

The Falls City Library & Arts Center  
1400 Stone St.  
Falls City, NE 68355  
Phone: 402-245-2913 - Fax: 402-245-3031  
Email: [info@fallscitylibrary.org](mailto:info@fallscitylibrary.org) - Website: [www.fallscitylibrary.org](http://www.fallscitylibrary.org)

## **LIBRARY POLICIES**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To assemble, preserve and administer a comprehensive collection of books and related educational and recreational material in order to provide, through guidance and stimulation, the communication of ideas and enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives.

### **INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM**

The Falls City Library & Arts Center endorses and incorporates the Intellectual Freedom, Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Statements of the American Library Association into its policy.

Democracy and the American way of life require that a full range of human ideas be accessible to the people and that proponents of various points of view be able to fully and openly make their cases, however popular or unpopular they may be, before the individual and collective judgment of their fellow citizens.

This principle is embodied in the First Amendment of the Constitution, which protects the free expression of ideas, and in American public libraries where librarians provide access to those ideas.

### **A. NEW APPLICATIONS**

1. Library privileges may be obtained by filling out an application. The applicant must provide current identification, a telephone number, one reference with a telephone number. Only two items may be checked out at first visit. Upon their return the patron may check out the regular limit.
2. Falls City residents support the Library through property taxes. Non-residents are assessed an annual fee of \$25.00 per year to register a family (list each family member who has user rights), \$20 to register an adult, and \$10.00 to register a student/child.
3. Temporary residents may borrow books by placing a \$20.00 cash deposit at the Library. The deposit will be returned at the conclusion of residence, once all materials have been returned.

4. The library staff reserves the right to limit services to anyone for lost items, large fines, or disorderly behavior.

## B. CIRCULATION

1. Book materials may be checked out for four week periods.
2. Current periodicals may not be checked out. Back issues may be checked out for two week periods.
3. Reference materials that are specially marked may be checked out for two week periods.
4. Audio-visual materials may be checked out for two week periods.
5. The library cannot assume responsibility for damage caused to a patron's equipment by library materials.
6. Copyright laws limit these audio-visual materials to home viewing and prohibit their duplication.
7. The regular limit is twenty-five (25) per family, twenty (20) items for adult cards and ten (10) items for student/child cards.

### Renewal:

8. Items may be renewed two times, unless a hold has been made for the materials. A longer time may be granted for special circumstances.

### Reserve:

9. Requests may be made for materials to be placed on reserve. The patron will be notified when the hold is ready, the material will be held for one (1) week. If the material has not been picked up during that time it will then be returned to the shelf or the next patron called.

### Inter-library Loan:

10. An inter-library loan material fee of \$2.50 will be charged for each title requested to cover borrowing expenses. These materials are loaned for a period specified by the loaning library.
11. Inter-library loans may be requested by registered patrons.

## C. LOST OR DAMAGED MATERIALS POLICY

- Lost or damaged library materials replaced at cost or acceptable replacement copy.
- Library staff will determine lost status, due to demand

#### D. EQUIPMENT POLICY

##### Check-out Equipment:

1. Library equipment may be available to patrons. Patrons will assume full responsibility for loss or damage to the equipment while in their possession. The equipment schedule will include reserve and return times to accommodate multiple requests.

##### Equipment Fees:

- Projector \$2.00 per day
- Projector screen \$2.00 per day

##### Other Equipment:

###### Copier:

Copies may be made by the public as posted;

- \$.10 per copy
  - \$.20 per copy for double-sided 8 ½” and 11” x 17”
  - \$.50 color less than half page
  - \$1.00 color for full page
2. Laminator: \$.50 per foot, with a \$.50 minimum. The library staff cannot be responsible for cutting material, or for damage done by the laminating process.
  3. Microfilm: Microfilm copies are \$.25 each. The microfilm machine may be reserved in advance for two hour blocks of time, a two hour time limit may be imposed if there are multiple requests for use.
  4. Typewriter: The typewriter may be used in the library by patrons.
  5. KINDLE FIRE
    - Patron has no lost/damaged items
    - Patron is 18 years of age or parent/guardian permission
    - Parents/guardians responsible for setting control of content
    - Patron agrees to pay replacement fee (\$200) if lost or damaged
    - Patron will not attempt to repair the device
    - Patron agrees to return the device in four (4) weeks

