

ROCKWALL COUNTY LIBRARY

POLICY BOOK

APPROVED BY
Rockwall County Library Board
March 2012

APPROVED BY
Rockwall County Commissioners' Court
July 2012

Updated through November 23, 2021

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GENERAL POLICIES

GOAL

The goal of the Rockwall County Library is to provide the highest quality public library service which will effectively contribute to the enrichment of all residents of the County and to increase public awareness of the services offered in a modern public library.

OBJECTIVES OF THE LIBRARY

The objectives of the Rockwall County Library are:

1. To assemble, preserve and administer books and related library materials, within the framework of the budget, which will provide educational, informational, and recreational resources to the citizens of Rockwall County.
2. To promote and encourage maximum and effective use of the library's materials and services.
2. To cooperate with civic, cultural , and educational organizations whose aims are compatible with those of the library.

FUNCTIONS OF THE LIBRARY

The function of the Public Library in America today is to provide the means through which all people may have free access to the thinking on all sides of all ideas. It must offer opportunity and encouragement for all ideas. It must offer opportunity and encouragement for all the people:

1. To educate themselves.
2. To keep abreast of progress in all fields of knowledge.
3. To maintain freedom of expression and constructive, critical attitudes toward all public issues.
4. To be responsible members of the community, the state, the nation and the world.
5. To develop greater efficiency in the performance of work.
6. To discover and develop an appreciation of arts and letters.
7. To develop and increase enjoyment of leisure time.
8. To use leisure time in the enjoyment of library services.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Rockwall County Library is an integral part of the county government. Specific services are provided through the Library. The Library will continue to develop its collections, staff and facilities to meet American Library Association Standards for Public Libraries.

EXTENSION OF SERVICES

The Rockwall County Library may extend service into the community through its programming. The Library will make surveys and studies to ascertain growing and changing needs of the community in order to plan more effective services.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The library will be open as many hours per day and as many days per week as possible.

The hours of opening will be determined by the convenience to all patrons and the ability of the staff to cover those periods under available financing.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER LIBRARIES

It is the plan of the Rockwall County Library to continue cooperation with other libraries, information services, networks and systems on all bases – local, state, regional and national.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The Rockwall County Library will work with educational institutions and community agencies in order to provide more complete service.

TYPES OF SERVICE

Ready Reference – That which can be answered within three minutes by consulting basic reference sources such as almanacs, encyclopedias, directories and the like.

Instructional Guidance – Instruction in use of basic library tools, to be provided for patrons as individuals or groups by the librarian.

Subject Searches – Service is provided as extensively as possible within realistic boundaries and without compromising services to other patrons.

Interlibrary Loan – Materials not available in the Rockwall County Library can be borrowed from other libraries through participation in the Texas State Library Network. Available to any patron with a library card; eligibility of request determined by the librarian. There will be a fee for postage. There will be a late fee of \$.15 per day or more if a higher fee is charged by the lending library. The privilege to use this service may be revoked if the patron is late twice in returning materials. This privilege may also be revoked if the patron fails twice to pick up books ordered. No renewals will be allowed. Three requests are permitted at a time.

LIMITS OF SERVICE

Information service does not include providing information which is judgmental in nature; rather, the librarian will direct the patron to sources of information. Falling into the category of judgmental are requests for advice on medicine, law and consumerism.

Criss-Cross directory reference telephone requests will not be answered.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PERSONNEL

Continuing education is a necessity for library staff members. This important aspect of growth will be encouraged through allowing attendance at seminars, conferences and workshops, in addition to sponsoring continuing education programs.

CLOSING OF FACILITY

The Rockwall County Library is normally open Monday through Saturday and closed on Sunday. When a County holiday is observed on a Monday, the library is closed on the intervening Saturday to afford the library staff a three day weekend consistent with other County employees.

The Rockwall County Library will be closed when deemed necessary by the librarian with the approval of the County Commissioners. The Library Board may make recommendations concerning special opening/closing of the library. Prior notice will be posted.

APPLICATION AND REVISION OF POLICY

This policy may be revised or amended only with the approval of the Library Board and the Commissioners' Court.

CIRCULATION POLICIES

BORROWER'S CARD REGISTRATION

Rockwall County property owners and Rockwall County residents and property owners are eligible for a free library borrower account. If an address is not listed in the Rockwall County property tax records of the Rockwall Central Appraisal District database, issuance of a card will be delayed until location of the property within Rockwall County can be verified.

Persons living outside Rockwall County may obtain a borrower card by paying an annual fee of \$50 per household. A Household shall be determined by the residence address. Current or retired Rockwall County employees and Rockwall County Library volunteers who have contributed 10 or more hours of documented service to the library in the past 12 months shall be exempt from the non-resident user fee.

An individual non-resident card solely for the purpose of public computer use may be purchased for \$20 per year. A temporary one month non-resident solely for the purpose of public computer use may be purchased for \$5 per month.

Non-resident user fees that are collected shall go directly to the library operating account.

New cards – Adult 18 years and over: A photo ID for proof of identity and documentation of current address are required. Acceptable forms of photo ID include a Texas driver's license, state ID card, military ID or passport. Acceptable proof of address includes driver's license, voter registration card, property tax statement or receipt, proof of insurance card, utility bill or personal check with printed address. Other proof may be accepted at staff discretion. A working telephone number that can be used to reach the cardholder is required.

New cards – Children (17 years and under): Signature of parent or legal guardian is required for persons who are 17 years of age or under. The parent or guardian must have an adult library account in order to take responsibility for the child's account.

New patrons may take out three (3) items per family the day they sign up for the card. Only one (1) video is to be included in the 3 items.

Account renewal – Proof of current address is required annually for renewal of accounts for the checkout of physical materials. Account renewals allowing use of online resources only may be conducted by telephone or email if necessary, at the discretion of the circulation supervisor or librarian in charge.

Replacement of a lost card – Replacements of lost cards may be obtained for a fee of \$3.00 each.

Library cards may be shared by members of the immediate family only for purposes of borrowing materials. Cards or accounts may not be shared for internet use.

A library card, Texas driver's license or official Texas ID card is required for checkout.

New library cards will not be issued the last 15 minutes of the working day.

