

MADBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Statement of Policies and Procedures

Updated May 2022

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Madbury Public Library is to augment the center of community life, and to enhance that life by:

- Encouraging free and open access to ideas and information in support of learning by people of all ages.
- Encouraging children's reading and learning by way of programs and services.
- Offering materials and programs which complement the interests of the community.
- Providing portals into statewide services and technological information sources.

Who May Use the Library

The library will serve all residents of Madbury. Residents of towns outside of Madbury may obtain a library card for an annual fee (\$30.00). All children who reside within the boundaries of ORCSD (Durham, Lee and Madbury) may have a free family library card for their use at the Madbury Public Library.

Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status; or because of mental, emotional, or physical condition; age; sexual orientation or gender identity.

The use of the library may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return library materials or to pay penalties, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other illegal, disruptive, or objectionable conduct on library premises.

Patron Conduct and Responsibilities

Patrons of all ages are encouraged to use the library for research, homework, recreational reading, and program attendance.

It is a patron's responsibility to maintain necessary and proper standards of behavior to protect his/her individual rights and the rights and privileges of other patrons. All patrons are expected to use all library materials, resources, and equipment in a responsible manner. If a patron creates a public nuisance, that patron may be asked to leave the library. Those who are unwilling to leave or do not leave within a reasonable amount of time, after being instructed to do so by the staff, will be subject to the law and there may be a revocation of library privileges.

The Madbury Public Library encourages visits by children, and it is our desire to make this important visit both memorable and enjoyable for the child. Library staff is not expected to assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised children in the library. Parents of minor children must assume responsibility for their children's use of library resources.

It is library policy that all children under age six must be accompanied by a parent or designated responsible person while in the library or attending a library program. We require the parent/responsible person to remain in the library throughout the program.

The library staff realizes that the library will be noisier at busy times and that children by nature can cause more commotion. However, children (whether with parents or not) who are being continually disruptive will be given a warning to settle down or be asked to leave the library. If, after a second warning, the child continues to be disruptive, he/she will be asked to leave the library. If the child needs to contact a parent, she/he may do so and then wait with a staff person until the parent arrives.

Services of the Library

The library provides materials and resources for information, entertainment, intellectual development, and enrichment of the people of the community. The library should endeavor to:

- Select, organize, and make available necessary books and materials.
- Provide guidance and assistance to patrons.
- Sponsor and implement programs, exhibits, displays, book lists, etc., which would appeal to children and adults.
- Cooperate with other community agencies and organizations.
- Secure information beyond its own resources when requested. (Using interlibrary loan and other resource sharing methods provided through the system and state.)
- Lend to other libraries upon request.
- Develop and provide services to patrons with special needs.
- Maintain a balance in its services to various age groups.
- Cooperate with, but not perform the functions of, school or other institutional libraries.
- Provide service during hours that best meet the needs of the community, including evening and weekend hours.
- Regularly review library services being offered.
- Use media and other public relations mechanisms to promote the full range of available library services.

Hours of Operation and Holidays

The library is open the following hours (subject to change):

- Monday & Wednesday: 10:00-7:00
- Thursday: 10-5
- Saturday: 10-2

Holiday Closings will be determined by the Library Director and Trustees on an annual basis. Storm related closures will be at the discretion of the Library Director.

Responsibilities and Authorities of the Library Board

Refer to Chapter 202-A of the New Hampshire Statutes, the New Hampshire Public Library Trustee Manual, and individual library bylaws to provide basis and framework for the responsibilities and authority of the library board and individual trustees.

The Madbury Public Library encourages each library trustee to take advantage of training opportunities for trustees offered by the public library system or statewide agencies and organizations. Likewise, the Library encourages trustees to be active in the state library organization and its efforts to inform the governor and legislature of the benefits and needs of public libraries.

Volunteers and Friends

Volunteers contribute to the success and mission of the Madbury Public Library through their dedication, enthusiasm, and the services they perform in support of that mission. Under no circumstances should they be used to supplant or take on the duties of paid staff members. Volunteers are not expected to perform the scope of duties assigned to professional staff and should have very specific tasks for which they are properly trained and supervised by the Library Director.

- Volunteers are any individual age 16 or above who assist with work done at the Madbury Public Library, without remuneration. Volunteers under age 18 must have a signed parental permission slip and a valid work permit.
- Volunteers are selected based on their qualifications and the needs of the library at any given time. While we appreciate every person who wishes to volunteer at the library, opportunities for voluntary work are limited. Volunteers will be interviewed like any job candidate to ensure that the match between task and candidate is suitable. A volunteer must be trained and supervised by paid staff, limiting the number of volunteers to those which staff the has time to supervise and evaluate on a regular basis. Volunteers must complete the MPL volunteer agreement form. All volunteers must exhibit the ability to interact with the public in a positive and pleasant manner, as they are seen as representatives of the Madbury Public Library.
- The library is under no obligation to take volunteers from outside services seeking placements. Individuals seeking assignments to meet a requirement from an outside agency for the performance of service are subject to all the selection and evaluation criteria which any volunteer would be expected to fulfill. All volunteers over the age of 18 may be required to have a criminal background check before beginning service.
- Any volunteer working with children, working with the elderly, or handling funds must agree to undergo a criminal background check-the cost of which will be paid by the library. Volunteers may begin service while the background check is in process but may not have unsupervised time with children, with the elderly, or with the handling of funds in that period.
- Volunteers are required to uphold the same confidentiality, performance, and behavior standards as staff. They will be trained by paid staff for specific tasks; no task for which training has not been provided will be expected of a volunteer.

