



VILLISCA PUBLIC LIBRARY

204 South 3rd Avenue, Villisca, IA 50864

712.826.2452 | villisca.lib.ia.us |

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COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Purpose Statement

- The collection development policy exists to guide librarians in selecting materials and to inform the public about the principles behind collection development decisions. Collection development refers to the decision to add materials to the collection, retain materials already in the collection, withdraw materials from the collection, and choose materials for library programs, promotions and professional development. The goal is to increase both the quality and quantity of the entire collection.
- Materials selected for the collection will meet both the current and long-term needs of Villisca and area residents of all ages and abilities for information, education, culture and recreation.
- The Library staff strives to offer the widest possible range of subjects and views in varying formats and reading levels, within budget and space, and in consideration of current holdings and demand.

Selection Guidelines

- A. Selection of Library materials, whether purchased or donated, is based upon the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community, but is limited by factors such as materials budgets, space, and content of existing collections.
- B. Each potential acquisition must be considered in terms of its own excellence and the audience for whom it is intended. The collection does not attempt to duplicate the resources of larger research institutions.
- C. Popular demand is considered an important factor in material selection, particularly concerning books on bestseller lists for which there is persistent local demand.
- D. It is not possible for Library staff to review personally the large number of materials published, therefore professional reviews in periodicals and online will be used as a basis for evaluation. These reviews are used in conjunction with publishers' catalogs and advertisements for some materials.
- E. The Library Board of Trustees agrees to support the basic principles of the *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read*, and *Freedom to View* statements adopted by the American Library Association (see Resources).
- F. Every effort will be made to represent all points of view.
- G. Purchasing materials for the collection does not include endorsement of their contents by the staff of the Library or the City of Villisca.
- H. Patron suggestions for materials selection will be taken into consideration within the parameters of the Collection Development Policy, budget and physical space.

Access

- A. Censorship is a purely individual matter. While an individual or group is free to reject material, no one shall restrict access to the rest of the community.
- B. The Library does not restrict access to Library materials except for the express purpose of protecting material from mutilation and theft. Materials are shelved for the convenience of their general audience and according to shelf space. Patrons of any age may use any materials in all sections of the library.
- C. Parents or guardians, not the Library or its staff, are responsible for the materials accessed by children in the Library collection or on Library computers. Responsibility for children rests solely with their parents or legal guardians.

Selection Responsibility

- A. Responsibility for collection development lies with librarians who apply professional knowledge, experience and the criteria of this policy to making selection decisions for the library.
- B. Formats may include but not be limited to fiction and non-fiction print materials for all ages, e-books, magazines and newspapers, DVDs, audiobooks and electronic databases. Evolving formats will be identified and added as technology changes, reliability and availability improve and patron demand increases.

Collection Maintenance

- A. To ensure that the library's collection remains up-to-date and relevant to the community's needs, it is the responsibility of the selectors to reevaluate, on a regular basis, the usefulness of materials held in the collection.
- B. Selectors will remove materials from the collection as they become out-of-date, badly worn, damaged or are no longer being used. Space, cost of replacement, and appearance of the collection are also factors. Locally significant materials or materials of historical note, are not held to these standards and are generally retained. Materials withdrawn from the Villisca Public Library may be sold in library book sales or recycled.

Withdrawing Materials

- A. Weeding is an essential and accepted part of Library collection development. Obsolescence, use, damage, and normal wear and tear make the withdrawing of materials a continuous process. The Director (or other professional staff) will decide by using the criteria listed under Selection Guidelines as to what should be withdrawn. The withdrawn materials are sold, traded, recycled, or disposed of in any way the Director and Library Board deem appropriate.

Reconsideration of Materials Procedure

A. The Library Board recognizes that the diversity of the collection may offend some patrons that will result in complaints. Challenged material will be handled in the following manner, consistent with the ALA's "*Library Bill of Rights*" and "*Freedom to Read Statement*," which are listed in the Resource Section:

1. The challenged material will remain in the library pending a decision.
2. After a review of any challenged material, an attempt will be made to settle the challenge through informal conversation or written communication with the complainant.
3. In the event that complainant has not received satisfaction through the preceding means, the complainant will be requested to file his/her objections in writing by filling out a Request for Reconsideration Form. At the same time, the complainant will be provided with a copy of the Villisca Public Library Selection Policy.
4. If the complainant does file a Request for Reconsideration Form, the written complaint will be forwarded to a committee of five, made up of the President of the library Board of Trustees, one member of the Board of Trustees, and three representatives of the school or civic community who reside in Villisca.
5. The complainant will be notified in advance of any meetings of the committee and is welcome to attend.
6. The committee will carefully view the complaint and the material in question in the light of the Library's selection policy. The committee will examine the challenged material as a whole, not passages pulled out of context. Strengths and weaknesses will be weighed and an opinion formed based on selection criteria and relevance. A written recommendation will be made and placed on the agenda of the Board's next regular meeting. The Board will decide on the matter and report in writing to the complainant within ten days of the meeting. The decision of the Board is final. An item will only be evaluated for reconsideration once in a twelve-month period.
7. The Director of the Library will implement the recommendations of the Board.



