

Collection Development & Maintenance Policy

Purpose & Scope of Collection

The Library provides an important community place for residents to engage in voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas. The Library's physical and digital collections are developed and managed to provide for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents.

Collection decisions are made in conjunction with the Library's mission, vision, and strategic initiatives, especially the following:

- Positioning the Library as a source for lifelong learning
- Developing opportunities for engagement, discovery, and creativity
- Developing exceptional resources that anticipate and respond to patron needs and expectations
- Embracing diversity

The Library's collections are intended for a broad patron base, ranging from infants to the elderly.

The Library's collections will contain a wide variety of material formats, including, but not limited to, print, audio-visual, electronic, and digital.

The Library's collections are meant for the general reader and not the specialist or the professional. Works meant for the professional will be selected only if they are also useful to the general reader.

The Library's collections should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints.

In selecting materials and developing collections, staff will include materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity, not only of the region it serves, but also the larger global perspective. The over-all value of an item, rather than freedom from defects, is the chief criterion in selection. Works which present an honest picture of some problems or aspect of life are not excluded because of coarse language or frankness. Materials, which trade on a taste for sensationalism or pornography, may be added when some specific social, psychological, or literary factor justifies their purchase.

All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

The Library provides a variety of collections developed to serve specific demographics or subject needs:

- *Children's Room*: The Children's Collections are intended to satisfy and stimulate the informational, recreational, and cultural needs of children through the elementary school years.
- *Tweens & Teen Room*: The Young Adult Collection aims to meet the recreational reading interests of adolescents of middle and senior high school age. It is intended to provide a transition from children's to adult literature. The collection will also contain special interest topics for adolescents, including, but not limited to, sex education, drug abuse, popular culture, and mental health.
- *Local History, Connecticut, & Genealogy Collections*: These collections document the history of Old Lyme and the region, including family histories. The majority of materials in these collections do not circulate.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The Library Board of Trustees affirms the American Library Association's *Freedom to Read* statement, *Freedom to View* statement, and the *Library Bill of Rights* (see Appendix A). These statements are used as guiding documents in all decisions relating to the Library's collections.

Selection Criteria

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. An item need not meet all these criteria to be acceptable.

- Literary quality as judged by reviewers, the staff, and the public
- Potential popularity among our readers
- Favorable assessments by reputable critics, reviewers, or organizations in professionally recognized publications
- Importance or interest of the subject
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- The authority and accuracy of the author
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Local origination or relevance to Old Lyme and the region
- Public's inability to procure item from alternative sources
- The quality and appropriateness of the format, including ease of use

Self-published items will only be considered if they have received a positive review from a professional literary publication and/or the author is from Old Lyme/Lyme and/or the content of the book relates to the history of the town.

Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for selecting library materials lies with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees. The Director may delegate selection responsibility to qualified staff members. Staff members are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials.

Controversial Materials

Materials are not excluded or included in the collection based solely on subject matter or on political, religious, or ideological grounds. In building collections, staff are guided by the principle of selection, rather than censorship. Furthermore, the selection of a given item for the Library's collections should not be interpreted as an endorsement of a particular viewpoint.

The Old Lyme-Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library recognizes that many 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 stated in this selection policy. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no material will be sequestered, except to protect it from injury or theft. The removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive is prohibited.

Responsibility for children's use of materials rests solely with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of material will not be inhibited by the possibility that items may come into the possession of children.

The decision by an author, publisher, or other content creator to withdraw their work from the market and stop selling or publishing it will not be considered sufficient reason alone for the Library to withdraw it from the collection.

Digital Collections/Databases

The Library's collections may include digital collections, databases, and online tools. Selection and maintenance will be conducted using the standards of selection outlined above.

As a member of Libraries Online, Inc., the Library provides access to shared digital collections via Overdrive/Libby. Management of these collections is dictated by the *Libraries Online, Inc. Digital Collection Challenge Policy and Procedures* (see Appendix B).

The Library provides access to digital resources curated by the Connecticut State Library. All resources provided by the Connecticut State Library are governed by the policies of that library.