- We ask that volunteers coordinate their scheduled time when adequate supervision is available.
- Volunteers will be informed of safety and security measures. They are NOT covered under Workmen's Compensation. Volunteers must be covered by their own vehicle insurance if their volunteer activity includes use of a vehicle and are liable for their own fees for traffic offenses - mileage reimbursement is not provided. The Town of Madbury carries liability insurance and volunteers are covered under the provisions of RSA 508:17, the Volunteer Immunity Law.
- Volunteers are asked to notify the library in advance if they will be discontinuing service. Also, all volunteers are requested to call in if they will be absent. Volunteers must record their hours worked each time they volunteer.
- The library staff and trustees will recognize volunteers for outstanding service when warranted.
- Paid staff of the Madbury Public Library may not volunteer at the library.
- Volunteers may be asked to perform tasks such as shelving materials, processing new books, reading and organizing the shelves, assisting with children's programs and crafts, working on the library grounds (weeding and cleaning), carrying out one-time projects, assisting in inventory/collection shifting, assisting with special events, photocopying materials, preparing materials for mailing, starting/facilitating a club, tutoring other patrons in computer use or giving tours of the library.
- Volunteers should not have access to patron records, including personal identifying information or circulation records.
- Trustees who volunteer at the library in a capacity other than being a trustee must also sign a volunteer form that outlines their duties. This agreement must be reviewed by the library's Board of Trustees. Trustees may not be paid employees of the library during their tenure; and their immediate family members cannot work as employees of the library during the elected trustee's tenure.
- All volunteers will undergo an informal annual review by the director.

Personnel Policy

- A. Management Policy:** The duly appointed library Board shall have all management rights, authorities, and responsibilities as stated in New Hampshire Statutes, Chapter 202-A.
- The library Board shall select and appoint all library staff, and when necessary for valid reasons, dismiss individual staff members.
 - The Board shall establish all positions, wage, and benefit levels for library staff.
 - The library Board shall provide an effective orientation for new Directors to assure that the Director understands a) the policies and processes related to the daily operation of the library b) reporting and budgetary requirements that assure accountability and compliance with the law, c) the expectations of the Board in regard to administrative processes and protocol, particularly as they relate to conducting effective and efficient Board meetings and d) rules and requirements for state certification, and e) provision of assistance and materials by the library as required to maintain appropriate certification.
 - The library Board shall conduct annual appraisals of the library Director's performance, at which time personal and management goals can be discussed and negotiated.
- B. Administrative Policy:** The person appointed as library Director shall be charged with the sole administration of the library.

- The Director shall be responsible to the library Board in all matters pertaining to and concerning the library; be present at Board meetings and prepare and present such reports and meeting documents as requested.
- The Director shall maintain financial records in an efficient manner; present periodic reports to the library Board and to the municipal governing body; prepare the draft of the annual budget to be presented to the library Board, and assist Trustees with presentation of the final budget to the municipal governing body for requested appropriations
- The Director shall hold periodic meetings with staff and/or volunteers for training and for interpreting Board policy.
- The Director will be responsible for preparing annual performance assessments for library staff and periodic feedback to volunteers.
- The Director shall have the responsibility for collections development for all materials in the library; this includes selection, ordering, processing, weeding, and inventory of the collections according to selection policy guidelines.
- The Director will recommend changes in or additions to library policies as needed.
- The Director will perform preparatory work to assist the board with regular library planning.

C. New Hires: The library requires a background check for all new employees. Employment is contingent upon receipt of a satisfactory background check. Employment for all new employees will begin with a two (2) week training period equivalent to the number of hours in their regularly scheduled work week. All new hires are subject to a three-month probationary period, which will conclude with an in house review / assessment.

D. Salaries: Wages for the Director and staff are set by the library Board. These wages are subject to regular revision so that wages remain equitable for both the library and the staff. All library staff will be notified in writing of changes in wages or hours.

- Part-time employees will be paid for any two (2) holiday closures of their choice. Hours lost due to remaining holiday closures can be worked later, in consultation with the library Director.
- For part-time employees, hours lost due to inclement weather can be worked later, as coordinated with the Library Director.

E. Health Insurance Policy: The Madbury Public Library does not provide health insurance.

F. Time Off:

- a. **Employee Leave:** Leave will be granted at such times as determined by the Board of Trustees to be consistent with the provision of full services to the public and in the best interests of the library. Requests for leave should be submitted in writing well in advance of the time when the leave is to begin. Written requests should indicate both a beginning and ending date for the leave. In some instances, it may be necessary to deny requests for leaves. Leaves are a privilege and can be granted only if the best interests of the library can be maintained. Leave for the library Director must be approved by the library Board. Vacation time must be used before an unpaid leave will be approved for reasons other than maternity, parental leave, adoption, or military training. Other reasons will be subject to Board review on a case-by-case basis.

b. **Part-time Employee Leave:** Part-time employees shall be entitled to one week of unpaid annual leave, scheduling of such leave to be negotiated with the Director. 'One week' would be the equivalent of the number of hours worked on an average week. If a person worked an average of eight (8) hours / week, he or she would be granted eight (8) hours of unpaid leave time. Discretionary leave, such as educational leave, will be granted at such times as determined by the library Director to be consistent with the provision of full services to the public and in the best interest of the library. All part-time employees must give a minimum of two-weeks' notice before taking leave time.

c. **Vacation Policy:** Library employees working twenty-five or more hours per week are eligible to receive the following paid vacation:

- Full years of service up to four (4) years: two weeks
- Full years of service of four (4) but less than ten (10) years: three weeks
- Full years of service of 10 or more years: four weeks

Time taken from a vacation account may be utilized in units of not less than one day.

Library employees must schedule vacations with the library Director at least two weeks in advance, when possible.

Employees will not be paid in lieu of vacation time not taken.

d. **Personal Day:** A paid personal day equivalent to the number of hours in an average day for an employee's position is earned after one year of service.

e. **Holiday Policy:**

- The Director will receive paid holiday leave or compensatory time for the following: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day, Martin Luther King Day and Veterans Day.
- Any part-time employee who has been employed by the library for more than 5 years may receive holiday pay for the hours he or she would have normally worked.

f. **Educational Leave of Absence:** An educational leave of absence may be approved if the desired curriculum is of benefit to the employee and the library. A request for unpaid educational leave of absence should be made to the library Director or in the case of the library Director, to the Board of Trustees. The request should be made in writing at least one month in advance. Each request will be reviewed and the decision regarding the request shall be final.

g. **Family and Medical Leave:** Permanent employees are entitled to job-protected family or medical leave of absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.

