

## Collection Development Policy

### Philosophy of Collection Development

It is the policy of the Old Lyme-Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library to provide physical and digital collections for all ages. The Library's collections are developed and managed to meet the majority of the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the library's service area. The Library Board of Trustees affirms the American Library Association's *Freedom to Read Statement* and the *Library Bill of Rights* (see Appendix A).

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

### General Collection Criteria

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, and electronic.

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 will provide a broad range of opinion on current issues.

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.

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.

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.

## **Standards of Selection**

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

- Literary quality as judged by reviewers, the staff, and the public
- Potential popularity among our readers
- 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
- The quality and appropriateness of the format, including ease of use
- Titles recommended from standard bibliographies

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.

## **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**

Gifts of materials suitable for Library use may be accepted providing there is no condition imposed on their use, location, or disposal. The Library will welcome 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 and executed by the Library Director.

## **Maintenance of the Collection**

Materials that are no longer useful because of duplication, poor physical condition, inaccuracy, outdated facts, or lack of popularity will be discarded regularly by the Library Director or by qualified staff members.

## **Reconsideration of Library Material**

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.

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.

Community members or groups requesting removal of library material may fill out the *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form* (see Appendix C) and submit it to the Library Director. The Library Director will review the request and the material in question per the criteria established in this policy and will make the decision to remove or retain the material. If the patron is not satisfied with the Director's decision, they may appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will respond to such appeals in writing with the final decision.

The following guidelines will apply to items under reconsideration:

- Items will not be removed from the collection or sequestered in any way during the reconsideration process.
- Items that have been previously reconsidered and remain in the collection will not be reconsidered for 5 years from the date of the last reconsideration process.
- All requests for reconsideration will be reported to the Connecticut Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee and the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom.
- The Library Director will handle all requests for reconsideration with understanding, respect, and responsiveness.

### **Shared Collections**

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

### **Programs**

The Library provides a wide variety of special programs and events for patrons of all ages. Staff will apply the standards identified in this policy when selecting program and event speakers and topics.

*Modified by the Board of Trustees, September 13, 2022*  
*Approved by the Board of Trustees, November 8, 1988*

## Appendix A: Freedom to Read 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.*

## 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](mailto: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*



## Appendix C: Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

The Trustees of Library have established a materials selection policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to a staff member or by mailing it to Library. Per Library policy, the Library Director will make a decision to remove or retain the material. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you may appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Representing yourself      ☐ Representing an organization?

Name of Organization (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Resource on which you are commenting:

☐ Book/e-book    ☐ DVD    ☐ Audio Recording    ☐ Magazine    ☐ Newspaper

☐ Digital Resource      ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

What brought this resource to your attention? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

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What concerns you about the resource?

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Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

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What action are you requesting the Library consider?

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