

# Melrose Public Library Collection Development Policy

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees December 21, 2021

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## **I. Material Selection**

### Responsibility

Direct selection of print and non-print materials is delegated to members of the staff who are qualified by education, training, interest and job classification to perform this duty. The responsibility for the collection rests with the Director, subject to the policies and mandates of the Board of Trustees.

### Goals, Priority and Criteria

Reaffirming that resources are selected for use by individuals and groups within the City of Melrose who have widely separate and diverse interests, backgrounds, ages, cultural heritages, social values and needs, the library's goal is to provide resources which:

- Respond to the expressed and anticipated needs and interests of users. Meet the user's need for practical information.
- Contain accurate, timely and comprehensive information of current and possible future significance.
- Document, interpret and illuminate the past.
- Entertain and enhance the user's enjoyment of life.
- Represent various points of view and reflect contemporary conditions, trends and controversies. The library recognizes its responsibility to provide accurate information on controversial issues.
- Stimulate creativity and provide an aesthetic experience.
- Effectively balance public demand and literary quality.
- Depict the unique history, landscape and issues related to living in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Represent value commensurate with cost and/or need.

Funding and space for collections is not unlimited, and professional choices must be made. In general, collection priority is given to:

- Works of broad popular appeal which meet the needs of the independent learner over textbooks or other materials which meet curriculum requirements of the formal student. Exceptions will be made when purchasing for students in commonly studied topics.
- Currency. Collection emphasis is on up-to-date information. Older materials which remain accurate will be retained and/or replaced according to user demand.
- General treatments over those which are specialized, scholarly or primarily for professional use.
- Single-volume overviews over multi-volume works.
- Breadth over depth. In general, single copies of a wide range of titles will be purchased rather than multiple copies of the same title. Multiple copies may be purchased to accommodate local demand, to support summer reading programs, or when the title is of local interest and may go out of print.

- Unabridged editions over abridgments. Abridgments will be considered only if they retain the flavor and quality of the original.

The collection should reflect the diversity of the community, providing information in a variety of formats and at multiple levels of complexity. User requests are integral to the selection process, and suggestions are welcome. Suggestions will be reviewed by the same criteria as all other titles. There is no single set of criteria that can be applied in all cases. The Library's general selection criteria include:

- Positive professional reviews.
- Support of the Library's Mission and Vision Statements. (Exhibits A and B)
- Representation of diverse points of view, in accordance with the ALA Diversity in Collection Development Statement. (Exhibit D)
- Currency, timeliness and accuracy of the content.
- Public demand.
- Relevance to the community.
- Relation to the existing collection.
- Cost.

## **II. Material Deselection**

Thoughtful deselection of materials is an important aspect of collection development. The library uses a method of continuous review, evaluation and weeding (CREW). Items may be considered for discarding or replacing based upon the following criteria:

- Misleading items that have inaccurate or outdated content due to changes in the field of knowledge.
- Ugly items that are damaged, overly worn, smell, or have mold/mildew.
- Superseded items that have been updated with newer editions.
- Trivial items that have lost their popularity.
- Irrelevant items that no longer reflect the needs of a changing community over time.

Decisions may also be impacted by whether or not the item is easily available elsewhere. When library materials lose the value for which they were originally selected, they should be withdrawn. This ensures that the collection remains vital and useful.

From time to time, a user may encounter library material which they feel should not be in the collection. For this reason, the Library Board of Trustees has established a Reconsideration of Library Materials or Services Policy, which includes a procedure for a user to request reconsideration of library material (Exhibit I). Any request for reconsideration will be addressed promptly, and the material in question will be evaluated with both selection and deselection criteria in mind.



### **III. Collection Areas**

In keeping with our Mission Statement, the Melrose Public Library Collections provide a portal for all to explore, imagine and engage. Material contained in the Collections are acquired to fill the informational, recreational, inspirational and creative needs of our users.

All materials will be chosen in accordance with the material selection goals, priorities and criteria outlined above. Collection Areas include Reference, Fiction, Nonfiction and Local History. Reference, Fiction and Nonfiction are collected for children (infancy to grade 5), young adults (grades 6 -12) and adults. Collections will be shelved separately and signed for ease of accessibility. Inclusion of material representing a particular belief, opinion or point of view does not constitute endorsement by the library.

