

Intellectual Freedom and Materials Selection Policy

Intellectual Freedom:

The Johnson Public Library does not promote particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any library material equivalent to endorsement of the viewpoint of the author expressed therein. The primary objective of the Johnson Public Library is to provide library materials which are selected on the basis of interest, information, and enlightenment of the people in the service area. No materials shall be excluded because of age, race, color, creed, religion, place of birth, ancestry, political affiliation, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, military/uniformed service or veteran's status, disability, or other legally protected classification of the author.

Additionally, materials shall be selected based on the diverse interests and needs of the people in the community.

The Johnson Public Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement. Included in these statements is the commitment to honor the rights of all individuals. Accordingly, Johnson Public Library provides equal service to all users. All registered patrons are equally free to use and borrow from the entire library collection.

Material Selection Principles:

Material selection for the Johnson Public Library shall be at the discretion of the librarians with input by the Board of Trustees as necessary.

The librarians utilize their professional judgment and expertise, enhanced by an understanding of our community needs. For this process they will use professional reviews, standard lists of basic works, recommendations from professional journals, their knowledge of authors and publishers, and bibliographic essays prepared by subject specialists.

The public may also recommend and will receive careful consideration in terms of overall objectives and the existing book collection. Additionally, the library trustees will periodically conduct a needs survey of the community.

All materials acquired should meet high standards of quality in content, expression, and form. The librarians will review the collection regularly to assess its continued relevance to the audience and the public it serves, judging its strengths and weaknesses, adding to it or subtracting from it according to general principles given under the criteria listed below.

Criteria for Selection of Library Materials:

Library materials include items such as books, audio-visual materials, periodicals. Evaluative factors for selection of library materials by the librarians are:

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- factual accuracy and authoritativeness
- effective expression
- significance of subject
- sincerity and responsibility of opinion
- current usefulness
- interest
- permanent value.
- Importance as record of the times
- Patron demand
- Relation to the existing collection and usefulness in presenting a diversity of information on issues
- Relative importance in comparison with other works on the subject
- Sufficient standards of quality in content, format, and binding

Materials, both fiction and non-fiction in all formats, should be favorably reviewed in several established professional journals. Careful consideration should be made when adding books and other library materials.

The library acknowledges its responsibility to preserve Vermont and Johnson local materials of historical, genealogical, or literary nature. Books by local authors and other materials of local interest will be given special consideration.

Censorship, Freedom, and Rights:

The Johnson Public Library adheres to the tenets as set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement adopted by the American Library Association. All patrons have free and open access to all library materials.

Materials of the required quality, serving the purposes of the library and relating to an existing need or interest, will not be removed because of pressure by groups or individuals expressing disapproval, but materials exhibiting balancing points of view will be offered.

It is the responsibility of parents to determine what their children, and only their children, may read, view, listen to, or access electronically. The selection of materials will not be restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain materials their parents considered inappropriate.

The Johnson Public Library maintains the confidentiality of its circulation records.

Gifts:

The library is pleased to accept donations of books or other library materials as well as monetary donations. The library will accept gifts with the understanding that the materials will be added to the library or its collection only when needed and meet the same criteria as purchased materials. The library accepts these gifts on the condition that their use is at the discretion of the librarians. If not added, the library has the right to dispersal or disposal and

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may sell, give away, or discard the item(s). Memorial books are accepted by the library. Patrons wishing to make such a gift should consult with the librarians before making a choice of books(s).

If a patron wishes to receive a receipt for tax deduction purposes, the patron should list those books he/she is donating, which the librarian may sign as a representative of the Johnson Public Library. The value of the donated books however is to be stated by the donor and is not to be determined by the librarian.

Material Dispersal and Disposal:

The deliberate, measured, regular evaluation of library materials in relation to the collection, as a whole and the community at large is part of the library's normal procedure.

The same criteria used in selecting materials apply to the systematic removal or replacement of outdated, inaccurate, no longer useful, seldom used, or worn items. Each withdrawal or replacement is judged by standard library tools to determine its retention value, as part of the overall collection, or its current usefulness.

Materials no longer useful to the library may be given to other libraries, sold for the benefit of the library, or discarded.

The authority for the final withdrawal of materials rests with the librarians.

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Challenges of Library Materials

In the event a library user wishes to protest the inclusion of a particular item in the collection, he/she must submit a written request on the Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources Form. This form should be completed in full and submitted to the librarian who will refer it to the board of Trustees with a recommendation for appropriate action as necessary.

In the event of a challenge, the procedure will be:

1. The Director will discuss the challenge and the selection procedure with the complainant.
2. If the complainant wishes further consideration of her or her objection to the library material under reconsideration, he or she will be requested to fill out a form titled "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" and submit it to the Director.
3. The Director will inform the staff members and the Board of Trustees of the complaint.
4. The challenged material will remain on the shelf during the reconsideration process.
5. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Director presents it to the Chair of the Board of Trustees so that the request may be incorporated into the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The complainant will be notified of this meeting.
6. Prior to the next Board meeting, the Director and the members of the Board who have read, viewed, or listened to the material in its entirety, checked general acceptance of the material by reading reviews and consulting recommended lists, will determine the value of the material to the collection.
7. The Director and the Board of Trustees present a written recommendation to the complainant. The recommendation will be based on their knowledge of the material as well as their understanding of the library's selection policy and Library Bill of Rights.

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Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources Form

The Johnson Public Library has delegated responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to the Library Director and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in that process. If you wish to request reconsideration of library resources, please return the completed form to the Library Director.

Your Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Resource on which you are commenting: _____ Book _____ Magazine _____ Newspaper

_____ Audio Recording _____ Video _____ Other

Title of the Work _____

Author _____

Have you examined the entire resource?

What are your concerns about the item?

Are there other resources you suggest to provide additional information /points of view on this topic?

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