to find the censored books.

The burden imposed by the Altman Resolution is, therefore, analogous to the restriction struck down by the Supreme Court in *Denver Area Educ. Telecomm. Consortium, Inc. v. FCC*, [518 U.S. 727](#), 116 S. Ct. 2374, 135 L. Ed. 2d 888 (1996). In *Denver Area*, the Court invalidated a requirement that "patently offensive" cable programming be segregated, blocked, and made unavailable to viewers unless they specifically requested access in advance and in writing. *Id.* at 2394. Although the regulation did not ban the "patently offensive" programming outright, the Court concluded that it had "obvious restrictive effects," noting that "[a] subscriber cannot decide to watch a single program without considerable advance planning...." *Id.* at 2391. Similarly, although the Books censored under the Altman Resolution are available in the adult section of the Library, they can only be located if a patron knows *in advance* that she wants those specific titles or authors. Just as the cable regulation in *Denver Area* impermissibly burdened the rights of television viewers who wished to "channel surf," *see id.* at 2391 ("These restrictions will prevent programmers from broadcasting to viewers who select programs day by day (or, through `surfing,' minute by minute)."), the Altman Resolution unconstitutionally burdens the First Amendment rights of browsing Library patrons.^[23] It would be absurd to conclude that the Altman Resolution imposed no additional burdens on targeted materials for if this was true, then the Resolution would do absolutely nothing to advance the purported interest in having children read these Books "with parental approval and/or supervision."

“Moreover, if a parent wishes to prevent her child from reading a particular book, that parent can and should accompany the child to the Library, and should not prevent all children in the community from gaining access to constitutionally protected materials. Where First Amendment rights are concerned, those seeking to restrict access to information should be forced to take affirmative steps to shield themselves from unwanted materials; the onus should not be on the general public to overcome barriers to their access to fully-protected information. *See, e.g., Denver Area*, 116 S. Ct. at 2394; *Lamont v. Postmaster General*, [381 U.S. 301](#), 307, 85 S. Ct. 1493, 14 L. Ed. 2d 398 (1965) (striking requirement that recipients of Communist literature notify the Post Office in advance that they wish to receive those materials). The Altman Resolution, therefore, places an unconstitutional burden on Plaintiffs' right to receive information under the First Amendment”

This freedom is also guaranteed by the Missouri Constitution Bill of Rights Section 8. “Freedom of speech—evidence of truth in defamation actions—province of jury.—That no law shall be passed impairing the freedom of speech, no matter by what means

communicated: that every person shall be free to say, write or publish, or otherwise communicate whatever he will on any subject, being responsible for all abuses of that liberty; and that in all suits and prosecutions for libel or slander the truth thereof may be given in evidence; and in suits and prosecutions for libel the jury, under the direction of the court, shall determine the law and the facts.”

[Amended 04/13/2023]

SCIENCE

Materials treating information of a scientific nature must be up-to-date, accurate, well-illustrated, and authoritative. Balance of the collection must be achieved between pure and applied science and the representation of specific theories and general treatises in accordance to the needs of all patrons.

REVALUATION OF MATERIALS – WEEDING

Obsolete items, such as outmoded, worn-out, or damaged materials, superseded editions, and superfluous duplicates, will be withdrawn from the collection and disposed of on a continuing basis.

CENSORSHIP

Freedom to read and freedom of the press are inseparable parts of the total concept of freedom upon which our society is based. In a free society, differences of opinion may develop relative to the appropriateness of books and other materials selected for use in the library. It is the duty of the Board and staff to consider objectively any questions in this regard. It is also the duty of the Board and staff to guard against pressures by individuals and groups who wish to use the library as an instrument of biased views through exclusion or removal of materials with which they do not agree or through inclusion of a disproportionate quantity of materials that support such views.

In a democracy, opinions differ, and occasionally there may be criticism of the most carefully selected material. To properly consider and reply to any protest regarding recommended or adopted material, criticism of such materials should be directed in writing to the Director. The Director will then submit this formal written and signed complaint to the Board, who will decide how to treat any given item which may be criticized or protested. (A form is provided for this purpose.)

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

Author: _____

Hardcover _____ Paperback _____ Other _____

Title: _____

Publisher (if known) _____

Publication date: _____

Request initiated by:

Phone# _____

Address: _____

City, State & Zip Code: _____

Complainant represents:

Him/Herself _____ Other: _____

If other –

Name of organization or group _____

(If objection is to material other than a book, change the wording of following questions, so they apply)

1. To what in the book do you object? Please be specific _____

2. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book?

3. For what age would you recommend the book? _____

4. Is there anything good about the book?

5. Did you read the entire book? Yes_____ No_____ What parts?_____

6. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics?

7. What do you believe is the theme of this book?

8. What would you like your library to do about this book?

- _____ Do not lend it to my child
_____ Withdraw it from all readers as well as my child
_____ Send it back to the staff selection official for re-evaluation

9. In its place, what book of equal library quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject related? _____

Signature of complainant

Date