Children's collections are shelved separately within the children's area. Although the materials in the children's area are selected to meet their special needs, children are welcome to use the materials in all parts of the library. The library supports the ALA Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Statements (Exhibits B and C), as well as the Free Access to Libraries for Minors Statement (Exhibit E). Responsibility for children's use of library materials rests with their parents or legal guardians.

### **IV. Collection Formats**

Materials collected by the Melrose Public Library includes a wide range of formats that include, but will not be limited to, hardbound, paperback, audio and large print books; graphic novels; DVDs; compact discs; newspapers and periodicals; maps; photographs and microform.

Material is available in either physical or electronic formats. Digital resources provided by the Melrose Public Library through our website are incorporated into the MPL collections.

With an eye toward the rapidly evolving technologies in the dissemination and sharing of information and material, the Collections will evolve with new acceptable technologies and formats being added when appropriate and available. The gradual phasing out of obsolete technologies will keep the Collections accessible and current.

In keeping with the spirit of embracing new technologies, the Melrose Public Library also circulates internet hotspots and laptop computers to enable access to these formats to all of our users.

### **V. Rare Books**

It is the public library's function to make materials available to all users, therefore the library does not collect rare or unusual materials that require special handling. The library

will not establish a “Rare Books Room.” Materials that have particular local importance may be collected, in accordance with the Local History Collection Development Policy (Exhibit C)

## **VI. Donations**

Newer donated books and media in good condition may be added to the library’s collection, however they must undergo the same scrutiny and meet the same standards as the materials purchased for the collection. Items in good condition not needed by the library are sold at book sales sponsored by the Friends of Melrose Public Library. The library cannot accept textbooks or books in poor physical condition.

The library may or may not accept donations of specialized collections or items. A decision will be made on an individual basis by the Library Board of Trustees, based on the recommendation of the Library Director.

All donations are tax deductible and the library will furnish a statement for tax purposes, but does not place a financial value on donated items.

All donations may be utilized, sold or disposed of in the best interest of the library.

## **VII. Intellectual Freedom**

The Melrose Public Library supports the individual’s right to access ideas and information representing all points of view. To this end, the library welcomes patron suggestions, comments, and ideas about the collection and its development. The Board of Trustees of the Melrose Public Library has adopted the American Library Association’s (ALA’s) Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read, Freedom to View, Diversity in Collection Development, and Free Access to Libraries for Minors statements (See Appendix). Responsibility for children’s use of library materials rests with their parents or legal guardians.

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **Mission Statement**

Melrose Public Library's staff, building and collections provide a portal for all to explore, imagine and engage. The library is where literacy, local history and community connect!

## **EXHIBIT B**

### **Vision Statement**

Melrose Public Library – where people of all ages, experiences, abilities and beliefs can belong. As a 21<sup>st</sup> century community institution with roots in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the library is grounded in the present and has its sights set on the future. Carefully curated resources provide wide access to books, media and technology. Skilled and welcoming staff design innovative programming to foster individual growth and enhance community engagement. The Melrose Public Library offers places to meet, study, read, engage in civic discourse and share all our stories.

## **EXHIBIT C**

### **Local History Collection Development Policy**

#### **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the local history collection is to preserve materials that document the history of Melrose and, to a lesser degree, directly neighboring communities and to make these materials available to researchers and the general public. The library holds these materials in trust for future generations; therefore, they can be examined in the local history room only.

#### **Scope**

The major emphasis of the collection is historical and current information about Melrose and its citizens, and materials about the surrounding communities as they pertain to the history and development of the city. The collection includes materials about the Melrose Public Library and City of Melrose, town/city annual reports, Melrose High School Yearbooks, List of Persons, maps, and genealogical information.

The collection emphasizes material of significant local and historical value and includes materials by and about the people of Melrose in a variety of formats including, but not limited to: books, pamphlets, posters, diaries, letters, maps, photographs, scrapbooks, and ephemera. The collection does not generally house materials in the following formats: three dimensional artifacts or original government records.

