

Columbia Township Library

Library Materials Challenge Policy Adopted 12/18/2017

Columbia Township Library materials are selected through the process described in the Library's "Collection Development Policy." This policy states that since the collection reflects contemporary society, it may include material which is controversial or offensive to some. The Library acknowledges that occasionally patrons may have complaints or concerns about individual materials or categories of materials in the Library's collection. The Library will handle complaints, ensuring that the complainant is respectfully heard and that the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom, as expressed in the Library Bill of Rights and ALA Freedom to Read Statement, are upheld. Complaints shall be handled in the following manner:

1. Informal Complaints:

- a. Individuals or groups may initiate complaints about specific titles or types of material in the collection by talking to or writing to a member of the Library staff or the Director.
- b. Staff or the Director should then offer a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form (appended to this policy), and explain the formal complaint procedure.
- c. No further action is taken by the Library at this point.

2. Acknowledgement of Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form:

- a. Once a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials is received by the Director, it shall be acknowledged by letter. This letter will contain copies of this policy and the Collection Development Policy.
- b. If the complainant has checked out the item, no further action will be taken until said item is returned to the Library.

3. Evaluation of Library Materials:

- a. The Director and/or a designated staff member will read, listen to, or view the material in its entirety.
- b. The Director and/or designated staff member review the material in relationship to the Library's Collection Development Policy and determine one of several actions:
 - i. Retain the challenged material in the collection
 - ii. Retain the challenged material, but move it to another location
 - iii. Withdraw the challenged material.

4. Notification of Complainant:

- a. The Director shall write a letter to the complainant stating the decision of the Library, as well as the reasoning behind the decision.
- b. The letter will include the steps complainant may take if unsatisfied with the decision.

5. Notification of the Board of Trustees:

- a. The Library Board shall be notified by the Director of any formal complaints, usually through the Director's Monthly Report.

6. Reconsideration by the Library Board of Trustees:

- a. If the complainant is not satisfied with the written decision of the Director, he or she may bring the matter to the Board of Trustees.
- b. To initiate consideration by the Board of Trustees, the complainant must write to the Library Director or President of the Board of Trustees and request that the matter be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting. The letter must be received at least ten (10) days prior to the next regular meeting of the Board. If received after that time, the matter may be deferred until the succeeding regular meeting.
- c. The Director or Board President shall acknowledge receipt of the complainant's letter in writing, and shall include the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the matter will be considered.
- d. Once the Request for Reconsideration is on the agenda, the Board shall decide by a majority vote of the members present whether it wishes to further consider the Request for Reconsideration.
- e. If the Board votes to consider the matter further, an ad hoc review panel will be selected to evaluate the challenged material, a public hearing is set, and the matter is placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting.
- f. If the Board does not vote to consider the request further, the matter is closed.

7. Ad Hoc Review Panel:

- a. The ad hoc review panel is composed of at least three members of the Library's Board of Trustees. Members of the review panel:
 - i. Read, listen to, or view the material in its entirety.
 - ii. Review the material in relationship to the Library's Collection Development Policy and the rest of the collection; and
 - iii. Consider what literary critics and reviewers think of the material.
- b. After coming to individual conclusions, the committee meets to discuss the material and recommend one of several actions to the Board of Trustees, with reference to the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom:
 - i. Retain the challenged material in the collection
 - ii. Retain the challenged material, but move it to another location
 - iii. Withdraw the challenged material.
- c. At the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees at least ten (10) days after the Director's receipt of the decision of the ad hoc review panel, the Board shall consider the recommendation of the ad hoc review panel.
- d. The Board of Trustees may schedule a public hearing as part of a regular Board meeting or at a special meeting called to address the Request for Reconsideration. Said meeting shall be properly noticed, and the director shall issue a news release to inform citizens of the date, time and nature of the public hearing.
- e. The Board of Trustees shall vote on the disposition of the challenged material. A majority vote of the full Board is required to remove materials from the Library's collection, to move materials from one location to another, or to otherwise restrict access to materials.
- f. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final. Whatever the decision, the principles of the Library Bill of Rights will be reiterated, as well as how the decision is in accordance with those principles.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS
(This form must be entirely completed for consideration)

Material Information:

Author: _____ Title of Book: _____

Publisher: _____ Call # _____

Type of Material:

____ Book ____ DVD ____ Audiobook ____ Video Game ____ Other

Request initiated by:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

This complaint represents:

____ Individual ____ Organization (Name _____)

Please answer the following questions about the material:

Did you read/view/listen to the entirety of this item? If not, what parts?

What do you believe is the theme or intent of this item or site?

To what in this item or site do you object? (Please be specific –cite pages, scenes, etc.)

What harmful effect do you feel might be/was the result of reading/viewing/listening to this item?

Do you believe this item serves any of the following purposes? (circle)

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| A. Promotes understanding of other cultures or lifestyles? | Yes | No |
| B. Promotes discussion of societal issues? | Yes | No |

In its place, what other source would you recommend that would convey valuable information or perspective on this subject?

Signature of Complainant: _____ **Date:** _____