- Patron will skip a turn if device is overdue
- Patron will not return in book returns
- Patron agrees that all content will be deleted upon return for the next patron

## E. COMPUTER POLICY

1. The Internet workstations are usually available during regular library hours to patrons in good standing and guests. Programs and classes scheduled in the computer lab will be posted. Reserving some workstations for public use.
2. Wireless Internet (WIFI) is accessible throughout the library and grounds, available all hours.
3. No time restrictions will be imposed, however if multiple requests are made for computer use a two hour time limit may be imposed, at the library staff's discretion.
4. Misuse of the computer or Internet access may result in the loss of your computer privileges.
5. No food or drink allowed in the computer room.

In response to the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), approved by the United States Supreme Court July 2003, revised 2011 imbed hyper link filters have been placed on all public internet stations.

Adults aged 17 and above may request that the filters be removed. The adult patron will inform the staff at the end of their computer usage. Filters cannot protect children from all adult content online and may in fact block useful, educational material.

The Library staff does not monitor and has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. The Internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population and Library patrons use it at their own risk.

All Internet resources accessible through the Library are provided equally to all Library users. Parents or guardians, not the Library staff, are responsible for the Internet information selected and/or accessed by their children. Parents -- and only parents -- may restrict their children -- and only their children -- from access to the Internet resources accessible through the Library. Parents are encouraged to supervise their children's Internet sessions.

To be more specific:

The Library staff does not censor your access to materials or protect you from information you find offensive. There is sexually explicit material and other information resources which you may personally find controversial or inappropriate.

Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete, or current information. You need to be a good information consumer, questioning the validity of the information you find.

Library staff can provide basic training concerning the internet and computer usage. Classes are offered on basic skills.

#### F. GIFT POLICY

1. Acceptance of art and loaning of art will be deferred to the Library & Community Foundation of Richardson County, Acceptance Review Committee.
2. Other donations such as real estate, stocks, antiques, will be evaluated individually and may be accepted if the conditions are acceptable to the Library Board.
3. Materials may be accepted with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only as needed and according to the principles of selection. The Library staff has the authority to make whatever disposition of items that she or he deems advisable.
4. Materials purchased with donated or memorial funds will have a memorial/donation plate placed in each book unless the person wishes to remain anonymous.
5. Any gift may later be sold, exchanged, or traded to acquire other assets or items to replace or expand materials in the library's permanent collection.
6. Donors requesting a receipt for income tax purposes must provide the library with an independent appraisal.

#### G. COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

The Library maintains an active policy of discarding 7% of the collection annually: outdated material, material no longer of interest or in demand, duplicate material, worn or mutilated copies, and material which no longer contributes to the total collection. Because library material is purchased with public monies, no material may be given to an individual even though it is marked for discard. Discarded materials may be sold.

#### H. PUBLIC MEETING SPACES STALDER GALLERY

- The library meeting spaces are available on a reservation basis for use during regular library hours, free of charge to non-profit organizations or groups for any lawful purpose.

- Some meeting spaces may be reserved for profit based purposed at \$10 per hour.
- There is to be no use of tobacco or alcoholic beverages during the meeting, although refreshments may be served with permission, in certain areas of the facility
- The Library Director may deny the use of the room for any purpose supported by just cause. Any such denial may be overruled by a majority vote of the Library Board at any regular, special, or emergency meeting of the Board.
- Requests may be made to the Library Director for use of the facility outside of Library hours. Approval may be granted if staff can accommodate without overtime. Special privilege is granted to Christina Wertenberger, Curator for the Stalder Gallery.

These rules shall be promulgated in accordance with Library policy and shall be posted in two places in the Library.

#### I. EMERGENCIES IN THE LIBRARY

The Falls City Library & Arts Center (FCL&AC) staff and Board of Trustees work diligently to provide a safe environment for all who use this facility, as well as a safe repository for library materials of all types. Despite our best efforts, situations may arise of an emergency nature. These guidelines are designed to reduce risk to life and materials for unforeseeable and unplanned emergencies.

If the FCL&AC must close for any of the following reasons the local radio stations will be notified. If possible a sign will be posted on the entrance doors, a message placed on the library answering machine, and an e-mail may be sent.