- Family/Medical Leave is an unpaid leave of absence available to eligible employees in the event of a personal serious health condition, a birth or an adoption or a serious health condition involving the employee's child, spouse or parent (if the family

member's health care provider deems the employee's presence as necessary) creating a need for extended family or medical leave. Serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that requires inpatient or continuous outpatient treatment.

- Salaried employees are eligible for up to twelve (12) weeks of Family/Medical Leave per year after one year's employment
 - Request for Family and Medical leave must be submitted to the library Director 30 days in advance of the start of the leave or as soon as possible after the need arises. The Trustees will make the final decision concerning the request.
 - Certification by the health care provider as defined by Federal Law is required for any leave based on the employee's or family member's serious health condition.
 - The library requests two weeks advance notification of the intended return date.
 - Employees will return to work as soon as the library Director receives certification from the employee's health care provider stating that the employee is able to return to work, and as the library schedule permits.
 - When the employee is physically able to return to work, his/her original job or a comparable position shall be made available unless business necessity makes this impossible or unreasonable. When the physician states that the employee is able to return to work, and the employee fails to do so, the employee will have forfeited his/her position.
- h. Sick Leave: Three days paid sick leave is allowed per year for salaried employees. Sick leave is cumulative to six weeks and may be applied to maternity leave. Employees may be asked to obtain a written medical statement after more than three days absence due to illness. Part time employees are not eligible for paid sick leave.
- i. Bereavement Policy: In the event of the death of an immediate family member, both full and part time library employees are eligible for up to 3 days bereavement leave without loss of pay for regularly scheduled hours or loss of accrued sick leave or vacation time, if applicable. Immediate family member is defined as spouse, child or stepchild, sibling, parent, in-law, niece, nephew, grandparent or grandchild of the employee or the employee's spouse.
- j. Military Leave: Library employees who are duly enrolled members of the National Guard, State Guard or any other organized reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States shall be allowed a military leave of absence which has been ordered. The leave, under normal circumstances will not exceed fourteen (14) days excluding Sundays and legal holidays. A copy of the order requiring attendance at military training sites shall accompany all requests for a military leave.

The library can assure no loss of wages if the employee wishes to turn all earnings from the training period into the library Board. Benefits are not affected by a military leave as long as the leave stays within the fourteen-day parameter.

- k. Jury Duty: In the event a library employee is called for jury duty, the library will release them and assure no loss of wages. If fees and expenses paid to jurors do not equal or

exceed wages normally paid by the library, these fees can be turned in to the library Board and the employee will be paid their wages as usual.

- I. Work Schedule Policy: Major changes in the Director's schedule or other circumstances may not be made without approval of the library Board. Requests for such shall be made in writing to the library Board. Requests for changes in the work schedule of other staff shall be made in writing to the Library Director.

G. Meetings, Conventions, and Workshops:

The Director, staff and Trustees attending continuing education opportunities to aid the library shall be allowed expenses at the discretion of the library Board according to the amount appropriated in budget for such. The Director, staff and Trustees are encouraged to attend and participate in continuing education activities.

H. Equal Opportunity Employment Policy:

It is the policy of the Madbury Public Library to provide an equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons. Equal employment opportunity shall be according to the provisions of State and Federal laws and regulations.

I. Drug-Free Workplace Policy:

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited while performing work for the Madbury Public Library, whether that work is carried out in the workplace building or not.

All employees shall abide, as a condition of employment, by the terms of this notice and shall notify the library director or board within five (5) days of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace or in work related venues. Failure to comply with the above requirements shall be grounds for appropriate personnel action against such employee up to and including termination, or such employee may be required to satisfactorily participate in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

J. Smoke & alcohol-free environment (NH RSA, Chapter, 155):

The Madbury Public Library is a drug, alcohol, and smoke free environment.

J. Sexual Harassment Policy:

Harassment on the basis of gender is a violation of Title VII (federal law) and RSA 644.4. Sexual harassment, either verbal or physical, is an unlawful employment practice and will not be tolerated by the Madbury Public Library.

The Madbury Public Library accepts and adheres to all definitions and procedures outlined in the law as regards sexual harassment. Any employee who engages in sexual harassment will subject themselves to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

K. Disciplinary Policy:

An employee of the Madbury Public Library may be dismissed for any action or behavior that causes the library's image or operation to under the Family and Medical Leave Act.be diminished. This includes but is not limited to incompetence, misconduct, inattention to assigned duties, or unapproved absences from work. Normally termination would be a final step which would follow substandard performance appraisal, verbal and/or written warnings, suspension, and/or extended probation.

It is important that complete and clear records be maintained of all disciplinary processes for the protection of the employee and the library.

The library wants each employee to be successful in his/her job and will work with employees to address deficiencies.

While notice of intent to terminate can be expected, the Madbury Public Library reserves the right to dismiss an employee without notice in cases involving theft, drug or alcohol abuse, criminal activity, or in instances of significant misconduct such as harassment, including but not limited to those offenses outlined in RSA 644.

L. Access to Personnel Files: Access will be made available as outlined under RSA 275:56.

- Except as provided in paragraph 3 below, the director shall provide a reasonable opportunity for any employee who so requests to inspect such employee's personnel file and further, upon request, provide such employee with a copy of all or part of such file. The library may only charge the employee a fee reasonably related to the cost of supplying the requested documents.
- If, upon inspection of his/her personnel file, an employee disagrees with any of the information contained in such file, and the employee and the director cannot agree upon removal or correction of such information, then the employee may submit a written statement explaining his/her version of the information together with the evidence supporting such version. Such statement shall be maintained as part of the employee's personnel file and shall be included in any transmittal of the file to a third party and shall be included in any disclosure of the contested information made to a third party.
- The provisions of this section shall not require the disclosure of:
 - Information in the personnel file of a requesting employee who is the subject of an investigation at the time of his/her request if the disclosure of such information would prejudice law enforcement; or
 - Information relating to a government security investigation.
- Health, fitness, lifestyle, and other information obtained from employees by the library or the library's agents for purposes of providing employees with a health risk assessment or other wellness program shall not be considered personnel records, shall not be retained in an employee personnel file, and shall be inadmissible in any proceedings under RSA 281-A.

