

Fairfax Community Library

Selection and Reconsideration Policy

Mission Statements

FCL Mission statement

The Fairfax Community Library serves both the citizens of Fairfax as well as the students, faculty and staff of Bellows Free Academy. We are committed to assisting and encouraging all community members in their endeavor for self-education and/or recreational reading. The library supports the curriculum of Bellows Free Academy. The library provides the community with materials, reference services and programs, functioning as a center for reliable information.

The mission of the Franklin West Supervisory Union School Libraries is to support and empower all students and staff to be enthusiastic independent readers, critical thinkers, skillful researchers, as well as ethical users and producers of information in a global society.

Support for Intellectual Freedom

The library provides an impartial environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together with the universe of ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions. The library affirms the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to View, and Freedom to Read policy statements in support of acquiring and managing collections. Pursuant to these, the Library will not automatically withdraw duly selected materials from the library collections in response to a request from an individual or group

The Library maintains a collection of over 43,000 volumes, including books, games, DVDs, audiobooks, and a collection of digital resources. The Library develops the collection based upon knowledge of the community, empirical data about the use of the collection, and input from staff and patrons. Selection of materials does not mean endorsement of the contents or views expressed in those materials.

Objectives

The library's collection is developed and managed to meet the majority of the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the library's service area. The library builds and maintains a patron-oriented collection by anticipating and responding to needs and expectations.

Public Library Selection Policy Objectives

Collection decisions are made in conjunction with the strategic initiatives, especially the following:

- To provide materials and information in a variety of formats that entertain, inform and enlighten all people of the community.
- To represent a wide spectrum of diverse ideas, cultures and philosophies which expose patrons to the larger world community without prejudice.

- To maintain a collection with materials appropriate for all ages and reading levels to promote literacy and learning.
- To ensure access to a rich variety of literature to foster a lifelong love of reading for all through effective service.

School Library Selection Policy Objectives

- To provide faculty and students with materials that enrich and support the curriculum and meet the needs of the students and faculty served
- To provide students with a wide range of educational materials on all levels of difficulty and in a variety of formats, with diversity of appeal, allowing for the presentation of many different points of view
- To select materials that present various sides of controversial issues, giving students an opportunity to develop analytical skills resulting in informed decisions
- To select materials in all formats, including up-to-date, high quality, varied literature to develop and strengthen a love of reading

Responsibility for Selection

Final responsibility for the selection of materials rests with the professionally trained library personnel using the Joint Library Board's adopted selection criteria and procedures.

Selection Criteria

Public Library Selection Criteria

Public libraries are diverse and represent a broad demographic. The Fairfax Community Library provides a collection containing a wide variety of material formats, including print, audio-visual, and electronic. In selecting materials and developing collections for adults, as well as for children and teens, library staff includes materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity not only of the region it serves but also the larger global perspective. The library collection will provide a broad range of opinion on current issues.

Works are not excluded or included in the collection based solely on subject matter or on political, religious, or ideological grounds. In building collections, library staff is guided by the principle of selection, rather than censorship. Furthermore, the selection of a given item for a library's collections should not be interpreted as an endorsement of a particular viewpoint.

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable.

General Criteria:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Cost
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Attention by critics and reviewers
- Potential user appeal
- Requests by library patrons

Content Criteria:

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Skill, competence, and purpose of the author
- Reputation and significance of the author
- Objectivity
- Consideration of the work as a whole
- Clarity
- Currency
- Technical quality
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Vitality and originality
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Sustained interest
- Relevance and use of the information
- Effective characterization
- Authenticity of history or social setting

Special Considerations for Electronic Information Sources:

- Ease of use of the product
- Availability of the information to multiple simultaneous users
- Equipment needed to provide access to the information
- Technical support and training
- Availability of the physical space needed to house and store the information or equipment
- Available in full text

Top Five Recommended Public Library Reviewing Sources:

- Booklist

- Goodreads
- New York Times Book Review
- Publishers Weekly
- Shelf Awareness

School Library Selection Criteria

General Criteria:

- Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests and learning
- Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format
- Be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected
- Incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources
- Earn favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
- Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest
- Represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues
- Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures
- Include a variety of resources in physical and virtual formats including print and non-print such as electronic and multimedia (including subscription databases and other online products, e-books, educational games, and other forms of emerging technologies)
- Demonstrate physical format, appearance, and durability suitable to their intended use
- Balance cost with need

Top Five Recommended School Library Reviewing Sources:

- Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Notable Children's Books
- Booklist
- School Library Journal
- We Need Diverse Books website
- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults

Acquisitions Procedures

The public library director and school library director have responsibility for the overall selection and maintenance of all materials and formats within the collection of the library.

- In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible.
- Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, students, district personnel, and community members, as appropriate.
- Gift materials shall be judged by the selection criteria and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.
- Selection is an ongoing process that should include removing materials that are no longer used or needed, adding materials, and replacing lost and worn materials that still have educational value.

Special Collections

The Fairfax Historical Society collection located in the Fairfax room provides users with access to works of local historical interest.