CIRCULATION OF MATERIALS

The librarian may deny service to any person for failure to return borrowed items, for repeated lateness, or for refusal to pay fines or replacement fees, for destruction of Library property, or for objectionable conduct in the library. In any of these cases, the librarian's decision will be final unless the Library Board in reviewing a case reverses the decision.

There will be a limit of 30 items per family. There is a limit of three (3) books per subject area and five (5) videos per household.

Two (2) renewals of items are allowed if there are no reserves on the materials. Books may be renewed by telephone or online through the library catalog if not overdue. Videos are not renewed and may not be checked out by anyone under age 18.

Books, audio materials, and videos circulate for three weeks. Reference materials do not circulate. The circulation period of downloadable material may vary by vendor.

FINES / OVERDUE CHARGES

There will be a grace period of one (1) day on materials. Materials will become overdue two (2) days after the due date for the item. Fines on overdue books, video and audio materials will be \$.15 per day up to the replacement value of the item.

No materials may be checked out by a patron owing \$5.00 or more in fines until the fines are paid or partial payment arrangements are made.

DAMAGE OR LOSS OF MATERIALS

1. Damage or loss of carrying cases and /or containers - \$5.00
2. Rebind book - current binding price.
3. Materials lost or damaged beyond repair - replacement price as indicated on the computer record plus a \$7.00 replacement fee and any overdue charge.
4. Lost and damaged individual components such as audiotapes, CDs or DVDs from multipart sets will be charged at the supplier's replacement fee plus shipping cost, if available for purchase. If replacement components are not available, the full replacement cost of the item plus a \$7.00 processing fee will be charged.
5. The fee for an interlibrary loan request shall be the cost of postage per item.

RESERVING MATERIAL

Any circulating, cataloged material, with the exception of videos, may be placed on hold or reserved if not currently available on the shelf. A total of three items per person may be placed on reserve.

FORFEITURE OF LIBRARY USAGE

Anyone violating the regulations of the library may, at the discretion of the Library Staff, be asked to leave the premises and/or forfeit his/her library card.

Approved by Rockwall County Library Board October 7, 2021
Approved Rockwall County Commissioners Court November 23, 2021.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The freedom to read encourages responsible citizenship and open debate in the marketplace of ideas. The beneficial objectives of a free democratic society will be promoted if citizens have, and are assured that they have, the freedom to read and the opportunity to consider all types of information.

The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States protects free speech and a free press. The Constitution of the State of Texas provides that “No law shall ever be passed containing the liberty of speech or of the press”. A corollary of those constitutional guarantees is the corresponding freedom to read what is written, hear what is spoken, and view other forms of expression without fear of intrusion, intimidation or reprisal. The guarantee of privacy for readers, hearers and viewers will ensure this freedom.

The Rockwall County Library is a central resource where information and differing points of view are available. Library users will be free to use the library and its materials and services without government, community or individual interference.

This library is pursuant to Vernon’s Annotated Civil Statutes, Article 6252-17a, referred herein as the Texas Open Records Act (Sec. 3:24).

POLICY

Records of the Rockwall County Library, which identify or serve to identify a person who requests, obtains, or uses library materials or services are confidential and excepted from required disclosure under the Texas Open Records Act (Sec. 3:24).

Exceptions:

Such records may be disclosed only if:

- a. The library determines that disclosure is reasonably necessary to the operation of the library and the records are not confidential under other state or federal law.
- b. The records are released to the person to whom the information relate; or the person to whom the information relates has given permission, in writing, for information to be released.
- c. The records are required under a valid court order or subpoena, as provided for under the provisions of the Texas Open Records Act.

Procedures for implementing this policy:

1. To bring library procedures into compliance with the Texas Open Records Act, the American Library Association’s Statements on Professional Ethics and Policy on Confidentiality the following will be done:

- a. Careful consideration will be given before creating written records pertaining to patrons' use of library materials and /or services.
 - b. Record retention requirements will determined and records will be destroyed as soon as possible.
 - c. Care will be given when providing patron information over the phone, e.g., titles of interlibrary loans, books on hold or titles which are overdue. Patron identification will be confirmed.
2. Steps to take when law enforcement officers visit:
- a. Staff member or volunteer who is approached by a law enforcement officer requesting information about a library user should ask for identification and refer the officer to the library director.
 - b. The library director will meet with the officer and a library colleague in the library.
 - c. The library director will explain that library ethical standards are not intended to be obstructionist, but affirm the importance of confidentiality of personally identifiable information in the context of First Amendment rights. The director should provide a copy of the library's policy and state that personally identifiable information about library users is not available under any circumstances, except when proper court order has been presented. Explain that it is a violation of the Texas Open Records Act (a misdemeanor) for the library to disclose confidential information.
 - d. The director should obtain the officer's name and badge number and notify the County Judge and the Criminal District Attorney of the request.
 - e. Any subpoena received will be referred to the Criminal District Attorney for review. If there is any defect in the subpoena, including its form, the manner in which it was served upon the library, the breadth of its request for documents, or insufficient evidence that a showing of good cause has been made to the court, the Criminal District Attorney will advise on the proper manner to deny the subpoena.
 - f. Through the Criminal District Attorney, require that any defects in the subpoena be corrected before the appropriate records are released. The subpoena must be limited strictly to require release of only specifically identified records or documents.
 - g. The entire process will be repeated should the party requesting the information be required to submit a new subpoena.
 - h. The Criminal District Attorney and the library director will review any information which may be produced in response to such a subpoena and exclude any information which is arguably not covered by a proper subpoena.
 - i. If the court rules that disclosure is required, request that the court issue an order that any information produced be kept strictly confidential and that it be used only for the limited purpose of the particular case.

CONCLUSION

An individual's reading habits cannot be equated with his or her character or beliefs. The First Amendment does not apply only to pre-approved or popular beliefs. The First Amendment also guarantees the right to hold and espouse unpopular beliefs and ideas. The First Amendment protects against the imposition of a state or community-approved orthodoxy as well as enforced conformity of expression and belief. The First Amendment protects all American's rights to read and view information and decide for themselves their points of view and opinions.

ROCKWALL COUNTY LIBRARY
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY
2012

Approved by
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COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This collection development policy defines the specific selection of print and non-print materials of the Rockwall County Library. A separate policy has been developed for the use of the Internet. This policy does not relate to materials provided by Internet services.