**DANGER:** An emergency situation can be defined as any situation in which a person's actions present an imminent danger to the life or safety of him/herself, others or to library property. Such incidents may include assault and/or crimes of violence, or the threat or attempt such crimes. The staff will immediately call the police.

#### J. Weather

##### A. Tornado or Violent Storm

1. When warranted, staff will monitor weather conditions using a weather radio, internet, television, and consult with the Richardson County Emergency Management Director. When Richardson County and the surrounding area are in a watch or a warning, staff will follow these procedures established for the situation. These procedures are reviewed by staff annually and are updated as needed.
2. During electrical storms the library staff will shut down the computers.

3. At first signs of severe weather all unattended children under the age of 18 will be instructed by library staff to attempt to contact parents or guardians for instructions. The staff will assume “in loco parentis” for unattended children not advised by parents. Adult patrons will be notified of weather conditions. If sirens are blown, staff will direct patrons to take cover in the library storm shelter. The library desk will close although the doors remain open for the public to take shelter if necessary, or parents to collect children.
4. If a tornado strikes with little or no warning, and there is not time to seek the library storm shelter, patrons and staff should take shelter away from windows and exterior walls, hiding under furniture, and protect their head as much as possible. The books stacks should be avoided.

#### B. Blizzards, Snow or Ice Storms

1. The library may open late or close early when winter weather conditions present a danger to patrons and staff. This decision will be made by the Library Director.
2. Maximum effort will be made to maintain regular library hours of operation. The library will not open at the regular time if the sidewalks have not been cleared.
3. Scheduled programs will be cancelled if the Falls City School District closes due to inclement weather, whether or not the library closes.

## II. Facility Emergencies

### A. Fire

1. Staff will familiarize themselves with the location of alarm panels, and the location and operation of (8) fire extinguishers in the building. Annual drills and review of fire alarm panels will be conducted in October, and March.
2. At the first indication of smoke or flames, or if the fire alarm is activated, staff will check the alarm panel at the front entrance, then locate the problem area, investigate the situation, and determine the extent of the fire. The staff will try to contain the fire, using the fire extinguisher, and call 911 to notify the Fire Department.
3. The library staff will help patrons evacuate the building, gathering across the street at the Elks Lodge to await emergency personnel.

### B. Loss of Utilities

1. If electrical power is lost for at least two hours, or if the loss makes the temperature or the lighting in the library difficult to work, the library may close until the problem is resolved. Annual inspections of the library’s emergency lighting will be conducted by the City’s Electrical Department each December.
2. If water is shut off to the building, all restrooms will be closed immediately. Staff and patrons may be able to use neighboring businesses’ facilities.
3. If the natural gas supply to the library is interrupted or leaking, the City’s Gas Department will be notified and consulted for instructions and advise on

evacuating the library building. If the temperature drops enough to make working in, or using the library uncomfortable, the library will close until the problem is resolved.

C. Hazardous Materials

1. If carbon monoxide detectors warn of danger or if other chemical fumes are noticeable, staff should immediately evacuate the library building and call 911 for assistance.
2. If a traffic accident in the vicinity of the library involves hazardous materials of any type, library staff should follow the directives of emergency personnel.

D. Plumbing problems or water leaks

1. If a plumbing problem or water leak is limited to a single area, staff will close off the affected room and call for professional assistance from the number in the “Numbers to Know” notebook located at the circulation desk.
2. If a plumbing problem or water leak affects major parts of the library building, the Library Director may close the library if it is deemed necessary. Professionals will be called.

E. Bomb Threat

1. Staff receiving a bomb threat call will try to keep the caller on the line as long as possible, noting every detail about the caller’s voice, background noises, and so forth. If the caller does not mention the location and detonation time of the bomb, this information should be requested.
2. When the caller hangs up the phone the staff person will press “star” 57 on the phone keypad and follow the detailed instructions. The staff person will notify other staff and evacuate the building at least 600 feet from building, and phone 911. The same process should be followed if the threat is delivered by means other than the phone.
3. When questioned by emergency personnel, staff will provide them with information about the incident.
4. If a bomb threat is received at a nearby facility, library staff will be instructed by emergency personnel.

