



Washington Parish Library Challenged Material Policy

The Washington Parish Library does not endorse opinions contained in its materials. Patrons are free to enjoy, dislike, or ignore any item in the collection. However, no one is free to restrict the community's use of Library materials.

The selection of Library materials is predicated on the Library customers' right to read, and similarly, their freedom from censorship by others. Many titles are controversial, and any given item may offend some persons. Selections for the Washington Parish Library will not, however, be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the material in relation to building the collection and to serving the interests of the readers.

This Library holds censorship to be a purely individual matter that should be free of government interference and declares that--while all are free to reject for themselves books and other materials of which they do not approve--they cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

With respect to the use of the Library materials by children, the decision as to what minors may read, view, or listen to is the responsibility of their parents or guardians. The Library staff can not and will not serve in loco parentis. Parental opinions on what is acceptable reading for children vary widely. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may come into the possession of minors.

A request to remove Library materials creates complex legal and ethical questions for both the Library and the community. Consequently, this issue is taken very seriously by the Library.

Process

1. Patrons questioning material may speak to Library Staff about an item. The supervisor in charge will discuss the patron's concerns and give the patron a copy of this policy and the Washington Parish Library Collection Development Policy.
2. If the patron wishes to continue questioning the material, staff will provide a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form on which they may state

their opinion in writing.

- Forms may only be completed by residents of Washington Parish.
 - The material in question should have been read in its entirety by the resident making the complaint.
 - Only fully completed forms will be accepted and reviewed.
 - One form must be completed for each item questioned.
 - Staff is available to assist in preparation of the required forms.
3. Once completed, the form and the material in question will be sent to the Library Director.
 4. The Library Director will then appoint a committee to review the challenged material and form a recommendation. Until a decision is reached by the Library Director, the item in question will remain available.
 5. After complete examination of the material, which includes reading or viewing the content, the gathering of professional reviews, and any other necessary research, the committee will make a recommendation to the Library Director.
 6. The Library Director will provide the decision in writing to the person listed on this form.
 7. Patrons who do not agree with the Library Director's decision may appeal to the Library Board of Control during a regular meeting of the Library Board under the agenda item "Public Comment" or at another time designated by the Library Board for public expression.
 8. The Library Board, after receiving testimony from the public and from the Library Director, will decide the Library's actions, in accordance with Library policies.
 9. Possible actions that may be taken when warranted are:
 - a) No change in status of the item
 - b) Re-classification and placement in another area of the Library
 - c) Replacement with another item which better covers this subject and better meets the needs of the community.
 10. The decision on a Statement of Concern will remain in effect for five years. Within this five year period complainants submitting a new Statement of Concern on a decided item shall receive a copy of the Board's current decision.

11. All concerns about the results of a Request for Reconsideration should be directed to the Library Director and/or the Library Board of Control and not to Library Staff.