

Redondo Beach Public Library

Materials Selection Policy

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I. Purpose

The purpose of the *Materials Selection Policy* of Redondo Beach Public Library is to provide guidelines by which Library materials will be acquired, withdrawn, disseminated and otherwise made accessible to the public. It incorporates the principles of the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the Freedom to View Statement of the American Library Association. It is intended to provide some specifications by which the Mission Statement of the Library will be realized.

II. Scope of the Collection

- A. Content of Collection
The Library seeks to build and maintain a collection of materials to meet the information, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of Redondo Beach Public Library patrons.
- B. Diversity and Inclusiveness
The Library seeks to develop a collection that includes information and literature covering a broad spectrum of human thought and experience. The collection attempts to provide, subject to the criteria of this policy, materials explaining all sides of issues. The collection does not advocate any specific historical, political or social perspective of events or ideas. Inclusion of materials in the collection does not indicate the approval or advocacy of the represented viewpoints by the Library.
- C. Formats
The collection includes materials in various formats, including books, magazines, newspapers, compact discs, DVDs, microforms, electronically accessed databases and downloadable media. As other technologies are developed, refined and become commercially viable, they will be evaluated for inclusion as well.
- D. World Wide Web Access
Recognizing that the Internet significantly and economically enhances the ability of the Library to provide information to its patrons, unfiltered access to the World Wide Web is provided. However, it is essential to understand that the Library exercises no control over the contents of sites accessible on the World Wide Web, and that the selection criteria listed in Section IV of this policy do not apply to any site visited or information received. Library staff will provide assistance and lists of recommended sites, but are not responsible for their contents, quality or use.
- E. Materials for Youth
The Youth Services collection contains materials designed for youth from birth to age eighteen and their caregivers and teachers. These materials represent a wide range of reading and maturity levels, approaches and schools of thought to child rearing and development.

It is the express responsibility of parents and other adult caregivers to monitor and select the materials, including Internet sites, that they find appropriate for their children. The Library does not deny access to any materials in any part of the collection to any patron.

F. Support for Formal Education

The collection contains materials that support a general curriculum of study through the community college level. It is not the intent of the Library, nor are there resources available, to develop a research or academic collection.

Textbooks generally are not purchased, unless they represent the sole or best source of information on a specific subject.

G. Popular Materials

A major focus of the collection is popular materials to meet the demands of the community. Consideration is given to popular culture, trends, and current issues.

III. Criteria for Selection

A. The general criteria considered in selecting materials for the collection include but are not limited to the following:

1. Significance and value to the existing collection
2. Qualifications of the author or producer
3. Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
4. Quality of format
5. Currency or timeliness, if applicable
6. Demand of patrons
7. Price
8. Attention given to the item by reviewers and the general news media
9. Technical quality and any required physical repackaging of non-book materials
10. Availability or access elsewhere

B. In selection decisions, consideration is given to the work as a whole. No work is excluded because of specific passages or pieces taken out of context.

IV. Selection Tools

A. Materials primarily are selected from standard review sources, including but not limited to:

1. Professional journals and online resources related to materials selection
2. Trade journals, such as *Publisher's Weekly*
3. Publishers' and vendors' catalogs
4. "Recommended Reading" and Awards lists, such as the American Library Association's (ALA) "Notable Books", ALA Awards and Recommendations, YALSA Awards & Recommendations
5. Review sections of major newspapers, such as *The New York Times Book Review* and *Los Angeles Times Book Review*

B. Purchase suggestions from Library patrons are carefully considered, and selections are made subject to the requirements of this policy.

V. Collection Maintenance

A. Withdrawal of Materials

1. On an ongoing basis, materials in the collection are reviewed according to original selection criteria. Those materials no longer meeting the criteria are removed from the collection.
2. Materials in poor physical condition and beyond repair are withdrawn, and replaced if appropriate, affordable, and available.
3. As existing technologies become outdated and/or unusable, Library materials will be evaluated for de-selection.
4. Withdrawn materials may be sold in the Friends of the Library's book store, donated to other nonprofit organizations, or otherwise recycled or discarded. They may not be donated to private individuals.

B. Multiple Copies

In order to meet the needs of the Library's patrons, multiple copies of popular items may be purchased. As the demand for these materials wanes, some may be withdrawn.

VI. Donations

A. Materials

1. Donations of books and other materials are accepted with the understanding that they become the property of the Library, and that they may be used or disposed of as appropriate to meet the needs of the Library and the criteria of this policy. No donation of materials is accepted unless it is given to the Library without restrictions. Any materials not used by the Library will not be returned to the donor. If desired by the donor, a receipt is issued stating the number and format of items donated but the Library does not assess the value of donated materials.
2. Information is provided at each library stating what types of materials are being accepted at any given time.

B. Funds

Donations of funds for the purchase of materials are welcomed by the Library. The wishes and interests of the donor in regards to subject matter and format will be honored to the extent that they are consistent with the needs of the Library and the requirements of this policy. Requests for the purchase of specific titles are subject to the criteria listed in Section IV of this policy.

VII. Policy Implementation and Responsibility

A. Authority and Responsibility

The Library Director has full authority and responsibility for the implementation of this policy. The responsibility is shared with and delegated to the professional staff charged with selection duties.

B. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed for viability and compliance by the Library Director and professional staff every three years.

C. Reconsideration of materials.

1. Any individual expressing an objection to or a concern about Library materials will receive respectful attention from the staff member first approached. The staff member will offer the individual the opportunity to:

a) speak with the Library Director or Librarian-In-Charge

and/or

b) complete a "Request for Reconsideration" form

2. Each formal request will be given full consideration by materials selection staff and reviewed in accordance with the selection criteria of the Library's Materials Selection Policy. Materials that have been questioned will remain in the active collection until a determination of their status has been made.

3. The Library Director will review the final decision and a letter of determination in response to the Request for Reconsideration shall be provided to the patron.

VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REDONDO BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

APPENDIX B: LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

APPENDIX C: FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

APPENDIX D: FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

APPENDIX A: REDONDO BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

The Redondo Beach Public Library provides services and materials in a welcoming atmosphere to meet the information, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of all Library users.

APPENDIX B: LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

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

- I. Books and other Library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the Library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a Library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948

Amended February 2, 1961; January 23, 1980

Reaffirmed January 23, 1996 by the ALA Council

APPENDIX C: 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.

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.

APPENDIX D: FREEDOM TO VIEW

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.

Adopted June 28, 1979 by the ALA Council.
Endorsed January 10, 1990 by the ALA Council.