F. Emergency Action Plan (EAP) **CALL 911**

1. Children’s program room doors are to remain unlocked at all times allowing a 5<sup>th</sup> exit.
2. All staff keep interior keys and cell phones on person at all times on duty.
3. Staff will be aware of anyone entering the building. Trust your instinct!
4. All visitors must register as a patron with photo id, government issued and current. Temporary passes are available for visitors.
5. A code word has been assigned to alert staff of danger.



6. Invite local law enforcement to frequently walk through in uniform.
7. A crisis kit will be prepared containing the items outlined @ [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)
8. Staff will gather at least 650 feet (approximately 2 blocks) from the library and wait for law enforcement instruction.
9. An emergency protocol has been established with local law enforcement. A “knox” box has been placed at the east and west entrances of the building to contain keys and a floor plan of the library.
10. Review exterior access @ North and South doors, after consulting with emergency personnel, following approval of this plan, by all agencies listed at the top of this document.

### III. Personal Safety

1. Library staff should exercise caution when assisting anyone with a health complaint. Remain calm, supportive, sympathetic, and see that the person is comfortable.
2. Call 911 immediately for rescue personnel in the event of a serious problem. Staff that are certified in CPR should assist if necessary.
3. In the event of health emergency in children under the age of 18, library staff will make every attempt to reach a parent or guardian.
4. Following any health emergency incident, the staff person will document details on the City of Falls City’s incident form and deliver it to the Library Director to forward to City Administration.

### IV. Reporting Emergencies

1. All emergency incidents should be reported to the Library Director as soon as possible. In the absence of the Director the President of the Library Board should be notified, the City Administration should also be notified.
2. Timely and accurate reporting of emergencies is crucial, library staff should refer to the Library Director and/or the Clerk Treasurer before information is released to the public.

#### SOURCES:

FEMA

OSHA

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT ONLINE

WWW.READY.GOV

CITY OF SEWARD NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA STATE PATROL

FALLS CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

RICHARDSON COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

## K. RULES OF BEHAVIOR FOR USE OF LIBRARY FACILITIES

When the behavior of a patron constitutes a disruption which interferes with the use of the Library by other patrons or the disruption interferes with a staff member's completion of his/her duties, the following progressive steps will be taken:

1. Issue a **written** (verbal) warning, with the statement that the person(s) will be asked to leave if the behavior in question does not cease.
2. Request the person(s) leave the library.
3. Call the police.

A juvenile causing repetitive behavior issues that interfere with other patrons or staff members, may be banned from using the library without a parent or guardian.

In the case of repetitive adult behavior problems a ban may be imposed.

A staff member may intervene with any person child in order to prevent injury or property damage.

The children's section of the library is for children, their families, and caregivers.

Adults without children in the children's section of the library service area may be requested to move to another area of the library.

The following actions are prohibited on library property for the safety of staff and patrons:

- Exhibiting poor personal hygiene, patrons with offensive body odor will be asked to leave
- Repetitive messes of feces, blood, vomit, and sputum will not be tolerated – for example stools may contain viruses, bacteria or protozoan pathogens
- Appropriate apparel, including footwear, shirts and pants covering private parts
- Annoying, harassing, or threatening another person
- Physical, sexual, or verbal abuse of others, this includes cursing
- Carrying weapons of any type unless authorized by law
- Stealing, defacing, or destroying Library property
- Interfering with the free passage of others
- Behaving in a loud, disorderly, or disruptive manner
- Leaving young children or vulnerable persons unsupervised or unattended
- Leaving personal property unattended. The Library is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen property
- Excessive display of affection
- Remaining inside the library when it is not open to the public
- Smoking on library grounds

## L. EXHIBITS

Display, Exhibits, Handouts, Bulletin Boards

## Political Literature and Petitioning in the Library

As part of its public service and information mission, the Library makes available handouts, posting, and exhibit areas and bulletin boards. The use of these areas is intended to increase public awareness of the range of information available in the library collection and to make available information created by and of interest to the local community. Displays, exhibits, handouts, and materials posted on bulletin boards are covered by the intellectual freedom policies of the Library.

Political Literature and Petitioning is not allowed inside the Library and must use the grounds

Final authority for all materials displayed and made available in handout, display, and exhibit space and on bulletin boards rests with the Library Director.

