

Collection Development Policy

Purpose of the Collection Development Policy:

The San Benito County Free Library is committed to building and maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and accessible collection that reflects the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of our community. This policy establishes the principles and goals that guide staff in the selection, maintenance, and evaluation of library materials. It also serves to inform the public about the values and criteria that shape the Library's collection. The policy is reviewed and updated regularly to remain responsive to the evolving needs and interests of the community.

Mission:

The San Benito County Free Library provides the community lifelong learning opportunities. The library delivers responsive informational, educational, recreational, and cultural library services within a welcoming environment.

Philosophy of Selection:

The San Benito County Free Library upholds the principles of intellectual freedom and affirms its support for the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. It endorses the American Library Association's key documents:

- [Library Bill of Rights](#) (Attachment 1)
- [Freedom to Read Statement](#) (Attachment 2)
- [Freedom to View Statement](#) (Attachment 3)

These foundational documents, along with professional ethics and standards, guide our collection development practices. In addition, this policy aligns with the California Freedom to Read Act (AB 1825, Title 1, Division 1, Part 11, Chapter 10, Sections 19800-19802 of the California Education Code), ensuring that:

- The collection reflects the broad and diverse interests of the community, respecting both library autonomy and the specific needs of the County.
- The public library serves as a center for voluntary inquiry and the free exchange of ideas.
- Materials are provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people, presenting diverse points of view in the collection as a whole.
- The public has the right to access a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences.

Selection of Materials:

A. *Collection Development Goals*

- Build a community-driven collection that meets the diverse needs and interests of the community.
- Develop a collection that reflects a wide range of viewpoints, perspectives, and lived experiences.
- Support lifelong learning and recreational use for all ages.

- Offer materials in a variety of formats to meet patrons' preferences and accessibility needs.

B. Selection Guidelines

The Library seeks to build a diverse collection of materials that focus on a range of subjects and are provided in multiple formats to meet the educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs of the community we serve. Collection development decisions are based on staff judgment and expertise, knowledge of what is in the collection, and professional reviews. Key considerations for the selection of materials include:

- Popular demand and community interest
- Contemporary & historical significance
- Literary, artistic, or cultural quality
- Relevance and accuracy of information
- Representation of diverse viewpoints and experiences
- Available space and budget considerations

C. Patron Requests

The Library welcomes suggestions for materials to be added to the collection. Requests are evaluated using the same selection criteria applied to other acquisitions. Patrons may submit a purchase request form for staff review. Request forms are provided in person at the library or through our [website](#).

D. Donations

The Library welcomes donations of materials for addition to the collection. All donations will be evaluated based on the same selection criteria used for purchased materials. All material that is not added to the collection will be given to the Friends of the Library for use in their book sales. The revenue generated by the book sales goes to the Friends of the Library and helps support library programs and services.

Scope of Collection:

- Children's Collection:** A diverse range of print and media materials designed to foster early literacy, learning, creativity, and curiosity. This collection includes board books, picture books, early readers, chapter books, nonfiction, audiobooks, and DVD's selected to engage young minds and support their developmental needs.
- Young Adult Collection:** A selection of resources that address the developmental, educational, and recreational interests of teens and young adults. This collection includes contemporary authors whose works resonate with young adults, along with a substantial selection of graphic novels, reflecting their popularity and importance

within this age group. Additionally, this area of the collection features authors of classic literature that are required reading for high school students.

- C. **Adult Collection:** A comprehensive range of materials designed to support lifelong learning, personal enrichment, professional development, and recreational reading. This section includes career development books, reference materials, and a broad array of fiction and nonfiction titles, offering resources for both professional and personal growth.