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CITIZENS REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Author_____

Title_____

Your Name _____

Address_____ Tel.#_____

City_____

Whom do you represent? Myself_____ Group or Organization_____

1) Why do you object to this item?_____

2) To what specifically in the item do you object?_____

3) What do you feel might be the result of exposure to this material?

4) For what age group would you recommend this item?

5) Did you read/view/hear the entire material? _____ If not, what

parts_____

6) Are you aware of the judgment of this material by professional critics?

7) Have you seen or heard review of this item? If so, please name the source:

8) What would you like your library to do about this item?

Signature of complainant _____

Date_____

Gifts & Donations

- A. Within the provisions of state law, the Villisca Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted the following policy:
1. Books and other materials will be accepted on the condition that the Library has the authority to make any decision whatsoever regarding the use or disposition of what has been donated.
 2. Gifts of money, real estate, or stock will be accepted if conditions attached thereto are acceptable to the Board of Trustees.
 3. All gifts of personal property, art objects, portraits, antiques, or museum objects donated to the Library shall become the property of the Library and shall be used, displayed, or disposed of as the Board deems fitting or proper.
- B. The Villisca Public Library welcomes gifts of all types including Library materials, money, and real property. Over the years, many generous gifts from individuals, clubs and civic organizations have helped the Library bring new services to our city and to improve the existing programs. Gifts of cash are most particularly welcomed since they can most easily and quickly be used to implement the Library's programs. This Library accepts gifts of cash designated for specific purposes but can most effectively use money if it is free to allocate it to those programs or activities currently in greatest need. The Library applies the same criteria for evaluation of gift items as it applies to purchasing materials. All gifts are tax deductible and the library will furnish (upon request) a statement for tax purposes, but does not place a financial value on items. No gifts are accepted unless given to the Library without restriction. All gifts may be utilized, sold, or disposed of in the best interest of the Library. Materials that are added to the collection will not be shelved in any special section, but will take their place with the regular collection. Gift items will be withdrawn from the collection according to the same principles as purchased items, and the library cannot assume responsibility for notifying the donor of this withdrawn item or for replacing worn-out or lost copies, nor for purchasing new or revised editions of titles which were donated.

Memorials

- A. The Villisca Public Library welcomes gifts of money for the purchase of books and materials as memorials. Materials purchased on this basis will be appropriately identified. Books selected as memorials will be ones of long-term usefulness and interest so that the donor will know that he/she is presenting material that will remain in the collection for many years. Material accepted as memorials must conform to the Library's policies for the selection of books and related materials. The donor may make a specific request for the use of his/her contribution (subject to the policies herein outlined) or he/she may leave the selection entirely to the discretion of the Library. All memorials given to the Library will be acknowledged by the Library to the immediate family of the deceased and to the person or organization giving the memorial.

Endowment Fund

In the fall of 2013, the Villisca Public Library invested in the Community Foundations of Southwest Iowa Endowment Fund with the following bylaws:

1. The Villisca Public Library Endowment Fund #2 is hereby established to preserve and insure the continued operations of this public service by gifts, devises, and bequests.
2. The principal of such gifts, devices, and bequests to said fund shall be held in perpetuity unless the terms of any gift, devise, or bequest shall direct that the principal be expended.
3. The principal of this fund shall be invested by the Board of Trustees with emphasis on safety in lieu of return and the income earned shall be paid into the general fund of the Library at regular intervals.
4. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for administering the expenditure income from the Endowment Fund.
5. Real estate, corporate stocks, bonds, or other property given to the Endowment Fund may, at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, be retained in the form as when received or sold and reinvested.
6. If at any time the Villisca Public Library is no longer in operation, the City of Villisca shall be entitled to receive all benefits of said Endowment Fund and shall be obligated to administer the same in all respects and in accordance with the terms thereof.
7. Any article may be amended from time to time with the approval of a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

Dated this 11th day of November, 2013

Marsha Underwood
President, Board of Trustees

Original Date: November 11, 2013



Donation Acknowledgement

I, _____, agree that by donating the books listed below, that I am aware that these books will be considered for use by the Villisca Public Library, but there is no guarantee that they will be added to the collection. The process to determine gifts to the library is set through the Collection Development Policy of the Villisca Public Library. Donated items may be added to the collection, added to the library book sale rack, donated or sent to a bookseller.