This policy will provide staff with criteria used for the selection of materials, and clarify the responsibility for collection development and maintenance, reflecting the library's mission and roles to the community. This policy will ensure that the materials selected are those which best serve the needs of the community. This policy will serve as a statement of principles in support of the content of the library's collection should a selection decision be challenged.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY

The Rockwall County Library serves a mainly suburban population in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The Library is a member of the Northeast Texas Library system and is accredited by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

With full awareness of the pluralistic nature of its community as reflected in current demographic data and census reports, the library strives to make available materials reflecting the needs of all citizens and of differing educational levels. The library not only has the obligation to provide the best service possible to its regular patrons but to search for materials and methods that will assist those in the community who have not been library users. To do this, the library must study its community on an ongoing basis to discern present needs that are unmet and to anticipate future trends.

The library recognizes that its community is continuously evolving and will try to incorporate data directly pertinent to material selection including levels of user satisfaction, potential markets for special collections, and any demographic shifts that have occurred. This data will be used to address collection strengths and weaknesses and to adjust selection of materials to meet changing community needs.

STATEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP

The Rockwall County Library does not promote particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any book or other material equivalent to endorsement of the viewpoint of the author expressed therein. To be a resource where the free individual can examine many points of view and make his or her own decisions is one of the essential purposes of the public library. The library attempts to provide materials representing different sides of controversial issues.

The library endorses the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the Texas Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Statement (see Appendices). These three documents are considered guiding principles for this collection development policy.

Access to library materials will not be restricted beyond what is required to protect materials from theft or damage. Parents and legal guardians should be responsible for what their children read. Parents who wish to limit or restrict the reading of their own child should personally oversee that child's choice of reading material. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that the materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

The Rockwall County Library provides books and materials, services and facilities for information, individual development and recreation to the residents of Rockwall County. The library offers a forum for ideas and is dedicated to freedom of access for all.

III. ROLES OF THE LIBRARY

Children's Door to Learning

The library encourages children to develop an interest in reading and learning through services and programming for children and for parents and children together.

Reference Library

The library actively provides timely, accurate and useful information for county residents.

Popular Materials Library

The library features current, high demand, high interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages.

Superhighway Access

The library provides a means by which patrons can access information from a wide variety of databases particularly for those patrons who do not have such access at home, school or work.

IV. SELECTION PHILOSOPHY

The Library must follow a policy of selectivity since it cannot acquire all materials. Since the number of materials published each year is vast, it is impossible to examine each selection prior to purchase. Our selection is based upon principle rather than personal opinion, reason rather than prejudice and judgment rather than censorship. The selection staff relies on critical reviews in a variety of periodicals and professional journals. The Library strives to provide a collection that is current, balanced and representative of the interests of patrons. Selection will be based on a number of criteria including the format, cost (including processing and additional equipment to use the material), importance of the subject matter to the collection and the reputation and significance of the author or illustrator.

The Library staff welcomes comments from members of the community about the collection or an individual work. Patrons wishing to voice a concern or to object to any item in the collection may ask about the Request for Reconsideration Procedure.

V. SELECTION RESPONSIBILITY

The actual selection of materials is accomplished by staff members who are assigned responsibility for selection in specific subject areas. Final responsibility for materials purchased with public funds rests with the Director of the Library who operates within a framework of policies periodically reviewed by the Library Board and county officials.

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

The Library will attempt to select materials that represent a range of viewpoints and will do its best to exercise impartiality in selection decisions. The collection will represent as many sides of controversial issues as budget, space and availability of materials allow. Selection will be based on criteria given throughout this policy. The race, religion, nationality or political views of any author, the frankness of language, the controversial content of an item or the endorsement or approval of an individual or group in the community will not automatically cause an item to be included or excluded. Materials are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular passage or illustration.

Acquisitions are considered in terms of the following standards:

1. Contemporary significance or permanent value.
2. Accuracy.
3. Authority of author in the field.
4. Relation of the work to the existing collection.
5. Price, format.
6. Relevance to community needs.

Evaluation of works of information and opinion:

1. Authority of the author.
2. Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment.
3. Objectivity of approach.
4. Accuracy of information.
5. Clarity and logic of presentation.
6. Representative of varying points of view.

Evaluation of works of imagination:

1. Representation of important movements, genre, trends of national cultures.
2. Vitality and originality.
3. Artistic presentation and experimentation.
4. Sustained interest.
5. Effective characterization.
6. Authenticity of historical or social setting.

Selection criteria by reader:

Adult:

Collections of adult materials must fill the informational, educational and recreational needs of a wide range of users whose reading levels vary greatly. The needs are met by many media and forms of materials in English, Spanish and other languages. Each title is judged according to its intrinsic merit, the subject treated, the reader interest and the need for the book in an organized collection. In order that readers may get balanced information, the library attempts to provide materials that present both or different points of view, even those points which may be regarded by some as controversial, whether because of political expression, affiliation or moral implication.

Young Adult:

The purpose of the young adult collection is to help bridge the gap between children's literature and adult literature. These books are selected with the aim of helping young people find self-realization, live well-adjusted lives in the community, and know and understand the world at large. The collection includes books that will widen the boundaries of the adolescent's thinking, offering recreation as well as enrichment for his or her life. The collection covers a wide range of reading levels.

For young adults, it is recognized that there is a body of literature that deals frankly, honestly and realistically with the growth situations confronting the young person today. These materials will be selected according to the same general criteria as discussed above. These materials will be shelved separately from juvenile books.

Children:

The children's collection includes items for informational, educational and recreational purposes. The collection is carefully selected for children of all ages and abilities, and emphasis is placed upon books which stimulate imagination, mental growth and the development of taste for good literature. Although the Library cannot purchase sufficient copies of titles for classroom use, the Library has a strong commitment to provide a variety of supplemental materials in support of classroom assignments.

Materials for infants and preschoolers are chosen to offer a first introduction to words, pictures, and concepts. Emphasis on materials for this age level is made in recognition of the fact that the public library is the only major library resource freely available to them. Materials are chosen to match the developing reading skills and enlarging interest of children during the years of elementary education and to satisfy the more sophisticated curiosities and tastes of early adolescents.