M. Grievance Procedure:

It is the intent of the Madbury Public Library that every employee shall have the opportunity to express concerns relating to the physical surroundings in which the employee works, procedures

and conditions of the specific position, relationships with fellow workers or supervisors, and library rules as they apply to staff. A concern or grievance should follow the procedure below:

1. If possible, discuss the problem with the Director. In the case of the Director having a concern, this should be discussed with the Board Chair.
2. If direct discussion produces no resolution, or is not possible at all, the concern/grievance should be submitted in writing and be delivered by the Director to the Board chair. The Board chair will, in turn, present the concern, during closed session, to the full Board at the next or a special Board meeting.
3. The Board's representative will respond to the employee within five (5) days of the Board meeting at which the issue is discussed, either providing a determination, solution, or a strategy for how the Board will address the issue over time.

N. Resignation and Retirement Policy:

A library employee wishing to resign or retire from employment must notify the Director or the library Board as soon as practicable. The library requests a minimum notice of two weeks. For the library Director a notice of at least two months is preferred. The employee must submit a formal, written resignation statement giving the exact date that employment is to be terminated. Between the time of notice and the time when employment ends, a final performance appraisal will be conducted.

Materials Selection/Collection Development Policy

Objectives:

- The purpose of the Madbury Public Library is to provide all individuals in the community with carefully selected books and other materials to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time.
- Because of the volume of publishing, as well as the limitations of budget and space, the library must have a selection policy with which to meet community interests and needs.
- The materials selection/collection development policy is used by the library staff in the selection of materials and serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection.
- The Library Bill of Rights and The Freedom to Read Statement have been endorsed by the Madbury Public Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of the policy.
- The materials selection/collection development policy, like all other policies, will be reviewed and/or revised as the need arises.

Responsibility for Selection:

- The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the library Director who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the Madbury Public Library Board of Trustees. This responsibility may be shared with other members of the library staff; however, because the Director must be available to answer to the library board and the public

for actual selections made, the Director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

Criteria for Selection:

The main points considered in the selection of materials are:

- Individual merit of each item
- Popular appeal/demand
- Suitability of material for the clientele
- Existing library holdings
- Budget

Reviews are a major source of information about new materials. The primary sources of reviews have been determined by the Director and the Library Board. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title that is in demand. Consideration is, therefore, given to requests from library patrons and books discussed on public media. Materials are judged based on the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.

Interlibrary Loan:

Interlibrary loan (ILL) is an integral element in both collection development and circulation. The purpose of ILL is twofold: to borrow, upon patron request, material not owned by the library; and to circulate our own material by loaning to other libraries upon their request. ILL is an adjunct to, not a substitute for, the library's collection. The library will exhaust its own collection before requesting items through interlibrary loan. Frequently requested items will be considered for purchase. A patron may have five active requests at any one time.

Gifts and Donations:

The library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. If they are not needed because of duplication, condition, or dated information the Director can dispose of them as he/she sees fit. The library Director applies to gifts the same criteria of selection that are applied to purchased materials. Memorial gifts of books or money are also accepted with suitable bookplates placed in the book. Specific memorial books can be ordered for the library on request of a patron if the request meets the criteria established by the Board. It is desirable for gifts of or for specific titles to be offered after consultation with the library director. Book selection will be made by the Director if no specific book is requested. The Madbury Public Library encourages and appreciates gifts and donations.

By law, the library is not allowed to appraise the value of donated materials, though it can provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the items if requested by the donor. The following guidelines govern donations:

1. Kinds of materials accepted:
 - a. Books in good condition-hard cover or paperback, fiction or non-fiction, adult or children's
 - b. Recent best sellers
 - c. Classic titles in excellent condition
2. Items not accepted:
 - a. Anything worn, tattered, yellowed, stained, musty or moldy

- b. Anything highlighted, written in, or drawn upon
- c. Textbooks
- d. Abridged or condensed books
- e. Complete sets of encyclopedias
- f. Magazines
- g. Discarded library books

Weeding:

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continuous withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the library Director and is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Withdrawn materials will be sold by the FOML, donated to charitable organizations, or otherwise disposed of.

Potential Problems and Challenges:

The Madbury Public Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made based on anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely based on the principles stated in this policy.

Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

Challenged Materials:

Although materials are carefully selected, differences of opinion can arise regarding suitable materials. Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from or restricted within the collection may complete a "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" (Appendix XXI) form, which is available in the library. The inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Madbury Public Library Board of Trustees.

Circulation Policy

A. Registration:

- All borrowers must be registered and must have a valid patron card to borrow library materials.
- Patrons must fill out an application form to register for a new library card. The following statement will be printed on the registration form for the patron's information and acceptance:
I agree to be responsible for all items borrowed with the library card issued in the above name, including items borrowed with it by others with or without my consent unless I have previously reported the loss of my card. I promise to comply with all library rules and policies both present and future, and to give prompt notice of change of address or loss of library card.
- Identification is required. A driver's license or student ID is preferred; however, any other official ID or recent non-personal piece of mail may be acceptable.

- Applicants under 14 years of age must have a parent or guardian give their consent on the application form before a new card can be issued. This parental signature is not required for children who are renewing cards.
- Materials cannot be checked out until a library card is issued.

B. Lost or Forgotten Cards:

- If a patron loses his/her library card, he should notify the library as soon as possible and request a replacement.

C. Expiration of Cards:

- Residents Patron cards are issued for a period of three (3) years. Patron status becomes inactive after three years with no recorded use. The patron list will be updated every 3 years.
- Non-residents cards are issued for a period of one (1) year, with an annual fee for that period.