The number of items donated includes:

_____ Hardcover books

_____ Paperback books

_____ Other (please specify) _____

(Please Print)

Name of Donor: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone or e-mail: _____

Signature of donor: _____

Staff person: _____

Date: _____

The Library Trustees, staff, and Friends thank you for supporting the Villisca Public Library. The Library is a non-for-profit institution, and this donation may be tax deductible. The Villisca Public Library does not assign a value to the items donated.



VILLISCA PUBLIC LIBRARY INTERNET DISCLAIMER AND PATRON USE POLICY

- A. By using the public Internet workstation at the Villisca Public Library, you realize that the staff cannot control:
- The accuracy and validity of the information accessed
 - The availability of links to sites you want to visit
 - The materials you may find offensive
- B. You also agree to the responsible, ethical use of the resources, such as:
- No unauthorized or illegal uses (spamming, hacking, copyright infringement, pornography or chain letters.
 - Respecting the privacy of others by not misrepresenting oneself as another user.
 - Not using online chat rooms, Usenet news, or downloading to the hard drive.
 - Illegal acts involving library computers or personal devices accessing the library's wireless service may also be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities. It is against Iowa law to download or provide child pornography, or display pornography where it may be seen by children (Iowa Code, chapter 728.2).
- C. The Villisca Public Library assumes no responsibility for the use of the Internet by children under the age of 14. It is not possible for library staff to control specific information that children and youth may locate on the Internet. Just as libraries do not vouch for or endorse the viewpoints of written material in their collections, they do not do so for electronic information. Selection policies, which serve to govern a library's purchase of written material, do not apply to material accessed electronically. It is the responsibility of the user (or parents, guardian, caregiver) to determine what is appropriate.
- D. Persons using this equipment agree not to make any changes to the setup or configuration of the software or hardware. **Downloading of games, without permission/supervision of staff, is strictly prohibited.** Misuse or abuse of this computer or Internet access will result in suspension of Internet privileges and/or further appropriate measures.
- E. Library staff is available to assist you in your use of these resources, but may not be familiar with every application you might wish to use. Because of the many different Internet applications available, total technical support cannot be provided.
- F. Use of this workstation is limited to 90 minutes per day, per patron if someone is waiting to use the computers. Continued time allotment is at the discretion of the staff on duty.
- G. Printing costs of 20¢ per page for black and white and 50¢ per page for color will be charged.

Wireless Access at the Library

- A. Unfiltered, wireless Internet access is provided free of charge to anyone using their personal laptop computer or device equipped with functioning wireless or wired network connection.
- B. The Library assumes no responsibility for wireless users' equipment or software and cannot guarantee the security of your files or transmissions.



Kindle Lending Policy

In April 2016, the Villisca Public Library (VPL) launched a free Kindle lending program for adults over the age of 21. Patrons may borrow tablets for three weeks at a time, with no renewals. The Kindle Lending Program aligns with many of VPL's strategic goals, including improving access to information, increasing digital literacy and supporting Villisca's creative community.

Kindle Loan Agreement

General Guidelines

Below are the terms for borrowing a Villisca Public Library Kindle Paperwhite:

1. Patron must be an adult (21 years of age or older) resident who is a library cardholder in good standing and have a current government issued ID such as a driver's license, permit, or passport. "Cardholder" is defined as a resident of Villisca or surrounding area having a VPL library card for a minimum of 6 months. "Good standing" is defined as a library card account and any custodial children/guardians' accounts having no fines or fees and no history of a delinquent account.
2. Only one Kindle per household may be checked out at any given time.
3. Be cautious with the Kindle. Keep it safe from water and other liquids and take care not to drop it. Avoid exposing the Kindle to extreme temperatures such as leaving it in your car in winter or in the summer's heat. Do not allow children to play with the device.
4. The Kindle has to be returned to a staff member, not to an external book drop. If the Kindle is returned in the book drop box, a \$25 minimum fee will be charged to the user.
5. Kindle will be inspected for condition and content before and after patron use. Any changes in condition or content while in the patron's care will be the patron's responsibility.
6. Patron will be financially responsible for purchase of additional Kindle applications, e-books, data, or services while using the Kindle.
7. Patron is responsible for all materials associated with the Kindle loan and will pay for any damages if it's broken, lost or stolen.
8. Patron will not use the Kindle for illegal activities and will follow all library policies.
9. Patron is prohibited from disabling or tampering with the installed antivirus software unless authorized by the Library Director. To protect the Villisca Public Library network, the patron must report and return an infected Kindle (suspected or actual) to the library as soon as possible for reload and renewal.
10. If the Kindle "crashes" or begins to operate erratically, the patron should return it to the Villisca Public Library as soon as possible for reload and renewal.
11. Patron will read and sign a copy of the Kindle Loan Agreement.
12. Kindles will be available on a first come, first serve basis. However, the Villisca Public Library reserves the right to prioritize checkout to visually impaired patrons when availability is limited.



