
Collection Development Policy

Summary

The purpose of this policy is to help patrons understand how and why we choose materials for our collection. It also serves as a guide to the staff in the selection of materials for the Library.

Policy

In accordance with its mission, the Nesmith Library subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A), and other policies on intellectual freedom authored by the American Library Association, including the Freedom to Read Statement (Appendix B), and the Freedom to View Statement (Appendix C).

Goals of Service

The following goals will fulfill the Library's mission:

1. To provide sufficient materials to meet current and projected community needs.
2. To assure open access to all library materials for all patrons.
3. To obtain materials of varying viewpoints to embrace diversity.
4. To meet the needs of patrons having a variety of reading and educational levels.
5. To expand library usage to those in the community who are not now library users.
6. To contribute constructively to the individual's awareness of self and community while providing insight into a wide range of human and social conditions and varying cultural heritage.
7. To encourage informal self-education and lifelong learning.
8. To measure the effectiveness of the collection in meeting the needs of our community.
9. To develop library services that incorporate both physical and virtual collections.
10. To encourage experimentation, curiosity, and learning.
11. To offer self-guided recreation.

Responsibility for Collection Development

Responsibility for collection development coordination and supervision lies with the Library Director, who is accountable for the growth and maintenance of the collection. Selected staff members have collection development responsibilities for specific collections, subject areas, or formats. All staff members make suggestions for new and replacement materials.

Collection Areas

Adult Collection

A selection of works highlighting a wide range of materials in different formats for all ages and levels of interest is available. Many points of view on current and controversial issues should be included to provide information needed for democratic decision-making.

A mix of classic, basic, and traditional works are provided, as well as materials presenting contemporary ideas, formats and styles.

Young Adult Collection

A selection of materials straddling the children's and adult collections, the Young Adult collection contains materials geared to those in the middle school and early high school years. It attempts to address the reading interests and concerns of those going through a period of rapid growth and development, while complementing the resources available at the Windham Middle School and High School.

Children's Collection

The Children's collection serves the needs of children and their parents, from infancy through the elementary and middle grades. The variety of materials in this collection provides for the development of literacy skills, creates an appreciation of the Library during the formative years, responds to recreational needs, and supports the educational process with materials complementary to those in the Windham public schools.

Reference Collection

The Reference collection is targeted to provide timely, accurate information for users to aid in their pursuit of personal and professional interests, support the educational process with informational materials for those requiring quick response to inquiries, assist those pursuing independent learning and make available local historical and community resource information. The collection contains resources to support the local business community, enhance career development and provide information on educational institutions.

Reference materials are collected in a variety of formats, including book, periodical, microform, and electronic.

Non-Print Materials and Periodical Collections

Non-print materials (e.g., audio books, DVD's, CD's, unusual items etc.) and periodicals (e.g., newspapers, magazines, and journals) are subject to the same selection criteria as printed books.

Electronic Format

In general, materials in electronic formats are subject to the same selection criteria as print materials. Other non-content criteria such as ease of access and hardware compatibility also play a role in selecting electronic media. Examples of electronic resources include eBooks and audiobooks, databases, streaming services etc.

Unusual Items

Unusual Items are a circulation collection of occasional use items. These items can include tools, games, or instruments to name a few. Some of these items may require that patrons be 18 years of age, and sign a liability waiver to check out.

Criteria for Selection of Library Materials

Materials selected may meet only a small number of selection criteria if their inclusion is seen as important enough to fill a serious gap in the collection, or, due to popular demand.

The following criteria serve as the backbone of materials selection:

- Library's mission and service goals
- User requests that fall within the scope of this policy
- Formal and independent educational needs
- Recreational needs
- Potential use
- Local significance
- Impact of item on collection diversity

Criteria for electronic collections may additionally include:

- 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
- Availability in full text

Criteria for unusual items collection may include:

- Patron demand or demonstrated community need for the item.
- Adequate space to store the item.
- Instructions for using the item are available and can be created easily by library staff,
- A reasonable assumption that patrons can use item without extensive specialized training.