D. Loan Periods:

- Library materials may be checked out for three (3) weeks.
- Interlibrary loans may be checked out for three (3) weeks. ILLs may be renewed only with the approval of the lending library.
- MPL books may be renewed two (2) times if there is not a waiting list for the title.
- The Director may establish the loan period for special collections, and materials which are temporarily in great demand.

E. Reserves:

- Reserves for items cataloged in our collection may be placed by patrons either in person, over the phone, or via internet or e-mail. Patrons will be notified by telephone or e-mail when the materials are available. There is no charge to the patron for placing a reserve or for interlibrary loan services.

F. Fines and Charges:

- There will be a charge for any materials that have been overdue for three (3) months, with two exceptions:
 - Materials that are new, or in popular demand, may incur a late fee.
 - Materials borrowed through Inter-Library Loan (ILL) may incur a late fee.
- A first notice within a designated period, a bill will be sent for the material with the cost of replacement of the material and a service charge for processing, cataloging and any registered mail fees incurred. Patrons who have been sent a registered letter shall be denied borrowing privileges until those overdue materials are returned or paid for if lost and/or damaged. If materials are so damaged as to be judged by the library as being unsuitable for the collection, the patron must pay the replacement cost.
- Inter-Library Loan (ILL) materials are subject to a separate system of fines and notifications. Fees and charges for ILL material will be assessed as soon as the materials become overdue.

G. Confidentiality:

The Madbury Public Library is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of records associated with our patrons. We are governed by the following New Hampshire Statutes:

As specified in New Hampshire RSA 91-A:5, "The records of the following bodies are exempt from the provisions of this chapter Access to Public Records and Meetings.

IV. Records pertaining to internal personnel practices; confidential, commercial, or financial information; test questions, scoring keys; and other examination data used to administer a licensing examination, examination for employment, or academic examinations; and personnel, medical, welfare, library user, videotape sale or rental and other files whose disclosure would constitute invasion of privacy. Without otherwise compromising the confidentiality of the files, nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit a body or agency from releasing information relative to health or safety from investigative files on a limited basis to persons whose health or safety may be affected."

Furthermore, as specified in New Hampshire RSA 201-D:11, "Library User Records; Confidentiality:

- I. Library records which contain the names or other personal identifying information regarding the users of public or other than public libraries shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except as provided in paragraph II. Such records include, but are not limited to, library, information system, and archival records related to the circulation and use of library materials or services, including records of materials that have been viewed or stored in electronic form.
- II. Records described in paragraph I may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such libraries and shall be disclosed upon request by or with the consent of user, or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by statute.
- III. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any library from releasing statistical information and other data regarding the circulation or use of library materials provided, however, that the identity of the users of such library materials shall be considered confidential and shall not be disclosed to the general public except as provided in paragraph IV."

The Madbury Public Library adheres strictly to all sections of these statutes regarding the protection of the confidentiality of its users

Reference Service Policy

The Madbury Public Library:

- will provide information in the form of short answers to specific questions and guidance in locating material for patrons who appear in person or call on the telephone, or request information through written or electronic correspondence
- will assist patrons in the use of the library and teach basic research methodology, when appropriate (this includes providing help in developing a research strategy and advice on whether a trip to the library would be worthwhile for individuals who telephone).
- will provide bibliographic verification of items both in the library and not owned by the library and will assist patrons in obtaining materials through inter-library loan, when appropriate.
- may refer library users to other agencies and libraries in pursuit of needed information.

- may use not only the library's resources in printed form but consult appropriate electronic resources.

Programming Policy

A “program” is a planned interaction between library staff and the program participants for the purpose of promoting library materials, facilities, or services, as well as offering the community an informational, entertaining, or cultural experience.

Programming includes such activities as story times, films, and activities on no-school days, summer library program for children, speakers for young adults, and book or author discussion groups for adults.

The board, in conjunction with the library Director, will establish a budget and goals for programming to facilitate the effective implementation of this service.

Public Relations Policy

Public relations goals of the Madbury Public Library are:

- To promote a good understanding of the library’s objectives and services among governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public.
- To promote active participation in the varied services offered by the library to people of all ages.
- The Board recognizes that public relations involve every person who has connection with the library. The Board urges its own members and every staff member to realize that they represent the library in every public contact.
- The Director is expected to make presentations and to participate in community activities to promote library services. A reasonable amount of library time will be allocated for preparation and speaking.
- Official library communications to be made public via any media must be approved by the Director.
- The Board may include money in the budget to cover costs related to printing, publication, supplies, and miscellaneous needs related to public relations efforts.

Internet, Computer and Printer Use Policy

The Madbury library offers access to a small number of computers, printers, and photocopiers for patron use. The computers are internet accessible. The library also offers patrons access to a wifi connection for connectivity to personal computer and mobile devices.

Access to the computer, printer and/or photocopier:

- Computers are available to patrons on a first-come, first-served basis.
- There is no charge for use of the computer.
- Each user is allowed one computer session limited to 60 minutes.
 - Having had the use of a computer for one session, the user must abandon use of the computer if another patron requests use of the service.
 - If there is no patron waiting for the computer at the end of a session, the user may have another session.
- Patrons should not attempt to change program settings on the workstation. or install or download software. Violations may result in the loss of computer privileges. Using the computer workstation constitutes an agreement by the user to these terms.
- Library staff is available for general assistance in using the computer. However, staff are not expected to train patrons in the use of application programs.
- Access to a printer and/or photocopier is also available. Patrons may print and/or photocopy materials at the rate of \$.10 per page and fees must be paid at the conclusion of the session.
- Copy machine users are advised that there are restrictions on copyrighted materials. Any violation of copyright is the responsibility of the copy machine user.

Access to and use of the library's internet connection:

The Madbury Public Library provides access to the Internet as a means to enhance the information and learning opportunities for the citizens of the library's service area. The Board of Trustees has established the Internet use policy to ensure appropriate and effective use of this resource.

Access to the Internet is available to all patrons; however, this service may be restricted at any time for use not consistent with the guidelines. Parents of minor children must assume responsibility for their children's use of the library's Internet service.