#### **Selection criteria**

The library welcomes donations to its Local History Collection. Consideration for inclusion will be based on the overall merit of the material and its usefulness in understanding Melrose history. Staff, space and budget limitations are considerations when adding new materials. Materials that fall beyond the scope of the collection, need repair costing more than their intellectual value, or require special shelving or storage because of a unique format will not be collected. All materials must be free of dirt, mold, moisture, and pests, and must be in good or repairable condition.

### **Gifts**

Donations will be accepted provided that there is a signed Deed of Gift form that legally transfers ownership of the materials to Melrose Public Library, and the donor does not require excessive restrictions on use. Items will not be accepted on deposit except by separate signed agreement that is approved by the Board of Trustees. The only exception is the temporary loan of items for exhibition.

Local authors must demonstrate a strong tie to Melrose to be included in the local history collection. Self-published books by local authors are generally not included.

The library reserves the right to decline gift offers. Gifts which are out of scope or which require more resources to preserve and make available than the library can provide will not be accepted.

### **Discarding Materials**

The library reserves the right to deaccession materials no longer appropriate to the collection. Options include offering materials to another institution, donating to the Friends of the Library, adding to the circulating collection, selling items or discarding.

### **Access**

The Local History Collection is available to researchers and the general public during regular library hours. Due to the valuable nature of this collection, certain restrictions are in place to protect the future viability of rare and/or fragile materials. Copying/scanning is generally allowed. No material may be taken out of the room. Detailed research assistance is not available.

### **Exceptions**

The Board of Trustees or the Library Director has the authority to make exceptions to this policy when benefiting the library and community.

Approved by Library Board of Trustees

September 15, 2015



## **EXHIBIT D**

### **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.

## **EXHIBIT E**

### **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 of suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgement, 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 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 to 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 would 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; not 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 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 work. 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 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 (<http://www.publishers.org/>)

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers for Free Expression (<http://bookweb.org/abfe>)

The Association of American University Presses (<http://www.aaupnet.org/>)

The Children's Book Council (<http://cbcbooks.org/>)

Freedom to Read Foundation (<http://www.ftrf.org>)

National Association of College Stores (<http://nacs.org/>)

National Coalition Against Censorship (<http://www.ncac.org/>)

National Council of Teachers of English (<http://ncte.org/>)

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

## **EXHIBIT F**

### **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 communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantees 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 or 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.

Revised ALA Statement adopted 9-24-2015 (\*\*check on this date)

## **EXHIBIT G**

### **Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the Library Bill of Rights: "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." A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and culture to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets--as closely as possible--the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library's selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities. (1)  
how do you make a footnote?

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection's diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions. (2)

(1) "Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*," adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council under the title "Services to Persons with Disabilities"; amended June 26, 2018.

(2) *ALA Code of Ethics*, Article VII, adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1995; and January 22, 2008.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 2008; July 1, 2014 under previous name "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 25, 2019.



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## **EXHIBIT H**

### **Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association supports equal and equitable access to all library resources and services by users of all ages. Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users is in violation of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skill, emancipatory or other legal status of users violates Article V. This includes minors who do not have a parent or guardian available to sign a library card application or permission slip. Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness should be able to obtain a library card regardless of library policies related to chronological age.

School and public libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and resources to meet the diverse interests and informational needs of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of providing library services and should be determined on an individual basis. Equitable access to all library resources and services should not be abridged based on chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, legal status, or through restrictive scheduling and use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. A library's failure to acquire materials on the

grounds that minors may be able to access those materials diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, social media, online applications, games, technologies, programming, and other formats. (1)

Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them. (2)

Libraries and their library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." This includes students and minors, who have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use.(3)

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services."(4) Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's--and only their children's--access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor's access to materials.(5)

Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the communities they serve have free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

(1) *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant's Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011).

- (2) *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975); “Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors.” See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F. 3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).
- (3) “Privacy: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*,” adopted June 19, 2002, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 2014; and June 24, 2019.
- (4) “Libraries: An American Value,” adopted on February 3, 1999, by ALA Council.
- (5) “Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*,” adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019.

