



Library Services Policy Manual

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on January 18, 2018

Revised June 27, 2019

Updated February 20, 2020

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I. Organization and Administration

Central Skagit Library District, which serves the residents residing in the Sedro-Woolley School District's unincorporated areas, is organized under the laws of the State of Washington (Revised Code of Washington 27.12). The library district is governed by a Board of Trustees, hereafter referred to as the Board of Trustees or simply as the Board, consisting of five Trustees. Trustees are appointed by the Skagit County Board of Commissioners and serve for a term of five years with a maximum of two full consecutive terms.

A. Board of Trustees

Legal responsibility for Central Skagit Library District is vested in the Board of Trustees, which is the policy-forming body of the Library District. Subject to RCW 27.12.210, it has the power to determine the rules and regulations governing library services and personnel.

B. Library Director

The Library Director is the administrative officer of the Central Skagit Library District. Said Library

Director shall have such educational qualifications as are prescribed by the State of Washington. The Library Director shall administer and establish procedures according to policies established by the Board of Trustees. His or her duties include, but are not limited to:

- Employment of staff;
- Prescription of staff duties;
- Removal of staff for cause;
- Preparation of the budget;
- Financial and statistical management;
- Reporting to the Board of Trustees; and
- Other acts necessary for the orderly and efficient administration of the library system.

Additionally, the Library Director shall prepare the agenda for and attend all Board meetings and has the right to speak on all matters under consideration. The Library Director is not a member of the Board and has, therefore, no vote on matters under consideration. The Library Director is the representative and spokesman of the staff to the Board. He/she welcomes communication from staff members, which may lead to improvement of library service or of personnel relationships and employment conditions.

II. Service Policy

A. Who May Use the Library

1. The Central Skagit Library District serves anyone who wishes to use library materials, equipment, and computers within the library. All visitors are welcome to take part in library programs.
2. Library service will not be denied to anyone because of religious, racial, social, economic or political status.
3. All materials may be used free of charge. To check out materials, individuals must apply for a library card. Documentation needed at the time of library card registration are a form of government-issued identification such as driver's license or other government-issued forms, along with proof of residence such as a current utility statement of services or current tax receipt. If the patron's name is on the property searched in the Skagit Auditor's Property database, this may be used as proof of address.
4. Residents of jurisdictions within Washington State that provide equitable tax support for public library service. In addition to current address and proof of identity, applicants must present a library card from their local jurisdiction. NOTE: Borrowing privileges for electronic materials and/or access to online services may be limited depending on vendor contracts.
5. Children ages infant to 14 years must have a parent or legal guardian show personal identification for themselves and proof of address to get a full-use library card. Children age 15 and older may produce a driver's permit or license and school identification; computer-generated school schedule; or report card if the parent is not present.
6. Limited-use student cards are available to children in the Sedro-Woolley School District with or without a parent. A parent must come in to the library to authorize the card to be full-use.
7. Central Skagit Library District reserves the right to deny or limit its usage and/or services to groups or individuals who make excessive demands on library resources and staff.
8. No fines or fees will be charged for library materials destroyed or damaged by flood, storm, or other acts for which the patron cannot be held responsible or negligent.

B. Patron Code of Conduct

Everyone is welcome at the library. Library patrons, regardless of age, are required to comply with the Central Skagit Library District Patron Code of Conduct. In order to provide a pleasant environment, the following behaviors are prohibited:

- Unruly behavior and/or disruption of library services
- Offensive language
- Unhygienic or offensive physical conditions
- Destroying or damaging library property

- Misuse of library bathrooms or other areas
- Hurting, harassing or threatening others
- Excessive public displays of affection
- Sexual misconduct
- Soliciting
- Illegal activities
- Misuse of library equipment, computers or tablet computers

Violation of these rules may result in the loss of library privileges. Library staff will take appropriate action when disruptions occur. Violators will also be reported to library management. The first violation will result in a warning. The second violation may result in the patron being asked to leave the premises for the remainder of the day. Further violations will be reported to the Central Skagit Library Board of Trustees and may result in loss of library privileges.

Violations of an extreme manner will be immediately reported to the police. If police must be called to handle a disruption or violation, those involved shall not return to the library until meeting with the Central Skagit Library Board of Trustees at the next designated meeting. The Board reserves the right to deny reinstatement of privileges at that time.

A person excluded from the use of the library building, property, and/or services may request, in writing, that the Library Board of Trustees reconsider such a decision and present evidence to the Board that s/he no longer poses a threat as described above.

RCW 27.12.290, states, “**Violators may be excluded.** A board of library trustees may exclude from the use of the library under its charge any person who willfully and persistently violates any rule or regulation prescribed for the use of the library or its facilities or any person whose physical condition is deemed dangerous or offensive to other library users.”

C. Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Library

The Central Skagit Library District encourages parents, guardians, and other caregivers to bring children to the Library whenever possible. Library staff have been trained to help children enjoy and derive benefit from the materials and services the Library offers, including programs designed to encourage a love of reading and lifelong learning in children of all ages. The safety of young children and the rights of other customers, however, requires that parents and/or guardians monitor the behavior of their children and correct behavior that is inappropriate. Staff cannot assume the responsibility of children’s care when they are in the library. No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. A child could be approached by a stranger, become ill, wander outside, or become lost or injured. Library staff are primarily concerned with children’s safety, and we believe that our policies help assure their well-being.