## M. EMPLOYEE STANDARDS

The Library staff adheres to the guidelines as outlined in the Labor Agreement between the City of Falls City and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1536 and CWA. In addition the Library Board has outlined a business casual dress code as follows:

1. No visible tattoos or body piercings (other than earrings).
2. Modest attire such as knee length skirts, city shorts, pants that cover the midsection.
3. Shoes should protect the feet; no sandals/open toe shoes/flip flops.
4. Jeans are acceptable.
5. Tee-shirts with logos that support reading, books, and art are acceptable.

In general employees are expected to dress in a neat and businesslike manner when working with the public. Personal grooming and hygiene are required. Suggestive and unkempt attire will result in the employee being sent home to change.

Library staff is encouraged to pursue continuing education by attending conferences, workshops and taking online training. Expenses for these opportunities will be paid by library budget.

All other items are covered under the City Management Employee Manual.

## N. PROGRAMS AND MARKETING

The Falls City Library & Arts Center Board and staff considers programming to be of the utmost importance in library operation. Programs are designed to attract to all ages in the community. All programs are free and open to the public. Marketing for all programs includes press releases in the Falls City Journal, Sunny 101 FM radio, KTNC am radio, Time Warner Cable local access channel, FCTV #1, monthly handout, Facebook, emails, and texts.

## O. FINANCE

The Library Board establishes the financial policy to ensure fiscal accountability and the

appropriate use of funds to support the library's goals within compliance of Nebraska State Statutes.

It is the responsibility of the Library Director to manage and account for all expenditures.

The Library Director prepares the annual budget proposal and submits it to the City Council Budget Committee. The Mayor and City Council approve the final document. The Library receives funding from the City of Falls City tax revenues, Nebraska State Aid, Interlibrary loan compensation, fees and fines.

Grants and donations are deposited in to the Library's Grant Fund Account, and expenditures accounted for in compliance with grant stipulations and donor wishes.

## P. MATERIAL SELECTION POLICY

### THE COMMUNITY

The Library is supported by and recognizes as its primary clientele the residents of Falls City, Nebraska, and the surrounding area. In order to most effectively meet the needs and interests of its patrons, the library gathers and analyzes information about the community on an ongoing basis. The results of this research provide the library with information about the various and diverse groups within the area so that their needs and interests may be considered when selecting material. In addition, knowledge of other readily available sources of information within the community enables the library to most effectively use its limited resources by avoiding unnecessary duplication.

The library welcomes suggestions from the public regarding the collection.

### COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The Library is a dynamic resource that provides free access to information, materials, and services which anticipate and respond to the interests and concerns of all individuals within its community. The Library Board and staff believe that this commitment translates into an active role in the community's intellectual life: an opportunity to stimulate ideas, advance knowledge and enhance the quality of life in the area.

Material is selected in various formats organized for easy access. The staff provides reference and reader's advisory services, programs, and exhibits, as well as displays and publications to assist people in the location and use of needed resources.

The final responsibility for material selected resides with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies adopted by the Library Board.

Library materials are selected:

- to ensure the right of the patrons to evaluate for themselves a broad range of ideas and concepts in appropriate formats and reading levels;
- to provide the information needed by the residents to enhance personal and professional lives and to facilitate participation in the democratic process; to facilitate self-education of people in the community;
- to enrich and extend interests which individuals have developed or may develop in the future;
- to encourage reading, listening, and viewing as leisure activities.

#### MATERIALS SELECTION: GENERAL CRITERIA

Library materials are selected to meet the popular reading/recreational, educational, informational, and cultural needs of the community. Each area in the library is developed on knowledge of the needs and interests of the community and its residents. Selection of library material is a complex process which takes into consideration a number of factors. These include the role of each area in the library and the availability of major information resources within the community and through information networks.

The following criteria provide a general framework within which selection takes place:

Material should contribute to the balance and variety of the Library's collection as a whole in order to provide the greatest number of options to the library patrons.

Material should receive acceptable reviews in recognized review media or be favorably reviewed by the Library Director. When reviews and/or review copies are unavailable, the decision to acquire materials is based upon other information sources such as interviews, author interest and reputation, media coverage, and/or the judgment of the director.

Material is evaluated with regard to artistic worth, originality of work, suitability of format, comprehension by the intended age level, and contribution to the total collection.

Non-fiction material is also evaluated with regard to authority, authenticity, accuracy and timeliness, logical and clear presentation of ideas, and local historical importance.

Material is selected to meet the needs and interest of the general public. The library does not seek to duplicate research or special collections which are readily available, nor does it attempt to meet the textbook needs of students.

Material is selected in various formats to meet the needs of library patrons. Magazines, newspapers, paperback books, pamphlets, maps, audiovisual materials, and computer software are examples of materials which present information in ways other than the traditional book format.

Materials other than books must also meet technical and quality standards based on the current state of the art.

Material is selected within the constraints imposed by availability, space, budget, and format limitations.

Material representing a single view of an issue will be considered for inclusion in the collection if it contributes to an understanding of the issue as a whole.

Materials which contain controversial passages are examined as a whole because the significance of an entire work often transcends isolated words, phrases, or incidents. Many current works deal graphically with all aspects of life.

Complaints may be submitted in writing to the Library Director who will respond in writing in ten (10) business days. Further action may be presented at the next regular meeting of the Library Board on the first Wednesday of the month.

#### **MATERIAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

Material selected for young people meets the same selection criteria as other library materials.

The Library Board endorses the belief that the parent or guardian is the only person who may restrict his/her child's access to library material. What may be acceptable to one parent may not be acceptable to another. Therefore, a parent may not impose his/her restrictions on others. \*

The Library staff follows the motion picture rating guide and check out "R" rated materials to those over the age of seventeen.

#### **Q. COMPLAINTS OF MATERIALS**

1. Any patron of the FCL&AC believes that material is inappropriate for the collection, the patron may write a written complaint to the Library Director, if the patron believes there is a violation of this policy, a policy review may be requested.
2. The Library Director will consider the complaint and respond in writing to the patron within seven working days.
3. If the response of the Library Director does not satisfy the patron, the patron may request to be placed on the next agenda for the meeting of the Library Board, to review the complaint. This request must be made one week before the first Wednesday of the month.

#### **USA PATRIOT ACT/PATRON CONFIDENTIALITY**

If staff is presented with a search warrant by court order or subpoena they should refer the matter to the Library Director, or if unavailable the Library Board President. A request for time to consult with the city's legal counsel should be requested. The city's legal counsel should be present during the actual search of patron records. The USA Patriot Act bars the institution from contacting the individual to disclose that a search warrant has been applied

to their records. Court orders will be the only breach of patron confidentiality. The library staff will adhere to federal, state, and local laws: sources listed on page 16.

## FREEDOM TO READ/FREEDOM TO VIEW

Freedom of communication is vital to preserving a free society. Accordingly, the Falls City Library & Arts Center Materials Selection Policy mandates choosing of books and other library materials based on values of interest, information, and enlightenment for all people of the community; no materials shall be excluded because of the race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of its authors. The library will consider patron objections to materials in its collection only when the objections are submitted in writing on the approved form (Appendix). However, the Falls City Library & Arts Center declares as a matter of policy that no challenged material which conforms to this Materials Selection Policy shall be removed from the library, except by order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

To ensure the right of the patrons of the library to have access to a broad range of ideas and concepts, the Library Board endorses the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement except where superceded by specific library policies and procedures. (Appendix)

## THE FREEDOM TO READ

A Joint Statement by: American Library Association & Association of American Publishers.

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 books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgement, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship.

The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as a hostile deed, with suppression.

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 stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which 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 towards 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 expression, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.**

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which 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 contained in the books 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 books 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 determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.**

A book should be judged as a book. 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 which 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, such modern literature 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 taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

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

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that individuals must be directed

in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

**6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.**

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

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

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated 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 their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

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

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

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

## FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

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

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

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

## 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, and January 23, 1980,

inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

---

Hope Schawang, Librarian

Approved at Library Board Meeting, March 3, 2021

Federal, state, and local law sources:

American Library Association:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/woissues/civilliberties/cipaweb/adviceresources/regulations>

<http://www.legislature.ne.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=s8407012005>, see section 11 as it pertains to public libraries.