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 *under previous name* “Free Access to Libraries for Minors”; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

## **EXHIBIT I**

### **Melrose Public Library Reconsideration of Library Materials or Services Policy**

Well-intentioned individuals or groups occasionally question the inclusion of items in library collections or the content of library programs or services. This policy explains the Melrose Public Library's commitment to providing open access to diverse information and describes the procedure that will be followed when a resident of the Melrose community expresses a concern about the content of library collections, programs, or services.

#### **Guiding Principles**

The Melrose Public Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution, the Library Bill of Rights and its relevant interpretations by the American Library Association Council, and the Freedom to Read Statement.

Collectively, these documents speak to:

- The right of every U.S. citizen to freely hold and express beliefs, and correspondingly, the right of every citizen to access the expressions and beliefs of other people without restriction
- The fact that it is unconstitutional for a government entity, such as a public library, to censor or restrict the free and open exchange of ideas
- The library's responsibility to make available without restriction or judgment a wide diversity of ideas and viewpoints, in support of an informed citizenry and a resilient, free, democratic society
- The library's obligation to safeguard intellectual liberty by supporting individual choice and judgment in seeking information; upholding the freedom to read, view and listen; and challenging and resisting attempts to restrict access to information or ideas by those seeking to impose their own standards, opinions, or beliefs upon the broader community
- The library field's commitment to honor the rights of an individual to use a library regardless of age, race, religion, national origin, social or political views, etc., and the obligation of library staff to provide equal service to all library users

The library staff and Board of Trustees recognize that individuals may object to library materials, programs, and services out of a genuine desire to safeguard the well-being of their fellow community members and for reasons arising from deeply held beliefs and opinions. However, we take the position that the risk of restricting access to information and ideas is greater than the risk of providing it, and that each person is capable of assessing information and making decisions for themselves without undue interference from outside sources.

## **Library Practices in Support of Open Inquiry and Intellectual Freedom**

As a community resource, the Melrose Public Library is obligated to provide diverse resources and information to meet the varied needs of community members who have different backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and worldviews. This includes providing material that opposes as well as supports particular beliefs, opinions, and viewpoints, including potentially controversial material, for the benefit of community members who wish to explore perspectives different from their own. The library aims to support the growth and fulfillment of individuals in all aspects of their lives, and therefore provides resources that meet needs for entertainment and leisure as well as for learning, growth and edification.

The library does not promote particular beliefs or views. Rather, it provides resources to explore various opinions that apply to important, complex, and controversial questions, including unpopular and unorthodox positions. The presence of any item in the collection does not imply the library's, Trustees', or City's approval or endorsement of its contents, with the exception that library staff make an effort to ensure that materials and programs which discuss matters of objective fact are reasonably accurate. Per the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association, library staff do not allow personal opinions to interfere with professional decision-making or the equitable provision of services to the whole community, including in the selection of materials or event presenters.

Because the library aims to represent diverse perspectives and ideas, not every event, service, or item in the collections will be for everyone. The library does not make decisions on the basis of protecting patrons from particular content or topics and expects that individuals using the library will determine which resources and services are right for them and/or their children. Library staff can help empower patrons to make these decisions by assessing their interests and guiding them to content that may be desired, but the ultimate responsibility for any person's use of the library's collections, programs and services lies with that person.

The library does not restrict young people from using any part of the collection. Library events may have a suggested or required age range, predominantly as a way to ensure an event is attended by its intended audience. The children's and young adult collections and programming may include content too mature for some individuals in those age groups, as others of the same age may be ready for the material. A child's parents or guardians are responsible for determining what is appropriate for that child and for monitoring their access to library materials. Neither library staff nor other individuals may make such decisions for other people's children.

The library avoids labeling or otherwise identifying materials to show approval or disapproval of content. (This is not to be confused with labels that indicate a genre, general subject matter, or area of the collection, which do not comment on the "appropriateness" of the content, or with rating labels which come affixed to materials, which the library does not remove.)

## Reconsideration Process

The library recognizes the right of community members to question library materials, programs, or services. Any individual or group seeking the reconsideration of an item in the library's collections, or a library program or service, will be provided with the Collection Development Policy, and may submit a Request for Reconsideration form to the Library Director.