A vulnerable individual is any unattended child or adult of any age who meets the definition of a vulnerable adult pursuant to RCW 74.34.020. If a vulnerable individual comes to the attention

of library staff, attempts will be made to notify a caregiver. If library staff are unable to contact a caregiver, staff may contact the police for assistance.

Children under the age of 8 years must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. A parent or caregiver must be in the same area of the library and in close proximity to them. Caregivers under the age of 18 must be willing and able to care for the children in their charge. Children over the age of 8 years may use the library unattended provided they follow the Library Code of Conduct. Adults and children of any age with special needs which affect decision-making skills must be accompanied by a caregiver at all times.

Children must know how to reach a parent/legal guardian or caregiver in case of an emergency, and both children and adults should be aware of library hours. Caregivers must make arrangements to meet and transport children or vulnerable adults. **Under no circumstances are staff members permitted to transport or escort an unattended child or vulnerable adult home or to any other destination. If a parent/legal guardian cannot be reached by the time the library closes, library staff will call the police to take custody of the child or vulnerable adult.** The CSLD is not responsible for children outside of its facilities who walk or ride a bike to and from; who are awaiting transportation; or who are socializing.

If a child age 8 through 15 has not been picked up by a parent/caregiver by closing time, library staff will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver. If a caregiver cannot be reached, law enforcement officials may be called, and staff will remain with the child until placed in their care.

If a child age 8 through 15 is found unattended when the library is open and the child has become ill, upset or frightened, has become disruptive and will not respond to verbal warnings from library staff, or other special circumstances exist, library staff will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver. If a caregiver cannot be reached, If a caregiver cannot be reached, law enforcement officials may be called, and the child may be placed in their care.

After a child has been placed in the care of law enforcement personnel, the staff will leave notes about the child's whereabouts at the front desk or on the front entrance if closed. If after library operating hours, parents will need to contact local law enforcement.

D. Computer and Internet Use

Central Skagit Library District is committed to its role in serving the information and lifelong learning needs of all patrons. Providing access to the Internet enables the Library to greatly expand its information services. Internet access allows the opportunity to integrate electronic resources from information networks around the world with the Library's other resources. The Library's goal in providing Internet access is to enhance its existing collection in size and depth and, as a public access agency, to give anyone who wishes to use the Internet the chance to do so.

The Internet offers access to a wealth of information that is personally, professionally and culturally enriching. Central Skagit Library District's website includes links to resources on the Internet that are consistent with the Library's Collection Development Policy. However, patrons must be aware that they can also access ideas, information, images and commentary on the Internet that do not meet the Library's selection criteria.

Not all the information available on the Internet is accurate, current and/or complete. Patrons are encouraged to exercise critical judgment in evaluating the appropriateness and validity of information accessed via the Internet. The Library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from its connections to the Internet. Central Skagit Library District Internet patrons are prohibited from viewing, printing and downloading any material defined as illegal, e.g., child pornography or obscene by local, state and federal statutes.

E. Library Statement on Access

The Central Skagit Library District Board of Trustees considers reading, viewing and listening **(including that which is accessed on the Internet)** to be individual matters. While any patron is free to select or reject materials for themselves or their own minor children, the freedom of other Library patrons to read or inquire will not be restricted. The Library would never presume to usurp the role of the parent. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to guide the reading, viewing and listening choices of their own minor children. The Library does not stand in the place of parents (*in loco parentis*.)

F. Gifts

Items donated to the Library become the property of the Library to use as management sees fit. Normal collection procedures apply to all donated materials that are added to the library. Not all donations will be added to the library's collection. If items are deemed unsuitable for the collection they may be passed on to the Friends of the Library who may sell them in book sales.

III. Collection Development Policy

A. Selection

Central Skagit Library District strives to provide materials in support of its mission, which includes lifelong learning, progress, creativity and promotion of personal well-being.. Patrons enjoy the materials and services of the Central Skagit Library District through its branch, website (centralskagitlibrary.org), Facebook page and other social media.

The materials and services provided may be packaged in a variety of ways and formats, but the **most closely examined component is content**. Selection is based on the merits of a work in relation to the needs, interests and demands of the community served by the Central Skagit Library District. Whenever possible, use will be made of professional reviewing tools, bibliographies, and other selection aids when making purchasing decisions. Suggestions from members of the public are always welcomed and will be given serious consideration.