VII. SELECTION AIDS

Ideally all materials added to the library should be read or viewed before purchase. The reality of the numbers of items annually available and purchased makes this next to impossible. The staff will be aided in their selection by various publications: basic general lists, current general lists, special bibliographies for reference books and particular subject materials, book reviewing journals and newspapers. While book reviews are a major source of information about new books, they are not to be followed blindly. No one publication is relied upon exclusively. The critical opinions of reviewers should be checked against each other where feasible.

The following list of media consulted is not to be considered an exclusive one, but has been chosen for the reputation and immediacy of reviews:

- A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books
- American Libraries
- American Reference Books Annual
- Best Books for Children
- Booklist
- Books in Print
- Horn Book Magazine
- Library Journal
- Publisher's catalogs
- Publisher's Weekly
- School Library Journal

VIII. GIFTS, MEMORIALS AND OTHER DONATIONS

GIFTS AND OTHER DONATIONS:

The term "gifts" as generally applied here refers to those materials, which are given primarily as clearance projects and not necessarily for their monetary value.

1. The Rockwall County Library will have the right to accept or refuse all donations to the library regardless of their nature. Typically the library director would assume the responsibility for the acceptance of books, periodicals, recordings, etc. while the Library Board would evaluate more special or unusual items such as furnishings, paintings, personal collections and so forth. Items of this nature will be accepted only when they can be used to the best advantage of the library's overall program.
2. Because of limitation of space, budget and staff, the library reserves the right to accept or discard, at its discretion, any unsolicited materials. The library cannot guarantee that any gift will be part of the collection or kept permanently.

3. The decision to include the materials in the library's collection will be based on the same principles of selection as are applied to purchases of materials by the library. In addition, consideration will be given to the number of copies of the item currently in the collection and the physical condition of the gift materials.
4. All books and materials are to be accepted with the understanding that the library reserves the right to make such disposition as is fitting of duplicates and titles not needed by the library. The library will dispose of all gift materials, which are rejected to the best advantage.
5. Due to lack of space and relevance to the collection the library cannot accept old reference books, textbooks, or condensed books.
6. If the donor wishes the materials which are not added returned, he may so state and leave his address and telephone number for notification purpose.
7. It is the policy not to accept special collections of books to be kept together as a separate physical collection or entity. Collections will be accepted only with the understanding that they will be integrated into the general collection.
8. Except for temporary exhibit or other special use, the library will not accept storage responsibility of historical documents or objects owned or controlled by groups or individuals. When such materials are held at the library for temporary exhibit, etc., the library will endeavor to protect the materials; but the owner shall execute a contract relieving the library of responsibility for loss or damage. The contract shall testify the owner's responsibility to remove the materials upon the agreed termination date of exhibit or other use. For additional information see POLICY ON EXHIBITS.
9. The acquisition of valuable or rare books is not a function of the Library. An exception is made when an item is of bibliographic importance to a particular area of the collection wherein the library has a special responsibility, e.g. the Genealogy Collection.
10. When gift materials are deemed no longer useful, the library will dispose of them on the same basis it disposes of other materials.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS:

Memorial donations are welcomed as they provide the library with an opportunity to add materials or equipment, which it might not otherwise be able to afford. In addition it is felt that such donations provide individuals with a rich opportunity not only to express sympathy, but also act as a long-term statement of respect for the deceased.

Donations received for this purpose will be handled as follows:

1. Memorial Book form will be completed by the donor or library personnel.
2. Selection of materials will be made by the librarian who will consider suggestions from the donor.
3. The nature or subject of the book will be based where possible on the interests of the deceased.
4. A bookplate indicating in whose memory or honor the book is being purchased and the donor's name will be placed in the book prior to inclusion in the collection.
5. A letter or other appropriate form of notification will be forwarded both to the family of the deceased or other designated parties and to the donor.
6. In those instances where an individual wishes to donate a book from his personal library, the decision to accept the gift will be based on the principles enumerated under the GIFTS section of this statement. If accepted, the bookplate and notification will be handled as stated in 3 and 4 above.

IX. OTHER SELECTION ISSUES

PATRON REQUESTS:

Suggestions for inclusion of materials which have not yet been added are welcomed.

DUPLICATION:

The library gives serious consideration to the number of requests for an item as a guide for duplication. Duplication must not be at the expense of important but less-demanded materials needed for the permanent collection. Popular demand, importance of the material and budget limitations will be the determining factors.

X. COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

WEEDING:

The collection will be periodically examined for the purpose of weeding in order to maintain a balanced, timely, and attractive collection. The library recognizes the need for continuous evaluation of its collection in response to the changing nature and needs of its community. Weeding will be done according to accepted professional practices as described in the publication, The Crew Manual.

Although the library tries to have copies of all standard and important works, it does not attempt replacement of every copy withdrawn due to loss, damage or wear. Since books rapidly go out of print, many specific titles cannot be replaced.

Materials may be withdrawn for the following reasons:

- Superseded editions
- Worn-out, damaged or mutilated items
- Seldom used materials
- Duplicates bought to satisfy initial heavy demand
- Dated or incorrect information
- An item not circulated in a given period of time
- Any item that does not meet current selection criteria

STORAGE:

Storage is an area in the library used in maintaining titles or copies currently receiving minimal use but may be needed in the future. Titles in storage are so designated on the catalog and may be requested for use. There will be a delay of up to 48 business hours before a book will be available from storage.

REPLACEMENT:

While the library attempts to have copies of all standard and classic works, it cannot replace each copy withdrawn. Further, the library will not automatically replace items withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear. Decisions will be based on the following criteria:

- Demand for a specific item
- Number of copies held
- Existing coverage of the subject
- Availability of newer or revised materials on the subject
- Authority and importance of the author
- Appearance in standard bibliographies
- Price of the replacement copy
- Whether the item is the best available work on the subject
- Out-of-print items are not acquired except on an individual basis
- Whether the item is in keeping with the current selection criteria

XI. RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

The Library recognizes that many materials (books, videos, records etc.) are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selections of this library will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but only on the merits of the material in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the needs and interests of users.

Responsibility for the reading and viewing of children rests with their parents and legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that the materials may inadvertently come into possession of children. Selections will be made on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and the interests of the community.

The library will review the selection of a specific item upon the request of a member of the community. The form "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Material" is available at the circulation desk. The Library Director, in consultation with appropriate staff, will review the request in light of the criteria delineated in this policy. A letter will be sent promptly to the person or organization making the request. If the individual is not satisfied with the action taken, he/she may appeal to the library board. No title will be reconsidered more than once a year.