Interlibrary Cooperation

The Old Lyme-Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library, a full member of the State Library system and Libraries Online, Inc., is a small library, but it serves a population with many highly specialized interests. Various inter-library loan systems will be made available to accommodate our patrons' special interests. Because access to specialized and technical materials is available through interlibrary loan, the Library will concentrate its resources on broad subject coverage and aim to meet the needs of larger segments of the population.

Gifts/Donations

Gifts of materials suitable for Library use may be accepted providing there is no condition imposed on their use, location, or disposal. All gifts will be evaluated using the standards of selection that govern purchases. The Library welcomes gifts of money made by local groups or individuals for purchase of books and other materials. Choice of such materials will be subject to this policy.

Maintenance of the Collection

Maintenance of the collection includes discarding (weeding), replacement, rebinding, and repair.

If an item is lost or damaged, it may not be replaced depending on other available copies, the existence of other materials covering the subject, and/or low demand.

Weeding is performed as a regular, ongoing process by qualified staff in the interest of keeping all collections current and useful. Materials will be reviewed using professionally accepted standards, including, but not limited to, the material's relevance, the physical condition of the material, the availability of duplicates or copies of the material, the availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate material and the continued demand for the material.

Weeded materials in good condition may be sold, donated, or disposed of however the Library deems appropriate. Generally, standard titles of permanent value and materials of local significance are spared weeding even if they may meet the criteria for so doing.

Reconsideration of Library Material

The Old Lyme-Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library recognizes the importance of public feedback regarding material selection.

Community members requesting review of library material should refer to the Library's *Material Review and Reconsideration Policy*. Reconsideration requests may only be submitted by residents of Old Lyme.

This policy is in accordance with Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322, 323. This policy is posted on the Old Lyme-Phoebe Griffin Noyes website (oldlymelibrary.org), and copies are available in the Library.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees October 14, 2025

Appendix A: Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement, & The Library Bill of Rights

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:

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 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.

The 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 guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

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

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

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.

Appendix B: Libraries Online, Inc. Digital Collection Challenge Policy & Procedures Explanation of Digital Collections

Libraries Online, Inc. (LION) shares two digital collections among its member libraries, Overdrive electronic/audiobooks and Overdrive magazines.

Overdrive electronic/audiobooks are selected by the LION eMaterials Committee, which is composed of librarians from member libraries. Given the cost of eBooks and audiobooks, the selection team follows collection development principles that focus on materials that appeal to a broad range of public library users of all ages. These include, but are not limited to:

- NYT best sellers
- Major prize winners & popular award winning titles
- Popular fiction and non-fiction authors
- Books that turn into movies
- Series – if available , including backlists of new releases
- Additional titles will be considered upon patron recommendation.

Titles are withdrawn from the collection in order to maintain its usefulness, currency, relevance, or for contractual reasons between Overdrive, LION's content provider, and a publisher.

Overdrive magazines are an inclusive collection for which the consortium pays a fixed fee. LION does not contribute to the development of the collection.

Policy Statement

Libraries Online, Inc. (LION) provides online access to electronic and other content to serve the interests of its member patrons.

LION upholds the First Amendment and is dedicated to free inquiry. LION subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights and Connecticut Library Association Intellectual Freedom Statement Against Censorship. It also supports the "Freedom to Read" and the "Freedom to View" statements adopted by the American Library Association. LION endorses the Readers' First principles. LION believes responsibility for monitoring a child's access to resources rests with a parent or legal guardian. Individual member libraries do not have the authority to remove items in the LION collection.

LION believes that no individual should censor or restrict the freedom of others to read or listen to the collection. LION will respond to patron concerns about the suitability of a particular title. Please direct these inquiries to info@lioninc.org. LION asks that you include the following information:

- Contact information (name, email address)
- Patron's LION Library
- Item information (author/title)
- Examples of the unsuitability of the item in question

The LION eMaterials Committee, in consultation with the LION Board of Directors, will review the concern and respond to the patron within 30 days of submission.

LION Board approval, 2/22/22, rev. 4/22/25