The following are also considered in materials selection:

- Funding
- Critical reviews
- Space limitations
- Authority, accuracy and interest level of material
- Currency of information
- Reputation of author, publisher, or editing body

Criteria for Artificial Intelligence Generated Materials

The library is committed to maintaining a collection curated by the library staff that reflects human creativity, knowledge, and expertise. As such, the library does not deliberately purchase, acquire, or accept donations of books that are knowingly generated, authored, or written by artificial intelligence. This policy ensures that our collection upholds quality, authenticity, and intellectual integrity for our community.

AI-assisted content is permitted in the Nesmith Library collection subject to the same requirements and criteria as wholly human authored works. AI-assisted content is work that is written by a human but for which the author used AI tools to edit, refine, or error-check the work.

Due to the lack of publishing standards regarding the disclosure of artificially created materials, AI generated content may inadvertently be added to the collection. Every effort will be made to identify these items. However, there are also digital resources that the library offers that are not staff curated and therefore may contain AI generated material.

Selection Journals and Other Review Sources

The following journals are the standard first source to assist in the selection process: Library Journal; School Library Journal; Booklist; Kirkus Review, Horn Book and Publishers Weekly.

Examples of other review sources may include Goodreads, publishers' webinars, Book Riot.

Gifts

The Library accepts gifts of materials, but reserves the right to evaluate them in accordance with the criteria applied to all purchased materials. Gifts which do not meet the objectives of this policy may be refused. Bookplates may be provided for gifts, and a letter for tax purposes may be sent to the donor. No other conditions may be imposed relating to any gift either before or after its acceptance by the Library.

Withdrawal of Materials

The withdrawal of materials from the collection is known as weeding. Weeding of all library collections is a continuous process. It is carried out in order to provide the most current, useful information available, as well as to maintain the vitality and attractiveness of the collection. Weeding also helps to prevent the overcrowding of shelves, and to free up needed space for new and highly desired materials.

The following criteria, which are in accordance with professional weeding standards, are used to determine which materials are subject to weeding from the collection:

- Out of date or inaccurate information
- Badly worn or damaged physical condition
- Insufficient use—
 - Works no longer of popular interest (e.g., older fiction)
 - Multiple copies of previously popular works
 - Topic no longer relevant
- Lack of physical space
- More current treatment in collection

Even though meeting the above criteria certain materials may not be weeded because of their unique nature.

Controversial Material

The Nesmith Library subscribes to the *Library Bill of Rights* of the American Library Association which encapsulates the library profession's belief in freedom of access to information. The Library does not believe in the practice of censorship. Serious works which portray various aspects of life are not excluded because of their frankness.

The Library encourages the examination of diverse opinions. Therefore many points of view may be included in the collection. Materials selection will not be determined by pressure from outside groups and organizations, or by the individual prejudices of any person or persons. The Library will apply established professional standards in the selection and retention of its materials.

Reconsideration of Materials

Materials which have been accepted into the collection prior to the acceptance of this *Collection Development Policy* will not be removed unless they are weeded according to, or are in violation of, this policy.

The procedure for users who wish to petition the Library to reconsider any part of its collection can be found in the *Reconsideration of Materials or Programs Policy*.

Adopted on this 13th day of May, 2003 by the Nesmith Library Board of Trustees.

Nesmith Library, Windham, NH

Reviewed and approved: October 20, 2015 by the Nesmith Library Board of Trustees

Reviewed and amended: December 13, 2021 by the Nesmith Library Board of Trustees

Reviewed and amended: January 9, 2023 by the Nesmith Library Board of Trustees

Reviewed and amended: August 12, 2024 By Nesmith Library Board of Trustees

Reviewed and amended: April 14, 2026 by the Nesmith Library Board of Trustees

Appendix A

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.

Appendix B

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow

of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression.* By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

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](#)

Nesmith Library, Windham, NH

- [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

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:

8. 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.
9. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council