Selection is a discerning and interpretive process, involving the following:

1. Understanding the community served
2. General knowledge of the subject
3. Familiarity with existing materials in the collection

General Criteria – The Library will consider the following criteria as valid factors in the selection process as they relate to library customers of all ages, walks of life, value and interest patterns, education, opinion, and persuasion:

1. Range of appeal
2. Timeliness
3. Contemporary significance
4. Patron interest/demand
5. Favorable reviews
6. Appropriateness for intended audience
7. Accuracy
8. Quality
9. The authority and reputation of the author(s) and publisher(s)
10. Reputation and significance of the illustrator or reader/narrator
11. Nominated or received awards or honors
12. Availability, price and format
13. Relationship to other items in the collection
14. Local or regional significance
15. Inclusion on recommended lists (e.g., those compiled by the American Library Association)
16. Budgetary constraints
17. Media tie-ins

Additional criteria contemplated when selecting music, films, television specials or series include:

1. Reputation and significance of the director
2. Reputation and significance of the musical artist(s) or actor(s)
3. Historical place/classic film
4. Literature or book tie-in
5. Educational/informational
6. MPAA rating

Additional criteria contemplated during the selection process for e-materials and electronic informational databases include:

1. Ease of use
2. Access rights
3. Network requirements and connectivity issues

In its selection of books and other materials for public access, the Central Skagit Library District adheres to the principles set forth in the American Library Association's **Library Bill of Rights** and the **Freedom to Read Statement**, which endorse the concept that the freedom to read is essential to the democratic ideals of the United States. Therefore, the express purpose of the library collection of the Central Skagit Library District is to promote the broad dissemination of ideas upon which this democracy thrives.

Selection of materials by the librarian does not imply agreement with or approval of the content, viewpoint, implication, or expression of the material. Librarians will evaluate materials on the basis of the content and style of the work as a whole, not by selected or random passages or scenes. The public library is not a curriculum center and does not provide basic texts, curriculum resources, nor materials needed in quantity for schoolwork.

Parents or legal guardians are responsible for the reading, listening, and/or viewing of library materials engaged in by the youth of this community. Only parents or guardians may restrict their own children's access to library materials. Material selection practices of the Central Skagit Library District will not be inhibited by the possibility that library materials may be read, listened to, or viewed by youth.

The Library will attempt to provide materials for all members of the community. Access to and use of materials will not be denied or abridged because of origin, race, age, background, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or views. Likewise, none of these factors shall be cause to exclude any material of authors, artists, publishers, or producers.

Materials that contain sexual content, scenes containing violence, or which contain language generally considered to be profane in nature will not be automatically rejected for inclusion into the collection. Selection decisions should be made on the basis of whether or not the title presents life in its true proportions and whether characters and situations are realistically presented; or, if fantastically presented, consideration will be given to how well the title fits the other Central Skagit Library District selection criteria.

Final responsibility for title selection and for the entire Central Skagit Library District collection lies with the Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees. However, the responsibility for the initial selection and ordering of materials may be shared by other members of the Central Skagit Library District staff at the discretion of the Director.

The Central Skagit Library District accepts gifts of books and other materials. All gifts are accepted with the understanding that Central Skagit Library District may or may not decide to add the materials to the Library's collection. Gift materials will be judged on the same basis as purchased materials. The Library reserves the right to reject gifts.

The development of special collections shall be considered only if the collection fits within the library's mission, is not a duplication of resources readily available in the area, and can be reasonably maintained by library staff.

Central Skagit Library District participates in the Washington Anytime Library, which provides access to electronic resources. Central Skagit Library also provides access to hundreds of online full-text magazine and professional journal articles, along with online full-text reference materials and other e-content. Periodical hard copy subscriptions will be made to popular titles based on community interest and need.

B. De-selection

The professional staff will systematically remove (weed) worn, dated, or damaged library materials as an integral part of the selection process. Professional staff will also weed items with low to zero circulation statistics over time. This process helps maintain the quality of the library collections and is not intended to sanction removal of library materials based upon any controversy surrounding the material. Staff, during this process, should consider the selection principles stated in this Policy. Weeded materials are disposed of according to local and state laws with consideration to agreements with Friends of the Library or Library Foundations. Materials may be disposed of through book sales, giveaways or recycling.

C. Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Library Board recognizes that full information about issues of public concern requires access to information sources that embody, represent, and illustrate those concerns. The Board also recognizes the right of individuals to question both materials in the Library or those not selected for the Library. Material under question will remain in the active collection until a determination is made. To request a review of materials, a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form must be completed and submitted to the Library Director.

The form, "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" should be presented to any individual who asks or demands that a given book, periodical, or piece of library material be removed from the collection or restricted in its availability to the library's patrons. The

complainant must fill out the form as completely as possible. His/her signature at the bottom of the form is of particular importance.

Once an employee has received the completed form from the complainant, the library employee will inform the patron that the form will be submitted to the Library Director. If the complainant is not satisfied by the conclusion of the Director, the item may be brought before the Board of Trustees by submitting their concern to the Board Chair in writing.

The Central Skagit Library District subscribes to and supports the statements in the American Library Association Code of Ethics, Code of Ethics for Librarians, Library Bill of Rights, and Freedom to Read statement. Appendices I and II are published in the handbook as a reference resource and are not incorporated into the handbook because they are national publications originally authored in 1939 and not necessarily reflective of the current state of Washington state or federal law. Current state and federal law prevail if the provisions of either code of ethics statements are in conflict.

Appendix I - American Library Association Code of Ethics

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

- I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
- IV. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
- V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
- VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
- VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.

VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.

Appendix II - Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

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

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Appendix III - 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 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](#)