- D. **Digital Resources:** A diverse collection of digital resources accessible to patrons through the Library's website, providing access from any location. These resources serve all age groups and interests, supporting literacy, lifelong learning, and personal enrichment. This collection includes:
 - **Ebooks & Audiobook** – A broad selection of fiction and nonfiction titles for children, teens, and adults.
 - **Streaming Media** – Access to movies, television programs, music, and other multimedia content.
 - **Digital Newspapers & Magazines** – A range of current and archived periodicals, covering local, national, and international news, as well as special interest topics.
 - **Educational Help Databases** – Resources offering academic support, research tools, test preparation, and educational enrichment for students of all ages.
 - **Career Help Databases** – Resources providing career exploration, resume assistance, job search support, and workforce skill development

These digital resources are selected in alignment with the Library's mission and collection development guidelines, ensuring equitable access to high-quality, relevant, and diverse materials for the community.

Special and Unique Collections include:

- **California Collection:** These materials relate to the local history in San Benito County, as well as materials relating to wider California History.
- **Library of Things:** A collection of non-traditional, practical, and recreational items available for checkout, including:
 - **California State Parks Passes**
 - **Hiking Kits**
 - **Video Games**
 - **Telescopes**
 - **Board Games**

The Library's collections are developed with a commitment to intellectual freedom, open access, and the diverse needs of the community. To reflect the community's cultural and linguistic diversity, materials are also available in multiple languages, including Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese, across various age groups and subject areas. While materials are thoughtfully selected for specific age groups and audiences, the Library does not restrict

access to its collections. Responsibility for a child's use of library materials lies with the parent or guardian, who is encouraged to be actively involved in guiding their child's reading and viewing choices.

Maintenance of Collection

The Library's collection is a dynamic resource, continuously evolving to reflect the changing needs and interests of the community. To maintain a current, relevant, and accessible collection, library materials are regularly evaluated and, when appropriate, withdrawn from the collection. The responsibility for maintaining the collection rests with the Librarians and Collection Development staff, who apply their professional judgment, knowledge of the collection, and understanding of community needs in making these decisions. Materials may be withdrawn based on the following criteria:

- **Physical Condition:** Items that are damaged, worn, or otherwise no longer suitable for circulation.
- **Accuracy and Relevance:** Materials containing outdated, inaccurate, or obsolete information.
- **Usage and Demand:** Items with low or no circulation within a reasonable time frame, or those with declining relevance or interest.
- **Availability of Alternative Formats:** When newer, more accessible, or more popular formats are available.
- **Cost and Value:** Consideration of the cost to repair, replace, or retain materials relative to their ongoing value to the collection.

Withdrawn items may be donated to the Friends of the Library or responsibly discarded.

Requests for Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Collection Development Policy serves as both a guide for staff in developing a balanced, diverse, and relevant collection, and as a resource for the community to understand the principles and reasoning behind those collection decisions. The Library is committed to providing materials that reflect the varied informational, educational, recreational, and cultural interests of the community.

While every effort is made to build a collection that meets these needs, the Library recognizes that individuals may occasionally object to specific items included in the collection. The Library has established a formal process for patrons to request a reconsideration of library materials.

Library card holders residing within the County may submit a completed Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form. Upon receipt, the material in question will be reviewed by the Collection Development staff, who will evaluate the item in accordance with the Collection Development Policy, as well as the Library's commitment to intellectual freedom and access to diverse viewpoints.

The final decision regarding the reconsideration request will rest with the County Librarian. A written response will be provided to the requestor upon completion of the review.

Attachment 1

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.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

Attachment 2

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

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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.*

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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

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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

Attachment 3

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

Attachment 4

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

The San Benito County Free Library has established a Collection Development Policy that explains the process and criteria behind how our Library builds its collection. This policy is available for viewing on our Library website. In accordance with this policy, if a patron feels that an item does not align with this policy, they are free to complete this Request for Reconsideration form. Guidelines for completion include:

- Must be active SBCFL card holder & resident of San Benito County
- Forms must be picked up & returned to the library in person
- Individual title will only be reviewed once, every three years.
- If a title has already gone through a review, patrons requesting will receive the same report provided in the original review process of that title

Name: _____ Date: _____

Library Card Number: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Type of Material (Circle One) – **Book** **DVD** **Database/Electronic** **Other**

Author/Producer: _____

Title: _____

Did you read, listen, or view the entire work? Yes No

Please describe your concerns regarding this material:

What sections/pages illustrate these concerns?

What action would you like the Library to take?