DURING THE PROCESS OF RECONSIDERATION, QUESTIONED MATERIALS WILL REMAIN IN THE ACTIVE COLLECTION UNTIL AN OFFICIAL DECISION IS MADE BY THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR/LIBRARY BOARD.

Request for Reconsideration Procedures:

1. The person who receives the complaint will listen attentively and politely to the request.
2. All complaints are referred to the professional library staff.
3. Principles of selection are discussed with the patron, and the collection development policy may be shown.
4. If the patron wishes the material to be reconsidered, he/she will be asked to fill out the "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Material" form. Only requests written on the form and filled out completely will be accepted. All forms must be signed and dated.
5. The request will be given to the director to review along with the appropriate staff. Reviews of the materials, awards and other pertinent information will be used to assist in the review process.
6. The final decision rests with the Director.
7. A letter will be sent to the patron within thirty days explaining the findings of the review. The Director will send a copy of this letter to the Library Board.
8. If the person is not satisfied with the decision, he/she may appeal to the Library Board.

XII. POLICY REVIEW

The Collection Development Policy of the Rockwall County Library will reviewed bi-annually by the Library Board and the Director of the Library, to ensure that the policy remains current, pertinent, and an accurate reflection of the changing needs of the community, the library and its collection development objectives.

Adopted by
Rockwall County Library Board March 2012
Rockwall County Commissioners' Court July 2012

ROCKWALL COUNTY LIBRARY
CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION
OF MATERIAL

Date: _____

Material in question:

Title _____

Author _____

Type of media (book, audio CD, DVD, etc.) _____

Request initiated by: _____

Do you represent: Yourself _____

Name of organization _____ Name

of other group _____ Address: _____ City _____

_____ ZIP _____

Phone: Home _____ Work/Cell _____

Are you a registered borrower of the Rockwall County Library?

_____ Yes _____ No If yes, Library Card # _____

Have you read, seen or heard this material in its entirety?

_____ Yes _____ No If no, what parts did you read, see or hear?

(page numbers, chapters, etc.)

Why do you object? (Please be specific; cite page numbers.)

What do you believe is the main idea of this material?

What do you feel might be the result of reading or using this material, and why?

In your judgment, is the material of any value? _____

What reviews of this material have you read? _____

In its place, what material of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture of and/or perspective of the subject?

Signature _____

Received by _____ Date _____

UNATTENDED CHILDREN AND/OR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

The library welcomes children of all ages to use its materials and services in a positive manner and encourages children and families to use the library together. The library, however, is a public building with staff trained to provide library services, who are not licensed to provide for childcare needs that serve in lieu of parental responsibility. Although staff will always respond with care and concern, responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children lies with the parents/guardians, both within the library building and on library grounds. In order to promote a safe environment for children, the following policy will be enforced.

Parents/guardians are responsible for teaching their children the proper behavior in the library and respect for other patrons and books. All children are expected to follow the library's general patron behavior policy so as not to be disruptive to others.

UNATTENDED CHILDREN:

1. Children under the age of seven must have a parent/guardian in the immediate vicinity, who is in visual contact with the child and directly supervising the child, ensuring that the child's behavior is not disturbing to other patrons.
2. A child under age seven should never be left alone in the library, even for a short period of time.
3. An exception to #2 would be children (ages four and up) attending a library program without the parent/guardian in the room. However, the parent must remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.
4. Children ages seven through ten must be accompanied by a person fourteen years of age or older who acknowledges responsibility for the child.
5. Children eleven through 17 may use the library unattended, provided proper behavior is maintained as determined by the staff.
6. Library staff is not responsible for unattended children of any age.
7. Parents must accompany children ages 7 years and under to the restroom.
8. All children and teens should have the telephone number of a parent/guardian. Library staff will attempt to notify the parent/guardian in the event of:
 - a. closing due to inclement weather, power outage, etc.;
 - b. the child's behavior disturbing other users of the library;
 - c. cause to believe that the child's health or safety is in danger.
9. Child Protective Services or law enforcement may be contacted if a child under the age of eleven is habitually left unattended.

PROCEDURE FOR UNATTENDED CHILDREN:

Unattended children under age seven:

1. A child who is left unattended and is frightened or crying will be taken to the children's area and comforted while another staff member tries to find the child's parent/guardian.
2. When the parent/guardian is located, library policy will be explained.
3. If the child's parent/guardian cannot be located, the Director will contact the police.

Unattended children ages seven through ten:

1. If the child under age eleven (11) is left unattended and the parent/guardian cannot be located within a fifteen (15) minute search by library staff, the parent/guardian will be notified by phone, and the policy will be explained.
2. If the child's parent/guardian cannot be located, the Director will contact the police.

Staff will not take the child outside the building or transport the child.

If the same children are repeatedly left in the library without parental supervision, a registered letter will be sent to the parent warning that Child Protective Services may be contacted.

Unattended children after hours:

1. If a parent/guardian has not arrived to pick up the child at closing and the child has no means of transportation, the staff will assist the child in calling a parent/guardian.
2. After the library closes, two (2) staff members must remain with the child until the situation is resolved.
3. If the parents have not arrived to pick up the child within fifteen (15) minutes after closing time, the police or Child Protective Services will be contacted.
4. A follow-up letter will be sent to the parents explaining closing hours and parent's responsibility for the child's safety.
5. The Director will keep a list of parents who have been contacted.
6. Billing for staff time and overhead shall be made to the parents upon the second incidence from a household.

Unattended children at library programs:

1. No child under the age of three may be left in any program or special event alone.
2. The responsible adult shall remain in the building for any child under age eleven. The adult shall be available for the child if the child must leave a program.

3. The responsible adult is expected to join the child immediately at the end of the program.
4. Parents with children who are crying or engaging in other disruptive behavior as determined by staff, including but not limited to running, climbing, scuffling, and yelling, will be asked to take their children away from the program area until the behavior can be corrected.
5. Adults responsible for day care groups must remain with their groups at all times, directly supervising the children, regardless of the ages of children in the group.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Disruptive behavior will be determined by staff.

