

# Ethel Everhard Memorial Library

## Materials Selection Policy

The Ethel Everhard Memorial Library makes available to the Westfield community and broader Winnefox System a variety of materials that inform, educate, entertain, and enrich. The library affirms the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in the ALA Code of Ethics and the ALA's Library Bill of Rights.<sup>12</sup> The following materials selection policy is set forth to guide the library director in the selection of these materials.

### Objective

The library's collection is developed and maintained to meet the majority of informational and recreational needs of community members within our library service area. The library director builds and maintains a collection in response to patron needs.

Collection decisions are made in alignment with our strategic plan, especially:

- Being a leader in emergent collections
- Providing digital and print access to information
- Understanding and responding to patrons needs in current collections
- Developing collections that support early and emerging readers

### Responsibility

The responsibility for the selection of all library materials rests with the Library Director—the trained professional authority. Staff members and community members may suggest and recommend materials to be considered for purchase, and the Library Director will consider all recommendations within the framework of the Materials Selection Policy. The director contributes to a patron-responsive collection by:

- Interacting with patrons with understanding, respect, and responsiveness
- Handling all requests equitably
- Understanding and responding to rapidly changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes
- Balancing individual needs and broader community needs in determining the best allocation of the collection budget for acquiring or providing access to materials and information
- Reviewing the collection on a regular basis to identify areas of community interest that may need to be strengthened

### Selection Criteria

All materials whether purchased or donated are considered in terms of the following standards. An item does not need to meet all of the criteria to be considered acceptable.

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<sup>1</sup> "Professional Ethics", American Library Association, May 19, 2017. <http://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>. Document ID: 39f580a8-833d-5ad4-f900-53ecfe67eb1f

<sup>2</sup> "Library Bill of Rights", American Library Association, June 30, 2006. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>. Document ID: 669fd6a3-8939-3e54-7577-996a0a3f8952

# Ethel Everhard Memorial Library

Materials should be of enduring or current value to satisfy the informational or recreational needs of community members. They should represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity not only of the region it serves but also the larger global perspective. Material selection may be limited by price, format, physical limitations of the building, or availability of low demand items in other libraries of the Winnefox Library System.

## 1. *General Selection Criteria*

- a. Existing collection needs
- b. Relevance to community needs and patron demand
- c. Durability for library usage
- d. Cost
- e. Significant or reputable author
- f. Attention of critics and reviewers
- g. Representation of current ideas or events

## 2. *Content Criteria*

- a. Authoritative
- b. Well reviewed
- c. Comprehensiveness, depth of treatment, and objectivity
- d. Author's qualifications
- e. Objectivity
- f. Consideration of the whole work
- g. Clarity
- h. Currency
- i. Technical quality
- j. Representation of diverse viewpoints, genre, or trend
- k. Originality
- l. Sustained interest
- m. Relevance and use of information
- n. Authenticity of history or social setting

## 3. *Electronic Resource Criteria*

- a. Ease of use
- b. Availability of information to multiple simultaneous users
- c. Technical support and training
- d. Availability of physical space and equipment
- e. Available in full text

## **Acquisitions Procedure**

The library director of the Ethel Everhard Memorial Library has responsibility for the overall selection and maintenance of all materials and formats within the collection of the library. Each library within the Winnefox system retains responsibility for their own collection. All materials are selected and approved by the library director and recommendations for purchase by patrons and staff are considered when materials are

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Amended 10/10/2022

# Ethel Everhard Memorial Library

being acquired. When selecting materials the library director uses multiple avenues of information to make decisions about acquisitions, including:

- Current bestseller lists
- Patron requests
- Publishers' lists
- Specialized, professional review sources
- Book review journals
- System-wide or county meetings
- Professional conferences

## **Controversial Materials**

Public libraries have a responsibility to offer a representative selection of materials on all subjects of interest to its patrons, including materials on controversial issues. Materials that cover controversial topics are included in a collection when they meet the selection criteria set forward by the library. Selecting materials is a key function that libraries use to fulfill their mission in the community. A balanced collection attempts to represent all sides of controversial issues as far as availability of materials, space, and budget allow. Selection is based upon criteria stated in this policy. The race, religion, nationality, or political views of an author or creator; offensive language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content of an item; or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group in the community does not cause an item automatically to be included or excluded from the library's collection.