Expectations:

- Users should be aware that the inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws and can lead to prosecution. A user will be held responsible for his/her actions using the Internet. Users are expected to abide by the policies below which include generally accepted rules of network etiquette. Unacceptable uses of the service will result in the suspension or revocation of Internet use privileges.

Warnings:

- The Internet is a decentralized, unmoderated global network; the Madbury Public Library has no control over the content found there. The library will not censor access material nor protect users from offensive information, and it is not responsible for the availability and accuracy of information found on the Internet.
- The library cannot assure that data or files downloaded by users are virus-free. The library is not responsible for damages to equipment or data on a user's personal computer from the use of data downloaded from the library's Internet service.
- The use of the Internet and e-mail is not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the proper authorities.

Guidelines:

- Users may use the Internet for research and the acquisition of information to address their educational, vocational, cultural, and recreational needs.
- Users may use the Internet for the receipt and transmission of electronic mail (e-mail) as long as they use a web-based e-mail service; the library is unable to manage email accounts for any organization or individuals.
- Users must respect the rights of other patrons, particularly children, not to be exposed to materials or images that find unsuitable. Display of sexually explicit graphics is inappropriate for a public and open environment.
- Users will respect and uphold copyright laws and all other applicable laws and regulations; they will not use it for illegal purposes
- Users will respect the rights and privacy of others by not accessing private files
- Users agree not to incur any costs for the library through their use of the Internet service
- Users shall not create and/or distribute computer viruses over the Internet
- Users shall not deliberately or willfully cause damage to computer equipment, programs, or parameters

* On MPL public access computers, the memory is deleted when the user logs off.

Madbury Public Library Social Media Policy

In accordance with the Madbury Public Library's mission of "encouraging free and open access to ideas and information in support of learning, by people of all ages," and "providing portals into statewide services and technological information sources," the library will serve as a gateway for patrons by utilizing a third-party social networking service and maintaining a public organizational Facebook Page to be easily accessible by all members of the library's online community.

Staff maintenance of the Facebook Page is to be spelled out in the procedural manual.

Library staff will utilize multiple communication channels to reach the broadest number of patrons, including but not limited a Facebook page, the Madbury Public Library website, and email distribution (including the newsletter).

Meeting Room Policy

The Board of Trustees of the Madbury Public Library recognizes Article VI of the Library Bill of Rights which states that facilities should be made available to the public served by the given library on an equitable basis, regardless of beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

The Madbury Library Community Room is available to the community for civic, informational, or cultural activities. Only noncommercial, civic, or governmental groups may use the rooms free of charge.

Rooms are not available for social money raising events, or for the benefit of private individuals. Library sponsored fund-raising events are permitted. The fact that a group is permitted to use the room does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the group's beliefs or purposes by the library.

All groups wishing to use a meeting room must submit an application (available at the library) for Use of a Meeting Room. The representative filing the application must be 18 years or older. The meeting will not be scheduled until approved by the Director or her/his designee.

The following rules shall apply to use of the meeting room:

- No fees may be charged; commercial business functions or private parties are not allowed; no goods or services may be sold or solicited for profit
- All meetings must be open to the public
- Smoking and alcoholic beverages are not permitted; no lit flames are allowed including candles and sterno fuel
- Meeting space must be cleaned and returned to its original condition or set up; all trash must be picked up and the floor swept
- All food and supplies must be supplied by the group
- Groups may not post signs at the library; no nails, tacks, or other items may be used on walls, doors, or windows
- The library telephone number may not be given out for information about the event
- All programs serving children under age 18 must always have at least one adult chaperone in the room
- Groups must adhere to posted fire codes regarding the number of persons allowed in the room
- The library reserves the right to cancel any meeting because of adverse weather conditions or for other emergency reasons
- Groups must call the Library Director 24 hours in advance if their event is cancelled
- Groups will be held responsible for damage or loss caused by their use of the room, its contents or the equipment contained in the room. Groups may not store items at the library
- The library assumes no responsibility for damage or loss to personal property during use of the library
- Exits, exit signs and passageways leading to exits will be kept free of obstruction
- Any breakage, malfunction or other damage must be reported to the Library Director immediately. A charge may be assessed for damage. Also, a charge may be made if extra cleaning is needed following use

Displays and Exhibits Policy

As an educational and cultural institution, the Madbury Public Library welcomes exhibits and displays of interest to the community. However, the director shall accept or reject material offered for display based on its suitability and the space it requires.

The library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection, and no liability for possible damage or theft of any item displayed or exhibited. All items placed in the library are there at the owner's risk.

A release must be signed by the exhibitor before any artifact can be placed in the library. The release form is included in the appendices.

Public Notice Bulletin Board Policy

Bulletin board materials may be submitted for posting for civic, educational, or cultural purposes. Organizations may submit literature publicizing a specific event. Limited space generally allows only short-term notices. The director must approve all postings and may prohibit postings which do not meet library standards. Library staff will place and remove postings promptly.

Each item posted must be dated and signed. The library will not be responsible for returning materials unless arrangements are specified.

Posting Priorities will be:

1. Library program's and announcements
2. Announcements of programs and other activities by non-profit organizations
3. Other announcements, with those of a commercial nature by a for-profit organization receiving the lowest priority - and subject to the director's discretion

Disasters Policy

Fire:

At the first indication of smoke or flame, call 911 and clear the building. If feasible, investigate the situation to determine location and extent of the fire. If the fire can obviously be contained and extinguished quickly and safely by staff, proceed to do so. However, if there is any doubt wait for the fire department.

The time to think about fires is before they happen. Familiarize yourself with the type, location, and application of the fire extinguisher(s) in the building. Orient all staff and volunteers to this information

Health emergencies:

Staff members should exercise caution when administering first aid of even a minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the staff member. Without specialized training it is not advisable for staff to undertake more than keeping the sick or injured patron comfortable and protected from needless disturbance until medical help can be obtained. Since each case is unique, staff members should use their own judgement to do what is prudent and reasonable.

911 should be called immediately in the event of any serious problem. No medication, including aspirin, should ever be dispensed to the public.