Disruptive Behavior by attended children under age 11:

1. A child who is being disruptive will be asked by the staff to behave.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, a staff member should inform the parent/guardian that the child is disturbing others.
3. If the parent/guardian refuses or is unable to control the child, the family will be asked to leave.

Disruptive Behavior by unattended children under age 11:

1. If a child is unattended and is behaving in a disruptive manner, the staff member will ask the child to correct the behavior.
2. If misbehavior continues, the child will be told to sit quietly at the table closest to a staff member.
3. A staff member will obtain the child's parent/guardian's name and attempt to locate the parent/guardian. When the parent is located staff will explain to the parent that the child is being disruptive and inform the adult of the library policy.
4. If the parent/guardian refuses or is unable to control the child, the family will be asked to leave.
5. If the parent/guardian cannot be located within the building, the staff member will attempt to contact the parent/guardian by phone.
6. When the parent/guardian is contacted, he/she will be told that the child is being disruptive, will be reminded of the library policy, and will be told he/she must pick up the child immediately.
7. If the parent cannot be contacted within an hour, or cannot pick up the child within an hour, or if the library is closing, the police will be called.
8. If the parent cannot be located and the child must leave (to catch a ride, e.g.), the staff member will give the parent's name, address, and an account of the disruptive behavior to the Director of the Library who will then write the parent, describing the incident and informing him/her of the library policy.

Disruptive Behavior by children and teens eleven through 17:

1. Staff shall warn the young person he/she is causing a disturbance, and explain that the next time his/her parents will be contacted.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, the child's parents will be contacted. Staff will explain that the child is being disruptive and must be picked up immediately or directly supervised by the parent in the library.

If a child or teen continually exhibits disruptive behavior, the library reserves the right to revoke library privileges.

Approved by Rockwall County Library Board 03/04/2008
Approved by Rockwall County Commissioners' Court 03/11//2008

PUBLICITY

The Rockwall County Library cannot succeed in its objective of serving the community without an alert, continuous, planned publicity presentation of its materials and service program. The promotional role will not be played passively but will consist of library sponsored creative publicity to promote understanding of the library's objectives and services by governing officials, by civic leaders and by the general public. Publicity programs will include the following:

1. Widest possible dissemination of information about books, magazines, pamphlet, recordings and other available materials.
2. Description of range of facilities relating to needs of the community.
3. Acquainting the public with the physical location of service points, hours of service, conveniences, etc.
4. Background information to acquaint the public with library processes.
5. Profiles of library staff.
6. Feature articles describing particular aspects of library service, highlights of the past and features of a commemorative nature to acquaint the community with the breadth and continuity of service over the years.
7. Full utilization of all available channels of communication.

All publicity materials originating within the library shall be approved by the head librarian before release.

POLICY ON EXHIBITS

PURPOSE

Exhibits function as an integral part of the Library's total program of public service and are planned to direct the attention of the public to the materials, services and aims of the library.

PLAN OF EXHIBITS

- A. The library shall control the content and arrangement of all exhibits. The library reserves the right to reject any part of an exhibit or to change the manner of display if the items to be exhibited are contrary to the library's community responsibility. Every item used must meet the library's standards of value and quality.
- B. Booklists, posters, signs, brochures, publicity and all materials relative to any exhibit shall be controlled by the library.
 1. The library will utilize materials from its own holdings whenever possible to publicize the collections and services of the library.
 2. Non-solicited requests for display space from outside exhibitors shall be directed to the Librarian, who will carefully evaluate the requests.

3. Final authority regarding the acceptance or rejection of outside exhibits for the library display rests with the Librarian.

CONDITIONS OF EXHIBITS

A. The Library will provide no insurance of exhibits. However, all precautions will be taken to assure the safety of all exhibits. Locked exhibit cases will be used when practical.

B. The Library shall in no way act as agent for the sale of items from an outside exhibit.

1. Purchase prices shall not be posted, nor shall they be listed in exhibit brochures.

2. Inquiries from visitors to the exhibit regarding purchase prices shall be referred to the outside exhibitor or his/her official agent.

3. Transactions for the purchase of exhibit items shall be directly between the purchaser and the outside exhibitor or his/her official agent. Such transactions shall not be conducted in the Library.

4. The library shall receive no fees, commissions or other remuneration in connection with the sale of material from outside exhibits.

5. In accordance with items 1-4 under Conditions of Exhibit B of this policy, no exhibit material, which is sold during its display in the library, may be removed from the exhibit before the end of the exhibition period, unless the Librarian approves such removal and rearrangement of the display.

C. If the Library does not receive notification as to where an exhibit shall be shipped (i.e. a traveling exhibit), or if the exhibit is not claimed within fifteen (15) days after the closing date, there shall be a charge of ten dollars (\$10.00) per day storage fee.

PLACEMENT OF POSTERS IN THE LIBRARY

The Library, as a public facility, is pleased to lend its support to groups or organizations which sponsor activities or programs of general interest. To this end we are willing to place posters and /or other promotional materials in the library.

However, since only limited space is available for such items, we have established the following guidelines:

1. Prior to placement, all posters must be approved by the Librarian. Such approval will be indicated by the Librarian's initials and date approved on the back of the poster. Handouts and/or other types of materials will also be approved by the Librarian.
2. Posters or handouts, which appear and do not have above approval shall be removed immediately and discarded.

3. Posters will not be hung or handouts left available for more than two weeks unless so authorized. Materials should be removed promptly at the end of this period or when information is no longer current.
4. Posters which exceed 24"x30" cannot be displayed because of limited space.
5. Placement location will be determined by available space at the time items are approved.

STATEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

- A. The library has the responsibility of keeping on its shelves a representative selection of books and subjects of interest to its readers, including books representing differing sides of controversial issues.
- B. The library does not endorse any idea or presentation contained in books and materials made available.
- C. It does believe in the right of each and every individual to decide for himself what he does or does not wish to read from a variety of offerings – not all of which may be universally popular.
- D. Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents and legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the chance that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children.
- E. Members of the library staff will use their best judgment in the selection of materials. The following publications will be used to help in the selection process: Booklist, Library Journal, School Library Journal, Public Library Catalogue, Fiction Catalogue, Children's Catalogue and other publications.
- F. No book or material shall be judged solely on a single passage taken out of context.
- G. The Rockwall County Library does endorse the principles set forth in the Texas Library Association Intellectual Freedom Handbook containing the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement and other relevant items.
- H. Objection to, or criticism of books or materials in the library shall be presented to the librarian in writing. Printed forms provided by the library are to be completed in full. The Complainant must be a registered borrower of the Rockwall County Library.
- I. The Rockwall County Library Board will review the complaint if the librarian has been unable to satisfy the complainant about the item's inclusion in the collection. Each item in question will be reviewed one time.

