

**Randall Library – Stow, MA**  
**100-00007 – Rev 01 – April 2021**  
**Collection Development Policy**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Randall Library uses its resources to contribute to individual and community informational, educational, cultural, recreational, and social enjoyment and enrichment by providing free and equal access to high quality materials, an excellent, efficient, and energetic library staff, and a safe, pleasant library building.

**PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

This policy is established to formally outline guidelines for staff for day-to-day acquisition and withdrawal decisions, resource allocation, and long-range planning of collection needs in accordance with the Library's mission. It serves as a communication tool for discussion with library users about such decisions and a framework for responding to community needs and interests. The purpose of all collection development decisions is to offer opportunity and encouragement in the community's efforts to:

- pursue life-long education
- examine all sides of an issue
- keep abreast of new ideas
- become informed citizens of the community, the nation, and the world
- improve occupational performance
- read recreationally and develop creative abilities

**I. Selection of Materials**

The Library Board delegates to the Library Director the authority and responsibility for selection and management of all materials within the framework of this policy. Actual selection and management activities are shared among trained library staff that shall discharge this obligation consistent with this policy and established procedures. Selection will be made according to the guidelines stated by the American Library Association in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View Statements (Appendix).

Recommendations from patrons or staff for future purchases may be made to the Library staff with approval from the Library Director. All patron requests are considered, but not all may be purchased if the anticipated demand is low or the work has no permanent value.

The following general criteria will be used for selection of materials although an item does not have to meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any single criterion be decisive:

1. Accuracy, timeliness, and relevance to the community

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2. Suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience
3. Importance as a document of the times
4. Reputation and/or significance of the author, publisher or producer
5. Positive review in one or more appropriate professional journals
6. Positive critics' and staff member reviews
7. Relationship to existing materials in the collection
8. Within limits of the budget available
9. Subject matter of material is needed to round out the collection
10. Local author or illustrator
11. Format is appropriate for library use
12. Enhances a specific collection within the library
13. Popularity of author/genre/subject/series with library patrons
14. Literary and artistic merit
15. Accuracy of content
16. A copyright date falling within the last three years

Adult Fiction Collection – The fiction collection is intended to fulfill the overall needs of the public for novels and short stories in many genres, new or old, even if they are not of permanent value. Attention is paid to the literary side of fiction as well with purchases of books that may not be in high demand but that provide reflective reading. High-demand titles are purchased at the time of publication to keep up with requests. An item that is not purchased upon publication will be reconsidered at any time there is a request for it. Previous works by popular authors will be kept on the shelf until interest in the author wanes as long as space is available. Graphic novels will be shelved together for ease of location by our adult patrons and coded with a graphic novel spine label.

Adult Non-Fiction Collection – Within budget and shelf-space limitations, the library will attempt to build a collection covering the spectrum of the Dewey Decimal System for the adult patron. To achieve this end, materials on any particular subject will be of broad, general interest rather than of scholarly interest. Textbooks will not be part of the collection except in the case where it is the only or best material available on a subject. The staff will not seek out materials which support post-secondary education or scholarly research, as this is the mission upheld generally by academic libraries, not public.

Children's Collection – The goal of the children's fiction/non-fiction section is to provide books that children want to read. However, librarians will ensure that quality books are available by selecting children's fiction/non-fiction based on individual review of books by the library staff,

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book reviews in professional journals, catalog descriptions, and award winners. Books will be housed in the following categories:

- Board Books are designed to be used by infants as they learn to find joy in books. Selection will be based on book content and book size that is geared toward infants and toddlers.
- Picture Books are meant to be read aloud and include interesting pictures that hold a child's attention. The content of picture books will be selected to appeal primarily to children up to age 6, while recognizing that older children continue to be drawn to the picture book section. The picture book section will include a wide variety of subjects. Popular series will be shelved together for ease of location by our young patrons.
- Early Reader Fiction Books are items a beginning reader can read with little or no help from an adult. Emphasis for selection will be based on simple words, short sentences, larger type size, fewer paragraphs and fewer illustrations, rather than on subject-matter content. First chapter books will be included in the Early Reader section.
- Early Reader Non-Fiction Books are works, designed for children younger than third grade, which will be selected based on their appeal and reading level. Emphasis for selection will be based on simple words, short sentences, larger type size, fewer paragraphs and more illustrations to encompass a wide range of the Dewey Decimal System.
- Junior Fiction Books are those books written for independent readers at reading levels of third through fifth grade or whose subject matter is of interest to children in this age range. The books may contain some illustrations, but generally the books are presented in chapter form without pictures. Graphic novels will be shelved together for ease of location by our children and coded with a graphic novel spine label.
- Junior Non-Fiction Books are books of interest to, and written at a reading level of, third through sixth grades. In selecting children's non-fiction books, the criteria used will be accuracy of facts, timeliness of information, and clarity and quality of the writing, presentation and illustrations. It is the intent to provide information in all fields of knowledge in which children are interested, and to provide it in an engaging and entertaining manner in order to stimulate imagination and satisfy curiosity.

