

Bronxville Public Library Collection Development Policy

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Library Mission

The mission of the Bronxville Public Library is to provide state-of-the-art services and resources, and lifelong learning opportunities, for the residents of Bronxville and our neighboring communities. Through innovative educational, literary, musical, and artistic programs, we aspire to enrich the quality of life of, and inspire the joy of reading in, patrons of all ages and interests.

We will accomplish our mission by:

Offering welcoming and well-maintained space in our beautiful historic building;

Providing a wide variety of current books and printed and digital material in our own collection, as well as access to the extensive resources and reference services offered by the Westchester Library System (WLS);

Maintaining a fine art collection that is on permanent view;

Offering performance, exhibition, and meeting spaces;

Partnering with other institutions, organizations, and individuals to serve the changing needs of our community.

Purpose

The purpose of the Bronxville Public Library Collection Development Policy is to provide guidelines for selection, acquisition and withdrawal of materials for the Library in accordance with the Library's mission. The Library Board of Trustees seeks to acquire and maintain materials with both contemporary significance and permanent value to underline the Library's role as a community resource and center for education and entertainment. The responsibility for selection of library materials is delegated by the Board to the Library Director and, under the Director's supervision, to the Reference Librarians, Youth Services Librarians, and the Head of Circulation. These guidelines will help staff in their decisions for selection and weeding, and will serve as a tool to educate the public to the Library's roles and responsibilities in fulfilling the Library's mission.

Role of the Library in the Community

The Bronxville Public Library serves a highly educated suburban community of 6,500 residents located just outside of New York City, and draws heavily from neighboring communities of Yonkers, Mt. Vernon and New Rochelle. BPL is one of 38 libraries in the Westchester Library System, with one of the highest circulation rates in the County. The Library is a destination for members of the Bronxville community and beyond who are drawn to the extensive range of programs as well as to the high-quality traditional services delivered by an experienced staff.

Intellectual Freedom

The Library provides free access to all materials, housed on open shelves, easily accessible to the public. No item is labeled in any way to indicate any particular bias, nor will any item be identified to imply or show approval or disapproval of its contents. The Library's decision to acquire any item does not necessarily mean the Library's endorsement of that item's contents. The Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom. They are detailed in the four documents listed below that have been adopted by the American Library Association. They are located at the end of this document.

[Library Bill of Rights](#)
[The Freedom to Read](#)
[Freedom to View Principles](#)

Collection Description

For nearly 100 years, the Library has sought to acquire the broadest possible range of items for its size and for the community it serves. The Library maintains a collection of approximately 142,016 items (2014 Member Library Statistics). It also has access to the collections of the 37 other libraries within the Westchester Library System; to the academic libraries in the area; and ultimately, to any library in the United States that owns materials our patrons need or want. The following paragraphs describe its main Departments.

Adult

The adult collection is comprised of a wide range of materials in multiple formats and serves adults of all ages and ranges. The adult book collection includes fiction and nonfiction, mystery and large print, in hardcover, paperback, and digital formats. Magazines and newspapers are also available in print, digital and microfilm formats. The audiovisual items include music on CDs, fiction and nonfiction CD audiobooks, and DVDs. The Director, Head of Reference, Reference Librarians, and Head of Circulation are responsible for maintaining this collection.

Young Adult

Our Young Adult room's eclectic collection, aimed at the educational and recreational needs of the community between the ages of 12 and 18, contains hardcover and paperback fiction and nonfiction; CD audiobooks; and DVD's as well as study guides, magazines, college guides and video games. The Young Adult Librarian is responsible for maintaining this collection.

Juvenile

Our Children's Room serves children from birth through sixth grade and their families with books, both fiction and nonfiction; reference resources, CD audiobooks and kits, DVD's, magazines and many small separate collections specific to the Children's Room, such as Parenting, Easy Readers, Picture Books and Board Books. The Children's Librarian is responsible for maintaining this collection.

Material Selection Procedures

The Director, charged by the Board of Trustees with the responsibility of the Library's collection acquisition and management program, works with the Head of Reference, the Reference Librarians, the Youth Services Librarians and the Head of Circulation to carry it out. The Director determines allocation of resources and assigns responsibility for acquiring new materials in all departments of the Library. The acquisition and maintenance of materials is based on certain objective guidelines. All items, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the standards listed below.

General Criteria

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Popular Demand and patron requests
- Local interest in subject or author
- Relation to the existing collection and other materials on the subject
- Suitability of the subject and style for the intended audience
- Accuracy, currency and comprehensiveness
- Attention given by critics, reviewers and the public
- Reputation and significance of the author and publisher
- Award recipients
- A resource for school curriculums
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Price

Selection Tools

Library staff members rely on standard review journals, both in print and online. These include but are not limited to *Library Journal*, *Kirkus*, *Booklist* and *Publishers Weekly*. In addition, patron requests and/or staff recommendations are considered, along with publishers' catalogs and other promotional materials, including reviews

in current newspapers, general interest magazines, and online sources. Materials in high demand may be purchased in quantity. Items on bestsellers' lists or that receive a high number of hold requests from the public would be considered high demand items. In addition, materials are acquired to replace items that have been removed from the collection due to condition, through wear or damage; or loss.

Reconsideration of Materials

The Bronxville Public Library welcomes expressions of opinion from the public concerning materials selected or not selected for inclusion in the collection. While we recognize that some materials are controversial and may be considered offensive by some, our staff will continue to make selections based solely on the merits of the works, in concert with the criteria outlined above. Patrons who wish to request the reconsideration of an item may do so by completing a *Request for Reconsideration Form*.

Once a completed form is returned, the patron can expect the following:

- The Director will acknowledge receipt of the form.
- The challenged material will remain in the collection until a final decision has been made.
- The Director or designated staff will review the selection policy to determine if the material complies with the policy, and read professional reviews of the material.
- Based on this review, the Director will present a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, who will make the final determination as to whether to retain, reclassify, label, or remove the material.
- The Director will advise the patron of the decision.

The Board of Trustees will consider each request in terms of the Materials Selection Criteria as described in the BPL Collection Development Policy and the principles of the ALA Library Bill of Rights; Freedom to View; and Freedom to Read.

Request for Purchase of Materials

A patron wishing to request that the Library purchase certain materials may do so by filling out and submitting the *Request for Purchase Form*. The Director and designated staff members will review the request, and will advise the patron of their decision in writing.

Material Removal

The Bronxville Public Library continuously reviews its collection for condition, accuracy and timeliness of its items. Items are removed based on the following criteria:

- Condition of the Item. Examples include torn or missing pages, a broken spine, defaced pages or covers. A/V items can suffer scratches to CD and DVD surfaces or have missing parts.
- Accuracy and timeliness of content. Subjects such as history, health, computers, financial investing, science and travel must be constantly monitored in order to maintain the most up-to-date information.
- Lack of circulation. Fiction and nonfiction must be regularly evaluated to remove older titles that have become shelf sitters. Titles that are no longer on the best seller list may have multiple copies the Library no longer needs.
- Space limitations. In a finite area, older titles must sometimes be removed to make room for newer titles.
- No relevance to the community's needs or beyond the scope of the Library's collection.

**Appendix I
Bronxville Public Library
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. Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/intfreedom/librarybill/lbor.pdf>

Appendix II

Bronxville Public Library

Freedom to Read

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.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/freedomreadstatement>

Appendix III Bronxville Public Library Freedom to View

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional 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 of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

<http://www.ala.org/vrt/professionalresources/vrtresources/freedomtoview>