EXHIBIT LOAN AGREEMENT FORM

This certifies that I have read, understand, and will honor all sections of the POLICY ON EXHIBITS of the Rockwall County Library.

Signature Date

Name *(please print)*

Organization

Address City ZIP

Phone: Home _____ Work/Cell _____

Title of Exhibit _____

Place of Exhibit _____

Dates of Exhibit _____

Description *(include condition of items)* _____

Librarian Date

INTERNET USE POLICY

PURPOSE

The mission of the Rockwall County Library is to provide educational, informational, and recreational resources to patrons of all ages, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The Library seeks to protect intellectual freedom, promote literacy, encourage lifelong learning and provide library materials and information services.

RESPONSIBILITY OF USERS

The freedom to access information is also a responsibility. The Internet enables the Library to provide resources not available within the confines of its own collection. However, the Internet is an unregulated medium. It offers access to a wealth of material that is personally, professionally, and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, but it also enables access to some material that may be offensive, disturbing, and/or illegal. Internet resources are not subject to the same selection criteria that the Library uses for other materials. The Library staff cannot control information accessible through the Internet and is not responsible for its content or accuracy. Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete or current information. It is the user's responsibility to question the validity of the information that is found.

CHILDREN'S USE OF THE INTERNET

Internet resources accessible through the Library are provided to all Library users. Youth under 18 years of age will be required to have parental or guardian permission to access the Internet. While the Library staff encourages parental supervision of any minor accessing the Internet, children under age 11 must have direct parental supervision during Internet sessions. Parents or guardians are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Parents are encouraged to work closely with their children in selecting material that is consistent with personal family values. The staff of the Rockwall County Library will not be responsible for what minors access on the Internet.

GUIDELINES FOR ACCESSING THE INTERNET

1. A current Rockwall County Library card *in good standing* is required. Anyone wishing to access the Internet must use only his/her own library card number in accessing the Internet.
2. You must read this policy and agree to abide by it before using the Library computers.
3. If you are under 18, you and a parent or guardian must read this policy and sign the Internet Agreement Form.
4. Patrons who are accompanied by children under age 7 must keep those children with them while using Internet computers.
5. You will be limited to 30 minutes at a time if others are waiting. Use may not exceed 240 minutes (4 hours) per day.
6. In general, only one person may use a computer at a time, except for children under age 11, who must sit with a parent while using the parent's account for internet access.
7. The Internet computers shall not be used to access sexually explicit, obscene or prurient material.
8. The Internet computers shall not be used with the intent to intimidate, harass, or display hostility toward others (e.g. hate literature, pornography, etc.). Users are asked to be sensitive with material that others in a public place might find offensive.
9. Any files saved must be saved to your own portable device, as hard drive changes are deleted frequently from the library computers.

WARNING: Files downloaded from the Internet may contain a virus or other malicious software and you need to have security software on your own computer. The Rockwall County Library is not responsible for damage to a patron's computer or other device, or for any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from patron use of the Library's computers.

10. Printing is allowed but counts as part of the computer use time limit. Copies are 15 cents per page for black and white copies. Color copies are not available. Patrons are responsible for all pages printed regardless of intent or value to the patron. We ask you to use "print preview" to minimize your printing expenses and to help us conserve paper and toner and control library costs.
11. To ensure the equitable delivery of all library services, Library staff may assist patrons in the initial access to the Internet as time permits and provide

basic search suggestions, but cannot offer extensive personal instruction nor conduct research for patrons.

12. In attempting to answer telephone reference questions, the staff of the Rockwall County Library will use all available resources including the Internet. However, any requests for extensive research will have to be done by the patron in the Library. This includes printing or downloading.
13. Internet computers will be turned off 20 minutes prior to closing time. Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this policy.
14. The Library cannot insure the privacy of individuals who use the Internet to conduct business or for personal correspondence.
15. Failure to abide by this policy and guidelines and failure to use the Internet computers appropriately and responsibly may result in revocation of Internet use privileges, Library privileges, and/or criminal prosecutions.

USERS MAY NOT:

- a. Make any attempt to alter software configurations or to log on using another person's card number.
- b. Use the computers to gain unauthorized access to the Library's network or computer systems or to any other network or computer system.
- c. Obstruct other people's work by consuming large amounts of system resources or by deliberately crashing any Library computer system.
- d. Make any attempt to damage computer equipment or software.
- e. Make any attempt to cause degradation of system performance.
- f. Engage in any activity that is disruptive to other Library users.
- g. Violate Federal, State, or Local laws or regulations or software licensing agreements.

Approved by Rockwall County Library Board November 4, 2021.

Approved by Rockwall County Commissioners' Court November 23, 2021.

DIE CUT MACHINE USE POLICY

1. The die-cutting machine will not be available for checkout. It can be used in the library during normal operating hours by:
 - a. Schools, non-profit agencies, and daycare groups in the Rockwall County area.
 - b. Library patrons over the age of 16 with a specific project or detailed need for the use of this equipment.
 - c. Persons representing other local public libraries.
 - d. Friends of the library, library volunteers, and library staff.
2. Individuals not using the machine for Rockwall County library programs will be responsible for bringing their own materials, paper, and other additional supplies. The library will not charge any additional fees for the use of this machine.
3. Persons using the machine without prior experience or knowledge must be instructed in the use by a library employee. People with demonstrated knowledge of the machine may use it without supervision.
4. The machine will be available on a first come, first serve basis. The library has the right to reserve the machine for periods of time in which it will only be available for its own use. This might occur when preparing for the Summer Reading Club or other major library events. The library staff will take reservations for the use of this machine and these reservations will take precedence over walk-in requests.

NOISE POLICY

The Rockwall County Library seeks to provide a comfortable and casual atmosphere where quiet conversation and serious research may coexist. With the exception of library sponsored performances and story times, noise that is disruptive to this atmosphere is to be avoided where possible.

