



# EUCLID PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY MATERIALS AND RESOURCES SELECTION

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Euclid Public Library will provide a variety of resources to meet the lifelong learning needs of our citizens. This purpose statement was adopted January 26, 2004 by the Euclid Public Library Board of Trustees.

The Euclid Public Library Board of Trustees recognizes that the United States is a country in which the right to free expression is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. People may speak, hear, read, and view what they choose no matter how popular or unpopular it may be because democracy functions only when the full range of ideas is available to all people. The public library is the institution in our society which provides material representing all points of view in all fields, including political, social and religious, no matter how controversial or objectionable these ideas may be to some people. Therefore, the Euclid Public Library, within the limits of selection standards, budget and space offers a collection that is varied, divergent, and inclusive and protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution, the Constitution of the State of Ohio, and the library Board's endorsement of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. In addition, the Board of Trustees endorses the following: Free Access to Libraries for Minors, Diversity in Collection Development, and Freedom to Read and Freedom to View (see attached documents).

## **COMMUNITY SERVED**

The Euclid Public Library is a school district library whose primary service area is the Euclid City School District. The library provides walk-in borrowing privileges to any Ohio resident and participates in interlibrary loan programs that make it possible for libraries to share materials.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE COLLECTION**

The library collection is selected and maintained to enable all citizens to find the library materials and information they want according to their own free choice. No material will be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political or social view of either the author or of the material. The collection, taken as a whole, will be an unbiased and diverse source of information representing as many viewpoints as possible. Subjects and viewpoints will be covered in sufficient depth and breadth to meet anticipated and expressed community needs. The Board recognizes that library resources are not unlimited. Selection of materials must adhere to budget allocations. Resource sharing with other libraries and electronic access are valid ways of meeting customer needs.

Selection of materials by the library does not mean endorsement of the contents or views expressed in those materials.

## **MATERIALS AND RESOURCES SELECTION**

The Board of Trustees recognizes the pluralistic nature of the community and the varied backgrounds and needs of all citizens regardless of age, race, creed, gender, or political persuasion. It declares as a matter of policy:

1. Selection of books, materials, and electronic resources shall be vested in the Director, and, under this direction, by Staff who are delegated. Any book, material, and/or electronic resource so selected shall be held to be selected by the Board.
2. The library Trustees and Staff recognize the changing nature of the Internet and provide access to Internet resources within this understanding. Electronic resources may change in format and content after selection, and it is possible that a resource may not conform to the Library's selection criteria at any given time. Library

Staff will review the content of electronic resources on a regular basis to assess their continued value in terms of meeting the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community.

3. The Board recognizes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential in order for citizens to exercise their constitutional rights. The Board believes censorship is an individual matter and declares that while one is free to reject for oneself books, materials, and electronic resources of which one does not approve, one cannot exercise the right of censorship to restrict the intellectual freedom of others to read and inquire.
4. The library Staff does not act in loco parentis. Decisions concerning a child's use of specific library materials and/or electronic resources are the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the criteria listed below. Not every item is subject to each criterion, nor does an item have to meet a certain number of criteria for inclusion in the collection. Rather, these are general parameters within which selection decisions are made.

- Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Relation to the existing collection
- Reputation and significance of the author or publisher
- Presentation of varying viewpoints
- Cost
- Accuracy
- Reviews
- Currency
- Inclusion in standard library indexes and tools
- Physical format or condition
- Patron request

Library Staff depend upon standard library reviewing journals and also consider other sources appropriate to the material or subject.

## **CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS**

The library has a responsibility to provide a representative collection of materials on varied subjects of interest to the community, including controversial matters. The library makes an effort to provide information that represents balanced coverage of diverse opinions so individuals can examine all sides of an issue. A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not necessarily an equality of numbers. Materials are chosen on the basis of content as a whole and are not excluded because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.

Materials in any format that contain frank treatments of certain situations, language, or illustrations which may be objectionable to some individuals are included if they meet general selection criteria. Each work must be judged on its own merit, considering the audience for whom it is intended. The library has a responsibility to protect the rights of mature or sophisticated users by providing materials that are well balanced, authoritative and up-to-date.

