

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

I. General Statement

The Jefferson Public Library supports the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS and the FREEDOM TO READ statement, both of which are included and intended to be a part of this policy statement.

The following goals and objectives provide a direction for public library service in Jefferson and Greene County. From these goals, this policy was created.

1. To meet the informational needs of all.
2. To facilitate informal self-education of all ages.
3. To enrich and further develop the library as an educational resource for the community.
4. To encourage wholesome recreation and the constructive use of leisure time.
5. To provide a library staff that is knowledgeable, helpful and responsive to the needs of library users.

II. Philosophy

Materials for the library collection are chosen for a wide variety of reasons. These include information, self-education and the recreational pursuits of library users. The decision to add an item to the collection by purchase is usually the result of selection based on demand or need.

Selection based on demand: The individual request of a patron for a title is usually honored if the request conforms to selection and directional guidelines outlined in this policy statement. We feel that the library patron is an important part of the selection process. Other high demand items include best sellers and active subject areas. Expedient purchase without consulting reviews is the rule rather than the exception.

Selection based on need: A certain amount of the material added to the library collection is for the purpose of updating and further developing certain subject areas.

The library staff is constantly gathering information concerning the needs of library users. Information is collected by means of surveys, monitoring circulation statistics, inter-library loan requests and patron input. A core list of classic work has been developed and is monitored to insure their retention in the collection.

Follow-up studies are conducted on those items of subject areas where demand is constant. Material added in this manner is selected from print and on-line reviews, availability lists, vendor catalogs, bibliographies and local experts.

The library attempts to present a representative selection of materials that present all sides of an issue. The library provides service to all within the framework of its rules and regulations and does not knowingly discriminate in its material selection regarding race, creed, sex, occupation or financial position.

III. Responsibility

The responsibility for materials selection and the development of the library collection rests with the Director and Assistant Director, who work under the authority and the policies determined by the Board of Trustees.

IV. Guidelines

The general adult book collection is mainly developed through the selection of materials based on demand, need and information. There are other criteria that affect the selection process. The library endeavors to provide materials in a variety of formats, including print, audio, and electronic in its books and other resources. The library does not add abridged versions to the collection, with the exception of audio recordings of books. The library does not support educational curriculums through the purchase of textbooks. Textbooks may be added to the collection if they provide the best or only source of information on a subject, or to complement an existing area with another perspective.

Price, accuracy and timeliness are other factors influencing selection. The library does not purchase out-of-print material for the collection. No attempt is made to purchase all the works by a certain author. Requests by a patron can also be filled by inter-library loan.

Periodicals are added to the collection on the basis of need and budget. Periodicals provide up-to-date information and may serve to fill a particular void in the library's collection of information.

Newspapers are an important source of information and news. The library attempts to provide a balanced viewpoint from different regions of this area.

Audio resources are an essential part of the library's collection. Some subjects can only be covered adequately by an audio recording. The library particularly attempts to maintain an adequate collection of audio resources in non-musical areas. These include foreign language instruction, recorded books, sound effects, etc. Audio resources are purchased as the budget allows in the compact disc (CD) format.

Movies in DVD format are added to the Library's collection in a manner consistent with patron demand and budget constraints. Selection of movies for the collection is made by the library staff with input from the public. The library will not purchase or accept gifts of any movies other than those rated G, PG, or PG-13. Other titles may be requested on interlibrary loan and will be filled at the discretion of the lender.

The Library has a limited collection of art reproductions for public use. Based on demand and budget limitations, no new art prints are currently being added to the collection.

Children's books and other material expressly purchased for children are selected to provide reading for reading's sake and to provide information of interest to children in varied fields of knowledge. Selection based on demand or need is practiced in acquiring children's materials.

Responsibility for the reading of minors rests with their parents and legal guardians. Selection of materials for the library collection is not restricted by the possibility that minors may obtain materials their parents consider inappropriate.

Local history material is actively sought by the library. Collection and preservation of this material includes print, microfilm and digital formats. The library does not attempt to include artifacts as part of the collection.

Reference material is purchased by selection for inclusion in the reference collection. Every attempt is made to purchase the appropriate and up-to-date items needed to answer the informational questions of all library users. The Library recognizes and actively demonstrates the use of the Internet as an additional reference tool. Shelf space and budget constraints will help determine whether a work of reference is made available in print or electronic format.