Those tending to crying children will be asked to quiet the child or to remove the child from the building. Loud conversations should not be conducted in the library and those whose talking disturbs other should move out of the building until their conversations are completed. Running, shouting and horseplay will not be permitted inside the library.

Patrons entering the library shall silence their cellular phones and other electronic devices.

Library privileges may be revoked at the discretion of the Director.

Approved by Rockwall County Library Board March 2012

Approved by Rockwall County Commissioners' Court July 2012

Policy for Proctoring Examinations

The Rockwall County Library supports the lifelong learning goals of the citizens of Rockwall County. To support these goals, the Library may proctor exams for Rockwall County residents who are registered library cardholders in good standing, subject to staff availability.

Appointments for proctored examinations must be arranged through a librarian **at least one week in advance** and are scheduled only for times when the Library is open to the public and a professional librarian is available for proctoring. **An administrative fee of \$10 per exam is charged for proctoring and will be charged even if the student fails to report for the exam as scheduled.**

Guidelines for Proctoring

- ◆ **Proof of current Rockwall County residency will be required.** Students must be prepared to show photo ID to the proctor and are required to hold a Rockwall County library card in good standing.
- ◆ Examination appointments will be scheduled within the normal work hours of the exam proctor and may need to be scheduled around other duties. An exam may need to be re-scheduled if a conflict arises in the proctor's schedule, so students should avoid scheduling for the last possible day of the exam period.
- ◆ The student is responsible for all arrangements with the testing institution and for follow-up with any problems or questions.
- ◆ The student is responsible for contacting the proctor to check if the exam has been received and to confirm the scheduled proctoring time before arriving to take the exam.
- ◆ The exam must be taken at the location within the Library designated by the proctoring librarian. The student should bring a watch to keep track of time, as clocks are not visible from all areas of the Library. Intermittent time warnings will not be given by the proctor. The proctor may check any calculators, books, or other materials the student brings to the exam to assure that they meet the guidelines of the institution.
- ◆ No one other than the proctor may communicate with the student during the exam period unless specified in writing by the testing institution. No cell phone or other communication device use is permitted during exams. Any violation will be reported to the testing institution and may result in termination of proctoring privileges.
- ◆ The Library will not accept exams that require that the proctor directly observe the student at all times or require that the proctor leave the Library to return the examination (e.g., requirements that the exam be returned by registered U.S. mail or delivered to a certain location cannot be met).

- ◆ **Online exams or other use of personal or Library computers during exams cannot be accommodated.** If you need to take an online exam, please consult the National College Testing Association (www.ncta-testing.org) for information on other proctoring facilities.
- ◆ The student must provide any writing implements, clean scratch paper, blue books or other materials needed and must pay on the day of the exam for any printing, copying, faxing, envelopes, postage, long distance telephone calls, or other expenses associated with the exam. The institution or student is encouraged to provide addressed, stamped envelopes with sufficient postage or completed, pre-paid delivery service envelopes.
- ◆ The Library will retain a copy of the exam for a specified time period only if directed to do so by the institution. The Library cannot assume responsibility for completed exams not received by the testing institution.

Approved by Rockwall County Library Board
Approved by Rockwall County Commissioners' Court

August 4, 2009
February 23, 2010

Policy for Recognition of Naming Rights for Designated Areas Within the Library

1. Recognition with a plaque or sign will be coordinated with the architectural ADA compliant room signs.
2. The names of the people or organizations honored by naming rights will be engraved on the plaque. The wording and any logo for the plaque must be submitted to the County Librarian for approval ninety days before placement.
3. The Library will assume responsibility for engraving the plaques with a standardized font.
4. No name, logo or other signifying reference may appear other than on said plaque.

Approved:

Rockwall County Library Board November 6, 2007

Rockwall County Commissioners' Court November 13, 2007

Attachments for Reference:

American Library Association 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 that 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 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 Foundation for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses, Inc.
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

TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM STATEMENT

A. PREAMBLE

The Texas Library Association holds that the freedom to read is a corollary of the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press. Freedom of choice in selecting materials is a necessary safeguard to the freedom to read, and shall be protected against extra-legal, irresponsible attempts by self-appointed censors to abridge it. The Association believes that it is the essence of democracy that citizens shall have the right of free inquiry and the equally important right of forming their own opinions, and that it is of the utmost importance to the continued existence of democracy that freedom of the press in all forms of public communication be defended and preserved. The Texas Library Association subscribes in full to the principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association, Freedom to Read Statement, and interpretative statements adopted thereto.

B. AREAS OF CONCERN

LEGISLATION. The Texas Library Association is concerned with legislation at the federal, state, local, and school district level which tends to strengthen the position of libraries and other media of communication as instruments of knowledge and culture in a free society. The Association is also concerned with monitoring proposed legislation at the

federal, state, local, and school district level which might restrict, prejudice, or otherwise interfere with the selection, acquisition, or other professional activities of libraries, as expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee works with the Legislative Committee to watch proposed legislation, at the various levels, which would restrict or interfere with the selection, acquisition, or other professional activities of libraries.

INTERFERENCE. The Association is concerned with proposed or actual restrictions imposed by individuals, voluntary committees, or administrative authority on library materials or on the selection judgments or on the procedures or practices of librarians.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee attempts to eliminate restrictions which are imposed on the use or selection of library materials or selection judgments or on the procedures or practices of librarians, receives requests for advice and assistance where freedom has been threatened or curtailed, and recommends action to the Executive Board where it appears necessary.

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY. The Texas Library Association believes that every library, in order to strengthen its own selection process, and to provide an objective basis for evaluation of that process, should develop a written official statement of policy for the selection of library materials.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee encourages all libraries to develop a written statement of policy for the selection of library materials which includes an endorsement of the Library Bill of Rights.

EDUCATION. The Texas Library Association is concerned with the continuing education of librarians and the general public in understanding and implementing the philosophy inherent in the Library Bill of Rights and the ALA Freedom to Read Statement.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee supports an active educational program for librarians, trustees, and the general public.

LIAISON WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. The Texas Library Association, in order to encourage a united front in defending the right to read, shall cooperate with other organizations concerned with intellectual freedom.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee advises on Texas Library Association positions and cooperates with other organizations.

Adopted September 15, 1992 by the TLA Council.

Reaffirmed April 7, 1995 by the TLA Council.