

Washington County Free Library

Material Reconsideration Policy

General

The Washington County Free Library's (WCFL) materials are selected according to the parameters and framework provided by the Library's Collection Development Policy. WCFL believes that books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people in the communities we serve, and that libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues in order to reflect the diversity found in contemporary society. Consequently, the collection may include material which is controversial or offensive to some.

The Library acknowledges that occasionally patrons may have complaints or concerns about individual materials or categories of materials in the collection. WCFL will handle these concerns systematically and equally with due consideration as described in this policy, ensuring that the complainant is respectfully heard, while still adhering to the parameters of the Collection Development Policy and the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom, as expressed in the Library Bill of Rights and American Library Association (ALA) Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements.

Because the WCFL adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom, it does not endorse particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection or retention of an item express or imply endorsement of the viewpoint of the author or content of the item. Library materials will not be excluded based on expressions, including, and not limited to those of race, religious or spiritual views, gender, nationality, politics, or social views, nor because of the race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, or the political, social, or religious views, or other status, of the author.

Choice of library materials and resources for personal use is an individual matter. WCFL relies on each individual's freedom of choice to select or to not select materials for their needs. Any patron is free to reject materials for their own use if that patron does not personally approve of them.

The Washington County Free Library does not stand in loco parentis. Parents and/or legal guardians, not library staff, are responsible for monitoring their children's use of reading, viewing, and listening material. The freedom of access for a minor to the Library materials and resources may be restricted by the minor's parent or legal guardian. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to define what material or information is consistent with their personal and family beliefs; only they can apply those values for themselves and their children.

The specific aim of the Children's collection is to provide materials and resources in a variety of formats which will anticipate and meet the diversified needs, interests, tastes, and backgrounds of children from infancy through age twelve.

The specific aim of the Teen collection is to provide materials and resources for young people ages thirteen through nineteen. Recognizing that adolescence is a period of rapid physical, mental, and emotional growth, and considering the many levels of maturity and sophistication of this age group, materials and resources are selected which vary in format, content, and reading difficulty.

Materials will be evaluated as a whole rather than on the basis of a particular section or isolated passage according to the framework and parameters established by the Collection Development Policy. Works which accurately present an aspect of life will not be excluded or withdrawn because of frankness of expression, including, but not limited to, language, explicit text, or explicit illustrations.

Collection Concerns

Patrons wishing to express a concern about library materials may do so at any WCFL location; all concerns will be forwarded to the Head of Collection Management. Those wishing a formal review of an item must fill out a *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form*. The item will be reviewed by a team of library staff, including the Head of Collection Management and the Director of Operations. The Washington County Free Library takes patron concerns about items in the collection seriously, and a response will be returned in writing. During the evaluation period, the item will remain in the Library's collection. If the patron disagrees with the response, they may appeal the decision to the Executive Director.

Requests for reconsideration of materials may come from individuals who reside in Washington County and have an active library card; WCFL will not consider requests for reconsideration of materials from groups of any kind.

No material shall be removed from the collection, except for routine collection maintenance or for conditions as determined by the staff, pursuant to specifics of the Collection Development Policy and the Material Reconsideration Policy. Any material under consideration will remain in the collection until all review procedures are followed and an official decision is made.