The fully completed form should be signed and dated by the community member. The Director will set up a committee consisting of three professional staff appointed by the Director. This committee will review the concerns and then evaluate the material or service in question according to the standards stated in the Collection Development Policy and the Program Policy. Evaluation of an item or program will be based on consideration of the item or presentation as a whole, not on selected individual sections. The following factors may be taken into account, as appropriate, in reconsidering an item, program, or service:

- Accuracy and currency of content
- Reputation, qualifications, and/or significance of the author, creator, presenter, etc., including their local importance if applicable
- Popular demand
- Relevance to the community's informational and recreational needs and interests
- Availability of other materials or programs that cover similar information or meet a similar need or interest, in the library's current collections/services or otherwise
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Artistic, literary, and/or technical merit
- Appropriateness of the material for the level of its intended audience
- Quality of treatment of controversial issues
- Reviews from authoritative sources (professional journals, individuals experienced with the relevant subject area, other librarians, etc.); critical reception
- Relevance to the library's mission and goals; relationship with other library materials, events, or services

Factors that will not, in and of themselves, be considered appropriate reasons to remove an item from the collection or cancel a program or service include:

- An individual's personal disagreement or feelings of offense with the content or its presentation on the basis of their own particular opinions or beliefs (political, religious, or otherwise)
- The origin, personal history, and/or views of the author, creator, presenter, etc.
- The mere fact that content is controversial, graphic, or explicit, or includes profane language or sexual content
- Content considered inappropriate for children or teenagers that is in the adult sections of the collections or presented as part of an event aimed at adults
- A rating or "explicit content" warning

The Director will receive the recommendation from the investigators within two weeks.

The Library Director will notify the community member with a written statement about the recommendation of the evaluators. If the community member is not satisfied with the decision, they may appeal to the Board of Trustees who will ascertain whether or not library policies were followed. The recommendation of the Melrose Public Library Board of Trustees is considered final as a decision of the majority.

No item is to be removed from the shelf or be placed in a restricted-access status, and no program or service is to be preemptively abridged, modified, or cancelled, during the reconsideration process. No item in the collection is to be removed or restricted, and no program or service is to be cancelled, because of a complaint except in accordance with this procedure. Items that have become missing or lost but that are deemed to still be appropriate for the library collection will be replaced.

### **Responsibility**

Final responsibility for all library policies lies with the Board of Trustees. Responsibility for implementation of policies and day-to-day operations, including collection development and program planning, rests with the Library Director. The Director delegates these responsibilities and tasks to other library staff members as appropriate. Decisions by library staff are subject to review by the Library Director, as necessary.

The library does not have control over the content of certain electronic collections, including those administered by the NOBLE consortium or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or over materials that may be available through interlibrary loan from other libraries.

April 4, 2022  
Approved by Trustees

**MELROSE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**Request for Reconsideration of Library Material**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Library Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (MI)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mailing) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone No. ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that requests for reevaluation will be considered when made by a Melrose resident.

Whom do you represent?

\_\_\_ Myself \_\_\_ Organization (be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Description of material/program:

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Publisher/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Material/Program:**

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Have you seen or heard reviews of this material? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please name source(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you object to in this work/program? Please cite specific instances: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this work/program?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



4. What action do you recommend the library take on this work/program?

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5. Have you read Melrose Public Library's Collection Development Policy and the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements:

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

The Melrose Public Library appreciates your interest in our library's collections and services. You will receive written notification of the disposition of the request within two weeks.

Signature of Resident: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Received: \_\_\_\_\_

**MELROSE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**Preliminary Response Letter to Patrons Requesting Reconsideration of Materials**

re: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Your written request for reconsideration concerning the library's having/not having the item noted above has been received and is being evaluated by the library's professional staff. Their written recommendation concerning your request will be given/sent to you within 2 weeks. The report will be based on the library's established Collection Development Policy and will reflect an unbiased and objective review of the item in question.

The library appreciates your interest, and I sincerely hope that the disposition of your request will be to your satisfaction.

Sincerely,

(Name), Director  
Melrose Public Library