Young Adult Fiction Collection

This genre is for students in middle and high school grades with subject matter that is of interest to youth of that age level. Graphic novels will be shelved together for ease of location by our young adult patrons and coded with a graphic novel spine label.

Young Adult Non-Fiction Collection

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Books in this area will include a variety of subjects that may enhance school curriculum projects, college selection, and career planning for students in middle and high school grades. These items are shelved adjacent to the Young Adult Fiction section.

Library of Things Collection – As needs and interests change in the community, the Library seeks ways in which to meet those demands. One such resource the Library can provide to the community is the Library of Things collection. This collection is made up of non-traditional items for cardholders to borrow instead of purchasing and storing in their home. Current library of things examples include - a metal detector, sewing machine, ukuleles, wood burning tool, and a button maker.

## **II. Purchasing Materials**

Materials will be purchased using the most economical method available. The bulk of materials will be purchased through book wholesalers or retail outlets offering library discounts. Purchases directly from retail outlets offering no discount will be used if an item is unavailable through the primary wholesaler. Each item acquired will be date stamped and marked to show ownership by the library.

## **III. Gifts and Donations**

All gifts are subject to the evaluation criteria stated for the selection of materials. Donors are informed that any gifts or donations of materials may or may not be added to the collection. Any item which is not added will be placed on the Randall Library Friends' sale shelf. Donations are subject to the same weeding criteria as other materials in the collection. In the case of a memorial gift, reasonable attempts will be made to contact the donor or a family member before discarding the item.

## **IV. Formats**

The Library's collection will include materials in a variety of formats which meet the needs of the community including physical and electronic materials. Traditional formats such as books, audiobooks, videos, and periodicals will continue to have their place, but electronic formats such as downloadable eBooks, audiobooks, periodicals, and various streaming formats such as Hoopla will continue to be added.

## **V. Reconsideration of Materials**

As a tax-supported institution, the library welcomes suggestions and comments about its collection. Some of the materials may be offensive to individuals or groups because of individual perceptions of profanity, social, economic, and political ideas, religious viewpoints, and the background of the author, or the kind of information provided. The library does not

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approve nor endorse any particular viewpoint or belief represented in its collection. The library's role is to provide materials which allow individuals to freely examine issues and make their own decisions. It is the responsibility of individuals to limit their reading to books and materials which are congruent with their individual tastes. While a person may reject materials for him/herself and his/her children, he/she may not restrict access to the materials by others. Patrons who wish to make a formal complaint about an item in the library, should complete a "Reconsideration of Materials" form (Appendix) and submit it to the Library Director.

**VI. Analysis and Weeding**

The collection needs continuous evaluation in order to be sure that the Library is providing materials in a timely manner and to meet patrons' interests and needs. Some of the factors that will be considered when analyzing works in all formats are as follows:

1. A non-fiction item more than 10 years old, unless it is a work of classic thought or contains timeless information, will be removed from the shelves regardless of condition or use.
2. Works that have become unappealing due to aging, damage or wear will be removed; if repair cannot improve the condition, they may be replaced with a newer edition or a similar work on the subject.
3. Any work, regardless of age or condition, that contains information or illustrations that are dated or misleading because of lack of congruity with newer research will be removed. Works that have been superseded by a newer edition containing updated information will be removed and, if deemed necessary, replaced by the newer edition.
4. Fictional works which have no lasting value, as well as non-fictional works containing trivial or irrelevant information, such as popular diet books, political commentary or pop culture biographies, will be discarded if they have not circulated in the last three years.
5. Duplicate copies of titles, purchased due to high demand, will be discarded once popularity has waned.
6. If crucial components of materials from a unique collection are missing and not available for replacement from the publisher/vendor, then that item will be removed from the collection.

**VII. Repair/Replacement of Materials**

New materials will be protected with appropriate coverings and reinforced according to standard library practice. All circulation desk staff will be watchful of materials in need of repair and forward those materials to the appropriate staff person. At least one staff member will be trained in basic book-repair procedures and able to make simple book repairs such as torn or loose pages, loose signatures and covers, damaged cover corners, loose or broken hinges, worn spines

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and frayed spine edges. Before discarding any still-current but worn materials, an evaluation will be made as to the feasibility of on-premises repair.

**Appendix.**

- I. Library Bill of Rights.
- II. Freedom to Read.
- III. Freedom to View.
- IV. Reconsideration of Library Resources Form.

**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.

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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](#).

## **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

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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.*

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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

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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.

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## **Freedom to View Statement**

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

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**Request for Reconsideration of Material Form**

The Trustees of the Randall Library have 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 library director.

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Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent self? \_\_\_\_\_

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?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?

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