Bomb threats:

Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask the caller to repeat the message and try to write down every word spoken by the person.

If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of possible detonation, ASK FOR THIS INFORMATION.

Pay particular attention to peculiar background noises such as motors running, background music, and any other sounds which may indicate where the call is originating.

Listen closely to the voice (male, female), voice quality (calm, excited), accents and speech impediments.

Immediately after the caller hangs up, call 911. Clear the building. The police will handle the actual bomb search.

Infectious Disease Outbreak Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the protocol to be used in the event of a local, regional, or global infectious disease outbreak. If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, Madbury Public Library (MPL) may be required to operate on limited staffing or take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness. These measures may include service restrictions, limited hours of operation, or possible closure of the library to the public as directed by the Library Board of Trustees or by order of local public health officials.

POLICY

Priorities throughout all levels will be given to the following essential services:

- Communication with Library staff and Library Board of Trustees
- Information services for the public, both in-person and online
- Payroll/Timesheet submissions
- Accounts Payable
- Facilities Maintenance

In the event that the Library Director is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the Children's Librarian will be appointed to act in the absence of the Library Director.

Level 1: Precautionary Health Measures**1. Cleaning and Supplies**

- Purchase additional cleaning and disease prevention supplies and provide tissues, disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizer to staff and patrons in public areas.
- Offer staff facial coverings and gloves, if recommended by local health officials.

- Perform additional routine cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces in the library such as workstations, countertops, doorknobs, elevator buttons, and touchpads.
- Determine, if possible, longevity of contagion life on hard surfaces and disinfect/quarantine returned materials accordingly.

2.Work Schedule Adjustments

- Authorities may request that persons returning from a highly infectious area not return to work for a period of time. Library employees are required to follow those recommendations. Absences for this purpose will be excused.
- Any employee presenting symptoms consistent with the outbreak will be asked to return home and/or refrain from coming to work.
- Library Director may reallocate employee responsibilities and shift/schedule changes to provide coverage during open hours.

3.Communication with the Public

- Share official local, state, and national sources for health information with patrons.
- Recommend that patrons and staff with symptoms not enter the building.
- Promote healthy habits to decrease the spread of illness such as handwashing, coughing or sneezing into one's elbow, encouraging social distancing, and using hand sanitizer when handwashing is not an immediate option.
- Update library website and social media with the most recent information.
- Promote digital library services.

4.Communication with the Staff and Trustees

- Remind staff to review these procedures
- Remind staff to update their contact information to include address, phone number, and email address.
- Emphasize that staff should stay home if they are experiencing symptoms consistent with the outbreak or any other illness and to avoid close contact, if possible, with people who are sick.
- Encourage staff who are traveling to check with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Traveler's Health Notice for travel advisories relating to the outbreak
- The Library Director will maintain communication with Library Board of Trustees

Level II: Adjustments to Library Services

In the event that an official source declares a pandemic, epidemic, or other emergent infectious disease crisis, the library will respond according to the official recommendations of the CDC and state and local public health officials. Responses to those recommendations may include:

1.Service Adjustments

- Extend due dates or waive fines on overdue materials as necessary.
- Encourage social distancing by increasing distance between seats in public areas, including the public computers and children's library, limiting the number of patrons in the library at one time, adjusting the library's operating hours, or closing portions of the Library to the public.
- Public health officials may advise the library to minimize or entirely suspend gatherings in public spaces, which may include:
 - Library programs
 - Public meeting room use

- Circulation desk assistance
- Limiting number of patrons in public computer area

2. Work Schedule Adjustments

- Cancel all library-related travel to areas under a CDC's Traveler's Health Notice and reconsider all nonessential library-related travel.
- Consider postponing library-related meetings or moving meetings to an online format.
- Consider altering work schedules so fewer staff members are working in close proximity to one another.
- Reallocate employee responsibilities and shift/schedule changes to provide coverage during open hours.
- Allow certain staff members to work from home, if possible, or work inside the library outside of operational hours.
- Allow non-essential staff to take time off.

3. Communication with the Public

- Continue the same messaging as in Level 1. Messages should explicitly state that service reductions and occupancy restrictions are being done to slow the spread of infection per the recommendations of local health officials.
- Continue to update library website and social media with the most recent information and provide links to local, state, and national resources.
- Share messages and be transparent about the adjustments to services and the reasons why the measures were taken.
- Contact affected program registrants, upcoming program presenters, and meeting room users to notify of service adjustments.
- Remind patrons that they do not have to return borrowed materials if they are not feeling well and note this in their accounts by extending the due date and leaving a message in their patron account. Fines may be waived.
- Continue promoting digital services.

4. Communication with the Staff and Trustees

- Library Director will monitor and coordinate responses among authorities, local schools, town officials, New Hampshire State Library (NHSL), New Hampshire Library Association (NHLA), and public health officials and direct appropriate staff to communicate as needed.
- Library Director will continue maintaining communication with Library Board of Trustees
- Library Director will review timesheet submissions and paycheck distribution with Selectmen's Office.

Level III: Temporary Closure

1. Service Adjustments

- During the course of an infectious disease outbreak, the Library Director may temporarily close the library under certain conditions, including:
 - Public health officials advise, request, or order the closure
 - In-house patron use is too low to justify keeping the library open
 - Staffing levels are too low to maintain basic functions of the library

- Any other conditions that prevent the library staff from working safely and effectively.
 - Extend due dates and continue to waive overdue fines.
 - Inform vendors and delivery services that the library is closed.
 - Cancel all programs and presenters.

2. Work Schedule Adjustments

- Under direction from the Library Director, essential personnel will continue to work remotely to perform necessary business functions, promote patron engagement on social media, and communicate with staff.
- Certain staff will visit the library to monitor building and facilities conditions, ensure the security of the building, collect incoming mail and newspaper deliveries, and perform job duties relevant to maintaining the Library's collection (weeding, shelf reading, materials processing, deletions, etc.).
- Reallocate employee responsibilities to provide optimum virtual services and accessibility to staff members working remotely.
- Other staff members may be given projects or work assignments to complete remotely.
- Staff who have been directed not to return to work will refrain from reporting to work and entering the building. Any staff member who does not follow this directive will be forced to hand over their building keys.
- Library Director will work with the Library Board of Trustees to determine appropriate measures related to emergency closings and employee pay as defined in the Personnel Policy, depending on the length of the closure.