Paperbacks are purchased by the library only when hardcover copies are not available or if the hardcover cost is considered excessive compared to its usefulness. Paperbacks are also accepted as gifts.

Legal, medical and religious works are purchased by the library. However, the library will acquire only those works that would be of interest to the layman. Religious works promoting the principles and practices of a specific religious denomination will not be added to the collection. The library makes an effort to ensure that no one religion or series of beliefs is emphasized over others.

V. Gifts and Memorials

The library encourages the donation of books, magazines, and other materials with the understanding that they will be included in the collection only if they meet the criteria for selection outlined in this policy. The library does not assume responsibility for replacing worn or lost copies of these gifts. It is to be understood that gift books will be integrated into the general collection and the only form of donor identification being a bookplate. Other items may be accepted as gifts with the approval of the Director. The donor of any gift should understand that the library reserves the right to accept gifts or to dispose of them if the contents or conditions are not acceptable library material.

VI. Retention

The library maintains an active program of “weeding” the library collection. Material that is no longer used, worn, damaged, outdated or duplicated may be removed from the collection. Other factors taken into consideration are frequency of circulation, community interest and availability of other material on the subject. Every effort is made to preserve material relating to Jefferson, Greene County, and to a limited extent, Iowa.

If material is constantly added to a collection and nothing is ever removed – except what is lost or stolen – there comes a time when the library simply runs out of space. But more importantly, there comes a time when access to the materials in a collection becomes so difficult that users fail to find what they need and may stop using the collection altogether. In days past, when collections were smaller and the annual publishing output was less overwhelming, the tendency was to seek more space. In most cases today, this is no longer possible. Thus a library is faced with the problem of removing items to allow space for new material and easier access to the collection. This process is referred to as “weeding” or the practice of discarding or transferring to storage excess copies, rarely used books and materials no longer of use.

If librarians are to build collections for use, then they must be concerned with keeping these collections in the best possible condition. The American Library Association's Minimum Standards for Public Libraries states that "Systematic removal of materials no longer useful is essential to maintaining the purposes and quality of resources." Public libraries should be stocked with materials for use. When obsolete unused material is removed, the collection may be decreased, but it will also be improved. Research has shown that circulation often increases after weeding. People are able to find what they want more easily. Library collections that are well-maintained are more attractive and inviting.

While weeding is a complex professional task involving the skill and judgment of a trained and educated librarian, the following criteria are frequently used: age of the item, newer editions available, usage, appearance and condition, and duplication.

Even if a book meets all the criteria for weeding, if it has local appeal, it will be kept.

VII. Genealogical Materials

The library director selects genealogical materials for the collection. Cataloged genealogical items become the sole property of the library. No loose leaf, outdated materials, index cards, or pamphlets will be catalogued.

VIII. Requests for Reconsideration

The following procedure must be used by individuals or groups wishing to lodge a complaint concerning material held in the library collection.

The individual or group wishing to protest the presence of an item in the collection will contact the Director. If they wish to carry their objections further, a Request for Reconsideration form will be filled out and signed. The party making the complaint must be eligible to receive a free Jefferson library card.

The written complaint will be taken to the Board of Trustees at its next regular scheduled meeting. The complainant may appear before the board if desired. No items shall be removed from the library collection without a court order if the Director and Board of Trustees deem it appropriate for the collection.

Adopted: February 13, 2012

Reviewed and Approved by Board of Trustees: April 12, 2021

Jefferson Public Library
Jefferson, IA

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIAL

Author _____

Title _____

Publisher (if known) _____

1. How was this material brought to your attention? _____
2. What objections do you have to the material? _____
3. Did you read, see, or hear the entire material? _____
If not, what parts? _____
4. What do you feel might be the result of reading, seeing, or listening to this material?

5. What reviews of this material have you read? _____
6. In your opinion, is there anything good about this material, any redeeming quality?

7. What do you believe is the theme, the central tenet of this material?

8. What would you like the Public Library to do about this material?

9. Comments: (Use back if necessary)

Date _____

Signature _____

Complainant Represents:

Self _____ Other _____

Print Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; 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.