All public libraries contain materials that some community members may find objectionable. While an individual may personally reject materials, they will follow library procedure in requesting reconsideration of materials (see *Reconsideration* section). Any material in question will remain in circulation and the property of The Ethel Everhard Memorial Library while the Request for Reconsideration is being processed and until the final decision is made. The library is not responsible for the selection of materials from the other Winnefox member libraries or the Wisconsin Digital Library.

## **Donations and Gifts**

Gifts of books or other library materials or the money to buy such materials is gratefully accepted with the understanding that the library reserves the right to use or dispose of the gifts. The gifts may be added to the collection if they meet the established criteria for purchasing. The library is under no obligation to replace these gifts if lost, stolen, damaged, worn, or to keep them after they have no further value to the library. All gifts become the property of the library and if added to the collection must be for public use. Materials not added to the collection may be given to the Friends of the Library Book Sale, schools, or disposed of by other means. The library cannot place a monetary value on gifts, but a receipt can be provided upon request.

Funds may be given for the purpose of acquiring materials recommended by library staff as prescribed in this policy, or for purchase of specific items suggested by the donor if they meet the selection criteria stated herein. When the library receives a cash gift for the purchase of materials, the library staff must make the selection with the general selection principles set forth in this policy.

## **Collection Maintenance and Weeding**

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# Ethel Everhard Memorial Library

The library is continually withdrawing materials from its collection based upon multiple factors:

- Publishing date
- Unused materials
- Damaged materials
- Circulation frequency
- Community interest
- Availability of materials in system
- Availability of new materials

Withdrawn books are then donated to the Friends of the Library for books sales. Proceeds from these book sales benefit the library. Withdrawn books that are not sold will be disposed of at the discretion of the Friends of the Library. Books that have enduring value to the collection will be repaired or replaced as necessary. The standards of the Materials Selection Policy will be followed when maintaining and weeding the collection.

## Reconsideration

The library fully endorses the principles of intellectual freedom documented in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association. Materials available in the library present a diversity of viewpoints, enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy. The library also selects a wide variety of library materials that satisfy the diverse interests of our community. The library upholds the right of the individual to secure these resources, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to some. The library's varied collection is available to all; however, it is not expected that all of the collection will appeal to everyone.

Community members who wish to request the withdrawal or reclassification of materials currently owned by the library are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the library director. If the community member is not satisfied with the response to their request, the library director will provide them with information and a request for reconsideration form for formal reconsideration of the library resource. Community members must be defined as living within the library service area to request a formal reconsideration form. If there is a citizen outside of the library service area with a complaint, they are welcome to fill out a comment card. To reiterate, procedure will be as follows:

1. Library director will discuss complaint with community member within library service area
  - a. If the issue is resolved in that discussion and no formal complaint is filed, the reconsideration process ends.
2. If community member wishes that a formal complaint be filed, they will be offered a packet of materials which includes:
  - a. Library's Current Strategic Plan
  - b. Selection policy
  - c. Reconsideration Form
  - d. ALA Library Bill of Rights and Professional Ethics Principles
3. Community member will fully complete and submit reconsideration form to the library director.
4. The director will review the reconsideration form and the material in question to consider whether the selection follows criteria stated in the collection policy.

Approved 06/09/2003

Amended 04/09/2018

Amended 10/10/2022

# Ethel Everhard Memorial Library

5. Within 15 business days, the director will make a decision and send a letter to the concerned community member who requested the reconsideration, stating the reasons for the decision.
6. If the individual is not satisfied with the decision, a written appeal may be submitted within 10 business days to the Board of Trustees.
  - a. The request will then be passed on to a Reconsideration Committee comprised of three voting board members and the library director, who is a non-voting member of the committee.
  - b. The Reconsideration Committee will read and consider materials in full, discuss reconsideration, and will report back to the Board of Trustees with decision.
7. If the board plans to address the appeal at their board meeting the community member will be notified when and where the meeting will be held.
  - a. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of public comments.
  - b. The decision of the Reconsideration Committee is final.

# Ethel Everhard Memorial Library

## Appendix A

### 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](#).<sup>3</sup>

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# Ethel Everhard Memorial Library

## Appendix B

### 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.
- IX. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

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# Ethel Everhard Memorial Library

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; January 22, 2008; and June 29, 2021.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Professional Ethics", American Library Association, May 19, 2017. <http://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>. Document ID: 39f580a8-833d-5ad4-f900-53ecfe67eb1f  
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