

Newtown Public Library
Collection Development Policy

Adopted 12/21/2021 by the Newtown Public Library Board of Trustees

Revised and approved 09/20/2022 by the Newtown Public Library Board of Trustees

1. Mission Statement

The mission of the Newtown Public Library is to encourage the joy of reading, the exploration of ideas, and the pursuit of lifelong learning for all.

2. Purpose of the Collection Development Policy

The Collection Development Policy, approved by the Newtown Public Library Board of Trustees, is a foundational policy document for the library. It outlines the philosophies that create and shape the library's collections, the practices that maintain the collections, and provides guidelines to respond to community needs. The Collection Development Policy ensures the library's collections reflect the needs of all citizens of Newtown Township.

3. Philosophy

The Newtown Public Library endorses the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A) and the American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement (Appendix B).

Widespread interest and usage are the most powerful influence on the library's collections. Selections are made to provide depth and diversity of viewpoints and with an appreciation for all users. Materials are provided to support all individuals and do not place a value on one user's needs or preferences over another's.

The Newtown Public Library is committed to responding to the needs of the community and advances in technology.

4. Diverse and Inclusive Collections

Article I of the Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A) states, "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library services."

A diverse and inclusive collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences. The library will seek resources that exemplify this standard and acquire materials that reflect the diversity of our community, address collection gaps, and fulfill unexpressed information needs.

5. Scope of Collections

The Newtown Public Library collects materials, in a variety of formats, which support its function as the community library of Newtown Township. These resources evolve as new formats and products become available.

6. Responsibility for Selection

The Director of Newtown Public Library, or staff designated by the Director, is responsible for the selection and acquisition of materials. Collection development staff use their training, knowledge, and expertise, along with general criteria to select materials for the collection.

7. Selection Criteria

The following general criteria will be used to select materials:

- a. Relevance to the interests and needs of the community
- b. Extent of critical review, current/anticipated demand
- c. Reputation and qualifications of the author and/or publisher
- d. Historical or current significance of the author or subject
- e. Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- f. Suitability of format
- g. Date of publication
- h. Price, availability, and budget consideration
- i. Electronic resources are also evaluated based on accessibility and availability of library licensing

8. User Recommendations

Users are welcome to request or recommend items that the Newtown Public Library does not own. All requests will be reviewed for inclusion in the collection using the established selection criteria.

9. Request for Reconsideration

The Newtown Public Library selects materials using the established criteria. It considers the varying age groups and backgrounds of its users when making selections. All requests for reconsideration must be made directly to the entity owning the title in question. The policies and procedures of the owning entity will govern any such request. Patrons may request ownership information of any item in the collection. Requests for removal of an item from the collection must be made following the procedure outlined in Appendix C.

10. Donations for the Collection

Donations to the Newtown Public Library collection may be accepted with the understanding that all items will be evaluated for inclusion in the collection by the same standards required of purchased materials. Donations that do not meet these criteria may be given to other organizations, sold, exchanged, recycled, or discarded.

11. Collection Management

The Newtown Public Library's collection is an ever-changing entity. Items are reviewed for their ongoing value and sometimes withdrawn from the collection. Care is taken to retain or replace items that have enduring value to users. Decisions are based on patterns of use, capacity, and the holdings of other libraries in Delaware County. Staff review the collection regularly to maintain its validity and usefulness.

a. Responsibility for Collection Management

The Director of Newtown Public Library, or staff designated by the Director, is responsible for the maintenance of the collection.

b. Criteria for Weeding and Withdrawal

The following criteria will be used in selecting materials for withdrawal:

- i. Damage or poor condition
- ii. No longer relevant to the needs and interests of users
- iii. Infrequent use or lack of demand
- iv. Inaccurate information
- v. Availability elsewhere including other libraries in Delaware County

c. Criteria for Replacement

The following criteria will be used in selecting materials for replacement:

- i. Availability elsewhere including other libraries in Delaware County
- ii. Cost of replacement
- iii. Popularity and demand
- iv. Critical and/or historical significance
- v. Availability for re-ordering

Appendix A

American Library Association 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.

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.

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.

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

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

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

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.

All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Appendix B

American Library Association 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.

A Joint Statement by: American Library Association. Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by: American Booksellers for Free Expression, The Association of American University Presses, The Children's Book Council, Freedom to Read Foundation, National Association of College Stores, National Coalition Against Censorship, National Council of Teachers of English, The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Appendix C

Procedure for Request for Reconsideration

Users requesting reconsideration and removal of items from the Newtown Public Library collection must submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form, available on the Newtown Public Library website or by request. The request will be reviewed in relation to the Newtown Public Library's mission and selection criteria. The Director of the Newtown Public Library will review the request and reply within thirty days of receipt of the request. Appeals of the Director's decision can be made to the Newtown Public Library Board of Trustees. Items in question will not be removed from circulation during the reconsideration process.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

Newtown Public Library

Responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources is delegated to the Director of the Newtown Public Library by the Board of Trustees of Newtown Public Library. A procedure for the reconsideration of library materials begins with the completion and submission of this form. The Director will then review the request and reply within thirty days of receipt. Appeals of the Director’s decision can be made to the Newtown Public Library Board of Trustees. *Items in question will not be removed from circulation during the reconsideration process.*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ Email: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Do you represent yourself or an organization? Self Organization: _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

Title: _____

Author/Producer: _____

Book Magazine Newspaper Audiobook

Other: _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource?

4. What concerns you about the resource?

5. Are there resources you suggest to provide additional information and/or viewpoints on this topic?