3. Communication with the Public

- Continue to update library website and social media with the most recent information.
- Continue to share reputable local, state, and national sources for health information and library service updates.
- Continue promoting digital services

4. Communication with the Staff and Trustees

- Library Director will continue to monitor and coordinate responses among authorities, local schools, town officials, New Hampshire State Library (NHSL), New Hampshire Library Association (NHLA), and public health officials and direct appropriate staff to communicate as needed.
- Library Director will communicate with staff via email and telephone.
- Library Director will continue maintaining communication with Library Board of Trustees. If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, recovery may be slow and limited staff, reduction of services, and reduction of hours may be necessary for an extended period of time.

Should the situation call for a more extensive response than is outlined here, the Library Director and Library Board of Trustees may adjust the library's response to meet emergent needs.

Revision of Library Policies

The preceding statements of Madbury Public Library's policies shall be subject to review and needed revision at least every five years by the Library Board. Individual policies will be reviewed or added as needed.

Gifts and Donations

Gifts of money, real estate and/or stock will be accepted if conditions are acceptable to the Board of Trustees, subject to any applicable law. Personal property, antiques, art objects, portraits and other objects will be accepted only as outright gifts with no restrictions, with the prior approval of the Board of Trustees.

The library will accept gifts of materials with the understanding that they may or may not be added to the library collection. Gifted materials will be judged by the same criteria as material purchased by the library. Upon request a receipt will be given for donations, but no dollar value will be placed on the gift. Materials not added to the collection will be disposed of at the discretion of the Director.

Appendices

FORM: Madbury Public Library Statement of Concern about Library Resources

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Resource on which you are commenting:

- ☐ Book
- ☐ Audio Visual Resource
- ☐ Magazine
- ☐ Content of a Library Program
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Other

Title: _____

Author/Publisher or Producer/Date: _____

1. What brought this resource to your attention?
2. To what do you object? Please be as specific as possible.
3. Have you read or listened or viewed the entire content? If not, what parts?
4. What do you feel the effect of the material might be?
5. For what age group would you recommend this material?
6. In its place, what material of equal or better quality would you recommend?
7. What do you want the library to do with this material?
8. Additional comments:

FORM: Madbury Public Library Meeting Room Use Agreement

MADBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY MEETING ROOM USE AGREEMENT

Organization _____

This group is a: (check one)

Non-Profit Group (501 C-3) _____ Madbury or Other Government Entity _____

Non-business-related club or group: _____ Educational Entity _____ Non-Profit _____

Address: _____

Contact Person (must be 18 or over): _____

Phone #: _____ E-Mail: _____

Expected Number of Attendees: _____

Expected Age of Attendees: _____ Adults _____ Teens _____ Children

Number of Adult Chaperones, if teens or children: _____

Nature of Meeting: _____

Fees to Cover Costs: \$ _____ Attach an outline of fees, proof of supplies/instructor costs

Check One: One Time Meeting _____ Weekly Meeting: _____ Monthly Meeting: _____

Date(s) and Time(s) Requested: _____

_____ I agree to abide by all rules outlined in the Meeting Room Use Policy

_____ I will not hold the Library liable for any injuries, damages, or losses which may occur during our use of the Library facility.

_____ I understand that as the person signing this contract, I am taking financial responsibility for any damages occurred during meeting room use and that I am the primary contact for library closures.

_____ I understand that failure to follow the meeting room use policy may result in loss of privileges

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Staff Authorization: Application Date: _____ Approved: _____ Not Approved: _____

Reason: _____

Staff Signature: _____

FORM: VOLUNTEER SERVICE AGREEMENT



Volunteer Application

Name: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

I would like to volunteer for the following program(s), and perform the following tasks:

Please list past volunteer or employment experiences or certifications that you feel are important to these program(s):

Please name one reference _____ contact: _____

I am available to work at the following days and times:

Is there anything which would prevent you from participating in any aspect of the program you seek to serve? _____

Signature

Date

FORM: Madbury Public Library Displays and Exhibit Policy

I, the undersigned, hereby lend the following works of art or other material to the Madbury Public Library for exhibit. Purposes only. In consideration of the privilege of exhibiting them in the Library, I hereby release said Library from responsibility for loss, damage, or destruction while they are in the possession of the library.

Exhibition to be held in the _____

During _____

Description of material loaned _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

FORM: Library Bill of Rights (ALA)

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. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement 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 18, 1948.

Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

FORM: Freedom to Read Statement (ALA, AAP)

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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals: We, as citizens 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 citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

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 need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

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 or unpopular with 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 with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it 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 the citizen. 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. 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 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.
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 citizens 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.

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; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

A Joint Statement by American Library Association and Association of American Publishers

Subsequently Endorsed by:

- American Association of University Professors
- American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
- American Society of Journalists and Authors
- American Society of Newspaper Editors
- Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
- Association of American University Presses
- Center for Democracy & Technology

- The Children's Book Council
- The Electronic Frontier Foundation
- Feminists for Free Expression
- Freedom to Read Foundation
- International Reading Association
- The Media Institute
- National Coalition Against Censorship
- National PTA
- Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
- PEN American Center
- People for the American Way
- Student Press Law Center
- The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Sources

- Durham Public Library Durham, NH 03824
- Outagamie Waupaca Library System
225 North Oneida Street, Appleton,
Wisconsin 54911 Phone: 920.832.6190-
FAX: 920.832.6422
<http://www.owlslib.wi.us/>
- Russell Library (Internet policy statement on graphic
sexual displays) Beloit Public Library (Posting priorities)
<http://als.lib.wi.us/BPL.htm>
- Barrington Public Library Barrington, NH