## **COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

In order to ensure a vital and relevant collection for the community, it is necessary to continually evaluate the usefulness of materials and resources previously added to the collection. Criteria considered in removing items from the collection include:

- Physical condition
- Duplication of material no longer in demand
- Currency of material

- Availability of newer and better materials in a field
- Popularity of the title or subject
- Depth of the library's collection on a subject

Electronic resources are evaluated on a regular schedule. Any site which no longer meets the selection criteria overall will be deselected. Unnecessary duplication, unpopularity, or the availability of newer and better resources may also be criteria for removing an electronic resource.

### **DUPLICATION**

Titles are duplicated in areas where user demand is heavy and sustained. The library does not maintain sufficient copies of individual titles to meet classroom demand.

### **BINDING/REPLACEMENT**

Books basic to the collection and physically suitable for binding are rebound if they cannot be replaced. Books that can only be purchased in a nondurable format are bound before circulating.

Materials withdrawn because of loss, damage or other factors are considered for replacement. The same criteria apply to replacements as to original selection. In addition, the following factors are considered:

- Availability of newer and better materials in the field
- Scope of the library's collection on the subject
- Popularity of the title or subject

### **GIFTS**

Euclid Public Library accepts gifts of books and other library materials with the understanding that they will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria applied to materials selected for the collection. The library reserves the right to dispose of any material that cannot be used in the collection in any way it deems appropriate.

Money may be donated for the purchase of a specific item as a memorial gift. The item must meet all criteria of the regular selection process.

### ***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.

## **FREE ACCESS TO LIBRARIES FOR MINORS: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE *LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS***

Library policies and procedures which effectively deny minors equal access to all library resources available to other users violate the *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, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities which 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, level of education, or legal emancipation.

The selection and development of library resources should not be diluted because of minors having the same access to library resources as adult users. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community, and restricts access for all library users.

Librarians and governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions on access to library resources in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections from parents or anyone else. The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries do not authorize librarians or governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents or legal guardians. Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children—and only their children—to library resources. Parents or legal guardians who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials or facilities, should so advise their children. Librarians and 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 have a public and professional obligation to provide equal access to all library resources for all library users.

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

Adopted June 30, 1972; Amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, by the ALA Council.

## **DIVERSITY IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE *LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS***

Throughout history, the focus of censorship has fluctuated from generation to generation. Books and other materials have not been selected or have been removed from library collections for many reasons, among which are prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, sexual forms of expression, and other topics of a potentially controversial nature.

Some examples of censorship may include removing or not selecting materials because they are considered by some as racist or sexist; not purchasing conservative religious materials; not selecting materials about or by minorities because it is thought these groups or interests are not represented in a community; or not providing information on or materials from non-mainstream political entities.

Librarians may seek to increase user awareness of materials on various social concerns by many means, including, but not limited to, issuing bibliographies and presenting exhibits and programs. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all materials legally obtainable should be assured to the user, and policies should not unjustly exclude materials even if they are offensive to the librarian or the user. Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article II of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “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.” A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers. Collection development responsibilities include selecting materials in the languages in common use in the community which the library serves. Collection development and the selection of materials should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures.

There are many complex facets to any issue, and variations of context in which issues may be expressed, discussed, or interpreted. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be fair, just, and equitable and to give all library users equal protection in guarding against violation of the library patron’s right to read, view, or listen to materials and resources protected by the First Amendment, no matter what the viewpoint of the author, creator, or selector. Librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of materials based on personal bias or prejudice, and to select and support the access to materials on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs and interests of all persons in the community which the library serves. This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Toleration is meaningless without tolerance for what some may consider detestable. Librarians cannot justly permit their own preferences to limit their degree of tolerance in collection development, because freedom is indivisible.

Adopted July 14, 1982; Amended January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.

## **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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens 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 citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

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 need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

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 or unpopular with 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 with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it 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 the citizen. 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.*

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.

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 citizens 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; Revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

## **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 guarantees 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.

**Endorsed by the ALA Council January 10, 1990**