Effective Date: October 2007
Reviewed: July 2024

Reconsideration of Library Materials Policy

The Seymour Library Board of Trustees recognizes the right of residents to question materials in the library collection. The Trustees also endorse the First Amendment of the United States Constitution the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights, Ethics Statement for Public Library Trustees*, the American Library Association guidelines on *Freedom to Read,* and the *Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks*.

The *Library Bill of Rights* states in Article I that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," and in Article II, that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution of the United States, but constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line. The Constitution requires a procedure designed to focus searchingly on challenged expression before it can be suppressed.

It is inevitable that a public institution serving diverse people will be unable to please all of those people all of the time. Not all materials will be suitable for all members of the community. Selection of materials will not be made based on anticipated approval or disapproval but solely based on the principles stated in this policy. The Seymour Library also encourages parents or legal guardians to take an active role in helping their children make their reading, viewing, and listening choices; parents have the primary responsibility to guide and direct their own minor children. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because of frankness of expression.

Any attempt to regulate or suppress materials in the Library will be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged.

Reconsideration of Library Materials Procedure

- Patrons wishing to express their opinion on suitability of library material shall be referred to the appropriate age-level librarian.
- If the patron is not satisfied, the staff member will provide the patron with instructions on how to register a formal complaint and notify the Library Director.

- To register a formal complaint, the patron must complete (in its entirety) and submit a Library Materials Reconsideration form.
- Upon receipt of this form, the Library Director shall lead a committee of two other staff members to read/view the challenged material in its entirety. The Committee shall
    - consider the specific objections to the material voiced by the resident,
    - weigh the values and faults of the material as a whole,
    - refer to the library's Collection Development Policy and book reviews, if any,
    - where/when appropriate, solicit advice or opinion from other library directors/staff, the Monroe County Library System, the American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom and the New York State Intellectual Freedom Committee,
    - and issue a written decision within forty-five (45) days of receiving the form, indicating the committee's decision, which will indicate the action to be taken and reasons for or against the request.
- The Director will include the action taken in his/her monthly report to the Trustees.
- If the patron is not satisfied with the committee's decision, a written appeal may be made to the Trustees who shall create an Ad Hoc Appeal Committee to read/view the challenged material in its entirety. The Committee shall
    - consider the specific objections to the material voiced by the residents,
    - weigh the values and faults of the material as a whole,
    - refer to the library's Collection Development Policy and book reviews, if any,
    - where/when appropriate, solicit advice or opinion from library director, the library staff, other library directors, the Monroe County Library System, the American Library Association Office of Intellectual Freedom and the New York State Intellectual Freedom Committee,
    - and issue a written decision within ninety (90) days to the director indicating the committee's decision, which will indicate the action to be taken and reasons for or against the request.
    - The Trustees decision shall be final.
- An item will only be evaluated for reconsideration once in a two-year period.
- Until such review takes place and a decision is made, no removal or restriction of the questioned item shall take place.

Adopted: October 2007

Revised: April 2019

Reviewed: **July 2024**

Library Materials Reconsideration Form

Title: _____

Author: _____ Publisher: _____

Type of Material: _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Are you speaking for yourself or an organization (name)? _____

What concerns do you have about this work? _____

_____

_____

_____

Are there specific pages/sections to which you object? _____

_____

_____

_____

Did you read, see or listen to the entire work? **a)** Yes **b)** No

Have you seen/heard any promotions or read any reviews about this work? If so, please identify.

_____

Are there any additional comments you would like to make? _____

_____

Signature _____ Date _____

STAFF USE ONLY: This form was received by: _____ Date/Time:_____

Action taken: _____