Selecting Controversial Materials

A balanced collection attempts to represent all sides of controversial issues as far as availability of materials, space, and budget allow. Selection is based upon criteria stated in this policy. The race, religion, nationality, or political views of an author or creator; offensive language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content of an item; or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group in the community does not cause an item automatically to be included or excluded from the library's collection.

All public libraries contain materials that some patrons may find objectionable. Libraries may omit from the collection materials that some patrons feel are important. In either case, the library has procedures that patrons may use in requesting the reconsideration of materials.

School library professional staff will provide materials on opposing viewpoints on controversial issues to enable students to develop the necessary critical thinking skills to be discriminate users of information and productive members of society.

Gifts and Donations

Gifts are accepted with the understanding that final disposition of the material will be determined by the librarians in accordance with the above criteria. Gifts for memorial purposes are encouraged. Disbursement of memorial gifts will be decided upon by the librarians and the Joint Library Board after conferring with the donor or their representative whenever possible.

Collection Maintenance and Weeding

The library continually withdraws items from the collection, basing its decisions on a number of factors, including publishing date, frequency of circulation, patron interest, and availability of newer or more valid materials. Items dealing with local history are an exception. Fiction that was once popular but no longer in demand and non-fiction books that are no longer useful are withdrawn from the collection.

Withdrawn books in good condition may be made available to teachers, students or public patrons. Materials that are moldy, wet, or somehow contaminated will be disposed of.

Sustainable Shelves Program

The Sustainable Shelves program is a new service just launched by Baker & Taylor that helps libraries manage the books removed from the collection through weeding or discarding of damaged material.

All items are packed and shipped, reusing the same boxes that our new materials arrive in. Materials not purchased for resale are sent to a paper-pulper facility where new paper is created, benefitting our delicate environment. The library is credited for the material shipped and we are able to replenish the collection with new materials.

Policy Revision

All library policies, including the selection policy, should be reviewed for necessary revisions on a regular schedule.

Reconsideration

Fairfax Community Library recognizes that a collection of diverse materials may result in some complaints or requests for reconsideration. The following procedures have been developed to assure that complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. The Library will consider patron objections to materials in its collection by using the following procedure:

Fairfax Community Library Procedures for Handling Formal Complaints

The following steps will be used when an individual feels that further action is necessary to address concerns about a library resource. For the duration of this process, the material in question will remain in circulation in the library collection.

1. A concerned patron who is dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be offered a packet of materials that includes the library's mission statement, selection policy, reconsideration form, and the Library Bill of Rights.
2. Patrons are required to complete and submit a reconsideration form to the librarians..
3. The librarians will review the reconsideration form and the material in question, to consider whether its selection follows the criteria stated in the collection policy.
4. The librarians will then notify the Joint Library Board and the Superintendent of the

receipt of the statement.

5. All members of the Joint Board and the Superintendent will read the material in question and will fill out similar forms if appropriate.
6. The Joint Library Board will then call a meeting and a public warning will be posted.
7. The Joint Library Board and the Superintendent will render a decision in a timely manner.
8. The Joint Library Board and the Superintendent reserves the right to limit the length of public comments.
9. The decision of the board is final.

"Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries", American Library Association, December 8, 2016.

<http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit> (Accessed October 19, 2021)

Document ID: 8e08577d-3120-4054-796c-6f93719ba584

Fairfax Community Library Reconsideration Form

The Fairfax Community Library 's Joint Library Board has established a materials selection policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the librarians.

Fairfax Community Library

75 Hunt Street

Fairfax, VT 05454

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent self? Or an organization? Name of Organization

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

Book (e-book) Movie Magazine Audio Recording

Digital Resource Game Newspaper Other

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

4. What concerns you about the resource?

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?

Public Library Sample Letter to Person Requesting Reconsideration

Dear _____:

We appreciate your concern over the use of _____ in the library. Selecting materials that serve the needs of our community is a vital part of operating a library. The Joint Library Board takes this responsibility very seriously and has established a materials selection policy for selecting resources as well as a detailed reconsideration procedure for requesting reconsideration of particular items. I have enclosed both for your review. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss them further.

If you are still concerned after you review the material public library policies, please complete the Request for Reconsideration of Material form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request. The steps that will be taken are outlined in the Reconsideration procedure. At any point during this process, please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Library Director

Date

School Library Sample Letter to Person Requesting Reconsideration

Dear _____:

We appreciate your concern over the use of _____ in our school district. The district has a policy for selecting materials, but realizes that not everyone will agree with every selection made.

To help you understand the selection process, we are sending copies of the district's:

1. Instructional goals and objectives
2. Materials Selection Policy statement
3. Procedure for Handling Formal Complaints
4. Request for Reconsideration of Material form

If you are still concerned after you review this material, please complete the enclosed Request for Reconsideration of Material form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request. If I have not heard from you within two weeks, we will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint.

Sincerely,

Principal

Date

Library Bill of Rights

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights.

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

Freedom to Read statement

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

Freedom to View statement

<https://www.ala.org/rt/vrt/professionalresources/vrtresources/freedomtoview>

ALA Resources

<https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport>