

**Middleton Public Library**  
**COLLECTION POLICY**

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**I. Purpose**

- (A) The library needs a collection development policy to balance limitations of budget and space, with its objectives to meet the needs of its patrons and the community.
- (B) This policy is used by library staff to select, maintain and dispose of materials, as well as to inform the general public about the principles of collection development.

**II. Factors Affecting Collection Development**

- (A) The library has served the recreational, educational, and informational needs of Middleton since 1926. During its history, the library has grown with the community, adding services, and materials in response to user needs and the appropriateness of new formats.
- (B) One of the most significant factors affecting collection development resulted from the library's participation in the Dane County Library Service, beginning in 1966, and the South Central Library System beginning in

1975. The materials sharing network provided by these systems continues to have an impact on collection development in two ways:

1. It makes resources from throughout the state available to patrons locally. It provides access to extensive collections of technical and historical materials, which encourages the library to concentrate its selection on materials likely to provide the broad, general-interest subject coverage that will meet the interests and needs of larger segments of the public.
2. The South Central Library System provides funds to purchase multiple copies of books currently in heavy demand. This encourages member libraries, including Middleton, to purchase fewer duplicate copies of popular titles thus reducing the time patrons must wait for them.

(C) The sharing of an automated library system with other South Central Library System public libraries has had a two-fold benefit:

1. The automated library system allows participating libraries to share resources. The holdings of most member libraries are available to Middleton patrons via online access and an extensive delivery system.
2. The automated library system also allows participating libraries to diversify their purchasing patterns. This approach to selection results in fewer system wide multiple copies of marginal titles and an increase in the total number of titles available.

### **III. Responsibilities for Collection Development**

- (A) The ultimate responsibility for collection development, as with all library activities, rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board. This responsibility is shared with other members of the staff within their areas of expertise.
- (B) Because the Library Director must be able to answer to the Library Board and the general public for actual selections, he/she has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of staff.
- (C) Digital materials may be selected at the consortium or state level.

### **IV. Selection of Library Materials: Criteria for Evaluation**

- (A) General criteria - the selection of library materials involves the following factors and considerations:
1. The experience and knowledge of staff selectors.
  2. Familiarity with the community, its needs and interests.
  3. Holdings and availability of other area library resources.
  4. Library's existing collection and its materials budget.
- (B) Criteria for selecting materials:
1. Materials should be judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.
  2. Reviews in professional journals such as *Library Journal*, popular reviewing sources such as *The New York Times*, and online sources, such as Amazon.com.
  3. Opinions on selected works may also be solicited from area authorities.
  4. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review is not sufficient reason to reject a title for which there is demand.
- (C) Criteria for the selection of circulating nonfiction books:
1. Qualifications of the author in the subject field.
  2. Scope and authority of the subject matter.
  3. Quality of the writing (i.e., style, readability).
  4. Appeal to the general-interest reader.
  5. Date of publication.
  6. Reputation of the publisher.
  7. Physical format (binding, typography, design, etc.).
- (D) Criteria for selecting fiction books:
1. Popularity of the author (patron requests).
  2. Appeal to the general-interest reader.
  3. Quality of the writing.
  4. Historic and literary merit.
  5. Reputation of the publisher.
  6. Physical format (binding, typography, design, etc.).
- (E) Other guidelines for selecting fiction:
1. Best-selling fiction: The library will purchase two or more copies of a title when the ratio of holds to copies warrants it.
  2. Retrospective purchases: As much as possible, the fiction collection should contain the best and most enduring of all the

novels and short stories that have been published in the English language. The library will add and/or replace historically significant titles to the collection on a regular basis.

(F) The Reference Collection

1. Selectors may choose to catalog some library items to remain in the building at all times. The decision to do that is based on heavy use, cost, and frequency of referral by staff. In many cases an effort is made to buy a circulating copy of the title as well.

(G) The Periodical Collection

1. A collection of magazines and newspapers is maintained for browsing purposes and as a supplement to the book collection. Requests for periodicals which fall outside the scope of the collection may be filled through the interlibrary loan network. The collection is evaluated on an annual basis.
2. Selection of periodicals is based on the following criteria:
  - a. Appeal to the general-interest reader
  - b. Accessibility of a title's contents via online indexes
  - c. Accuracy and objectivity of the editors and contributors
  - d. Patron requests
  - e. Preservation of a balanced viewpoint within the collection
  - f. Access of content via online databases and other digital services.

(H) Audiovisual Materials: Music Recordings

1. Librarians try to purchase a cross section of musical styles which will appeal to a varied user group.
2. Selection is based on demand, critical review, and the intent to provide a wide range of musical styles and genres.

(I) Audiovisual Materials: Audio Books

1. Audio books are an important supplement to the print collection.
2. As with print materials, librarians select audio books based on demand, critical review, and the intent to provide titles which have been deemed historically important.

(J) Audiovisual Materials: Video Recordings and Games

1. The library's video and game collections are intended to serve the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community.
2. Selection is based upon demand, critical reviews, and the intent to provide a wide range of materials to suit a variety of interests and tastes. Cost is another factor which may impact selection of this format.

(K) The Middleton Collection

1. The library maintains a collection of local history materials, including microfilm of the local paper, transcripts of oral histories, and government and civic publications.
2. The Middleton Collection does not attempt to be a comprehensive collection of all local history and municipal materials. Collection development concentrates on frequently used and requested materials.

(L) Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Purchases

1. Items may be purchased to fill ILL requests dependent on cost and availability.
2. These materials may be added to the collection based on Section IV of this policy.

(M) Gift Materials

1. Materials donated to the library are property of the Middleton Public Library.
2. These items may or may not be automatically added to the collection. These items are reviewed according to the selection criteria set forth in this section.
3. Gift materials not added to the collection will be disposed of according to section VII (D) of this policy.

**V. Materials for Specific Audiences**

(A) Materials for Children

1. In selecting materials for children, the library's goal is to make available a collection which satisfies their informational and recreational needs.
2. Materials are selected which meet the general needs of the community. Materials whose qualities make them valuable to

children with special needs, talents, problems, or interests are also considered.

3. Criteria for materials selection are the same as for adult and young adult materials with the addition of vocabulary suitable to the age of the intended audience and quality of the illustrations in children's fiction.
- (B) Materials and equipment for the visually impaired, such as large-print books and magnifiers, are acquired according to patron demand. The library also encourages patrons with special needs to use the resources of the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library.
  - (C) The library will continue to work with area libraries and organizations in the planning or expansion of services for those with special needs not currently being met or adequately met.

## **VI. Maintenance of Library Materials**

- (A) Most library materials are processed in such a way as to insure their maximum use under normal circumstances. All materials returned to the library are inspected for damage.
- (B) Damaged but still usable materials are mended according to an established set of procedures.
- (C) Patrons are charged a replacement cost for materials they check out that are irretrievably lost or damaged beyond repair.

## **VII. Weeding of Library Materials**

- (A) Weeding is necessary to maintain a vital, useful, and up-to-date collection. This task takes skill, care, time, and knowledge of the materials to do a competent job.
- (B) Selection of materials for weeding is based on the following criteria:
  1. Materials worn out through use.
  2. Ephemeral materials which are no longer timely.
  3. Materials no longer considered accurate or factual.
  4. Materials which have had little recent use and are of questionable value.
  5. Excess copies of a title no longer in demand.

- (C) Replacement of materials that are withdrawn is not automatic. The need for replacement is based on the following criteria:
  - 1. Number of duplicate copies.
  - 2. Existence of adequate coverage of the subject.
  - 3. Demand for the specific title or for material in that subject area.
  - 4. Availability of items for purchase.
  
- (D) Disposal of materials weeded from the collection is accomplished according to the following priorities:
  - 1. No weeded or donated materials may be sold by library staff.
  - 2. Discarded materials may be used at outreach and other programming events.
  - 3. Materials unsuitable for transfer or sale are discarded through a library resale/recycling vendor.
  
- (E) The Library will not accept requests to hold weeded materials for individuals.

### **VIII. Reconsideration of Library Resources**

- (A) The library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval but solely on the basis of the principles set forth in this policy.
  
- (B) Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library materials will be sequestered, except to protect them from injury or theft.
  
- (C) Responsibility for reading and the use of the library by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. At no time will library staff act *in loco parentis*. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that they may come into the possession of children.
  
- (D) South Central Library patrons or Middleton residents requesting that an item be withdrawn from the collection may complete a "Reconsideration of Library Resources" form.
  
- (E) The review of questioned materials will be treated objectively and as an important matter. General acceptance of the material will be checked by consulting authoritative lists and critical reviews in light of the library's

selection policy. Passages will not be taken out of context, and the material will be evaluated in its entirety.

- (F) The Director will respond in writing to the complainant within 14 days with a decision regarding the resource in question. The Director will keep a log of forms filed and his/her response.
- (G) In the event of an appeal on the decision of the Library Director, the inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Middleton Public Library Board of Trustees with the Library Board serving as the final arbiter. After a final decision, the resource in question shall not be reconsidered for three calendar years.
- (H) The “Reconsideration of Library Resources” form may also be used by the complainant who appeals a decision not to purchase a particular item. The basic procedure will be the same, resulting in a written decision to the complainant.

Adopted May 14, 1981  
Amended May 12, 1987  
Amended August 13, 1991  
Amended May 14, 1996  
Amended June 12, 2006  
Amended March 26, 2019  
Amended October 11, 2022  
Amended October 10, 2025

## **IX. Appendix A – 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 which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

**X. Appendix B - American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement  
Library Bill of Rights**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We therefore affirm these propositions:

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

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of

restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which

the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

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

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

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

*A Joint Statement by:*

American Library Association

Association of American Publishers

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses

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

**XI. Appendix C – Reconsideration of Library Resources Form**

**Middleton Public Library Reconsideration of Library Resources Form**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip  
Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Library Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Resource on which you are commenting:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Book
- \_\_\_\_\_ DVD
- \_\_\_\_\_ Internet Resource
- \_\_\_\_\_ Magazine/Newspaper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Music CD
- \_\_\_\_\_ Library Program
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exhibit or Display
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Author/Publisher or Producer/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Item on display: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please briefly answer the following questions about the resource that you would like to have reconsidered.**

1. How did you learn of this resource?
  
2. To what do you object? Please be as specific as possible.

3. Have you read/watched/listened to the entire resource? If not, what parts did you read/watch/listen to?
  
4. What do you feel the effect of the resource might be?
  
5. What item with a similar purpose, or an opposing viewpoint, would you suggest in place of this resource?
  
6. Additional comments:

**Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form. The Library Director will respond to your concerns within fourteen business days upon receipt of this form.**

**Updated October 2022  
Updated 12/9/2025**