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Replacement Charges

The patron is responsible for replacement of lost, stolen or damaged Kindle Paperwhite readers, parts, and accessories. Replacement charges are as follows (subject to change without notice):

- Kindle Paperwhite: \$125 (includes processing fee)
- Kindle Cover: \$20
- MiniUSB/Power Plug Adapter/Charger: \$35
- USB 2.0 Cable: \$10
- Instruction booklet/Quick Start Guide: \$5
- Tote bag: \$20
- Battery: \$50

Responsibility

The Library is not responsible for any liability, damages, or expense resulting from use or misuse of the device, connection of the device to other electronic devices, or data loss resulting from use of device. The Library is not responsible for downloaded content on the device. Any use of the device for illegal purposes, unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material in any format, or transmission of threatening, harassing, defamatory or obscene materials is strictly prohibited.

Lending Guidelines

Eligibility: Valid VPL Library Card and a current government issued photo I.D.

Loan Periods: 3 Weeks

Check-in: Kindle must be returned to a staff member (no book drop returns)

Borrowing Limit: 1 per household

Renewals: None

Holds: No

Late Charges: \$1 per day

Lost/Replacement If the Kindle is 14 days overdue, the account will be blocked and replacement fees will be charged.

I, _____ (print full name) have read and agree to the terms and conditions of the Villisca Public Library’s Kindle Loan Agreement policy.

Signature: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date: _____

Staff inspection: _____ :before use _____ :after use (please initial)

Date: _____



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Kindle Loan Agreement

General Guidelines

Below are the terms for borrowing a Villisca Public Library Kindle.

1. You are an adult 21 years of age or older resident who is a library cardholder in good standing and have a current government issued ID such as a driver's license, permit, or passport. "Cardholder" is defined as a resident of Villisca or surrounding area having a VPL library card for a minimum of 30 days. "Good standing" is defined as a library card account and any custodial children/guardians' accounts having fines and fees of less than \$5.00.
2. Only one Kindle per household may be checked out at any given time.
3. You are responsible for all materials associated with the Kindle loan and will pay for any damages if it's lost or stolen. These materials include:
 - a. Kindle Paperwhite
 - b. Kindle case
 - c. Charger
 - d. Travel pouch
4. Be careful with the Kindle. Keep it safe from water and other liquids and take care not to drop it. Avoid exposing the Kindle to extreme temperatures such as leaving it in your car in winter or in the summer's heat.
5. If the Kindle or related equipment is not returned, your account will be blocked and you will be charged a replacement fee of \$275.
6. The Kindle has to be returned to a staff member not to an external book drop.
7. You will not use the Kindle for illegal activities and will follow all library policies.
8. You will read and sign a copy of the Kindle Loan Agreement.

Lending Policy

Eligibility: Valid VPL Library Card and a current government issued photo I.D.

Loan Periods: 3 Weeks

Check-in: Kindle must be returned to a staff member (no book drop returns)

Borrowing Limit: 1 Per household

Renewals: 3

Holds: No

Late Charges: \$1/day

Lost/Replacement If the Kindle is 28 days overdue, the account will be blocked and a replacement fee of \$275 will be charged

I agree to follow the Villisca Public Library's Kindle Loan Agreement policy.

Name: _____ Date: _____

ALA 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.

ALA 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.

ALA The Freedom to Read Statement

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:

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.

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.

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.

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

ALA The Freedom to Read Statement

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.

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.

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.

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

ALA The Freedom to Read Statement

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.

Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (formerly titled "Free Access to Libraries for Minors")

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users violate the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The "right to use a library" includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis. Librarians cannot predict what resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual user based on a single criterion such as chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation. Equitable access to all library resources and services shall not be abridged through restrictive scheduling or use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, games, software, and other formats.¹ Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.² Librarians and library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize librarians or library governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services." Librarians and library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their

children’s—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children.

Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

Note

1. See *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant’s Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011): a) Video games qualify for First Amendment protection. Like protected books, plays, and movies, they communicate ideas through familiar literary devices and features distinctive to the medium.. And ‘the basic principles of freedom of speech . . . do not vary’ with a new and different communication medium.”

2. See *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975): “Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors.” See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S.503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

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