Friends Seminary School Library Collection Development Policies

Mission Statement:
The Friends Seminary Library Program supports the mission of the school and contributes to the intellectual, imaginative, and spiritual growth of the students, faculty, and staff. The Library provides a welcoming environment where the Quaker values of peace, study, and service inform the pursuit of knowledge through reading and research.

A collection of more than 13,000 books, and a variety of databases and recommended web sites support reading for pleasure and information, classroom-related research projects, and the development of information fluency.

Librarians work closely with classroom teachers and technology integrators to help students acquire the information skills that will empower them to discover, understand, and enjoy using information in all its evolving dimensions.

I. Collection Development Statement of Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to guide librarians in developing and maintaining a well-balanced collection of materials for the Friends Seminary community and to inform the community of the principles upon which materials are selected, retained, or withdrawn.

II. Collection Development Objectives
- To provide a broad range of materials that will support the curriculum, taking into consideration the needs of individuals and the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students and faculty served.
- To provide learning resources appropriate for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected.
- To provide materials for students and faculty that encourage growth in knowledge, foster literary, cultural and aesthetic tastes, and develop ethical standards.
- To provide materials which reflect the ideas and beliefs of religious, social, political, historical, and ethnic groups and their contributions to world heritage and culture.
- To provide materials of interest and relevance to Quakerism.

III. Responsibility for Collection Development:
Ultimate responsibility for the selection of materials lies with Director of Library Services. All requests for materials are reviewed for adherence to the material selection guidelines librarians use to make selections. Faculty members are encouraged to continually monitor their professional literature for appropriate library acquisitions. Requests for new Upper and Middle School materials should submitted to Department
Chairs rather than to the Librarian so that requests can be prioritized and coordinated with overall Department curricular goals; similarly, Lower School requests should be discussed at Grade Level meetings.

Student, faculty and staff recommendations are always welcomed and encouraged, and will be reviewed by the same guidelines used to make all material selections.

**IV. Material Selection Guidelines:**
Collection development decisions are made on the basis of librarians’ judgment and expertise, and by evaluating reviews in library reviewing journals and other library selection tools. Materials are selected first for their importance to the curriculum and second for recreational value. The library strives to provide resources to facilitate and enrich classroom instruction for each department of the school. When appropriate, the librarians will consult with faculty in specific subject areas when considering purchasing, retaining, or withdrawing materials.

Criteria for selecting library materials include:

- Relevance to the curriculum and specific research projects
- Appropriateness for physical constraints of the building and Library space
- High standards of quality in content and form
- Authoritativeness of publisher or author

- Importance to core collection
- Current usefulness or interest
- Literary merit or artistic quality
- Price, format and availability
- Anticipated life of medium
- Suitability of format for subject and user's needs

**V. Library Selection Tools:**
Librarians consult standard professional reviews, reviews and recommendations of colleagues and other professionals when considering purchases.

**VI. Controversial Materials: Intellectual Freedom.**
The Library supports the following documents (see appendices for full text):

- The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- The Library Bill of Rights - by the American Library Association (ALA)
- Intellectual Freedom/Freedom to Read Statement - ALA
- Statement of Labeling - ALA
- Evaluating Library Collections - ALA
VII. Reconsideration of Library Materials.
Objections to certain Library materials may occasionally occur, despite the care taken to select valuable materials for student and teacher use and the qualifications of persons who select the materials. The librarians will make every effort to address concerns through informal discussions, including the following steps:

1) Explanation of the school’s selection procedure, criteria, and the qualifications of those persons selecting the resource.

2) Explanation of the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the educational program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use.

3) Referral of the party to the appropriate person (if not the librarian) who can explain how the resource is used in the educational program.

If a mutually satisfactory resolution is not reached, a formal complaint may be made, using the following procedures:

1) The individual will be asked to read or view the work in its entirety, and to then fill out the appended form to request reconsideration of the material.

2) The request for reconsideration of materials will be referred to the Faculty Library Committee.

3) The Faculty Library Committee will prepare a brief written report to be retained by the division principal and Director of Library Services.

4) During the reconsideration process, access to the challenged material will not be restricted.

VIII. Maintaining the Collection.
In order to maintain a collection which is current, reliable, in good condition, and which reflects selection priorities and responds to the constraints of the space, materials are withdrawn on a systematic and continuing basis. No materials in the Library collection are exempt from consideration for weeding, including gifts and donations. Librarians continually evaluate existing resources to enforce quality control of the collection’s usefulness. Criteria for withdrawing library material include:

- Outdated/obsolete/inaccurate information
- Poor condition
- Unused/seldom used
- No longer within collection priorities

Withdrawn materials may be offered to local educational institutions, charitable organizations, sold at book fairs, or discarded altogether. The disposition of weeded
materials will be determined on the basis of expediency. Library staff involved in the weeding process will not be offered weeded materials.

IX. Gifts:
Gift materials that enhance the collection according to the guidelines of "Criteria for Selection" may be added to the collection. Not all gifts will be recommended for retention. If a gift is accepted, the Library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing, access, and withdrawal of the material.

X. Revision of Policy:
This policy will be reviewed as needed.

Resources used in preparing these policies:

APPENDIX
A: U.S. Constitution - First Amendment
“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

B. Library Bill of Rights
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.
IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment 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.

Adopted by Faculty Library Committee on June 5, 2007
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.


C. Intellectual Freedom:

“Intellectual Freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored. Intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas.” —ALA

The Freedom to Read Statement

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 counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals 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 individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. 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 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 or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

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, unpopular, or considered dangerous by 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 the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression 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 others. 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; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

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 a 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. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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
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 Americans 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.


A Joint Statement by:
American Library Association, Association of American Publishers

D. Statement on Labeling:

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Labeling is the practice of describing or designating materials by affixing a prejudicial label and/or segregating them by a prejudicial system. The American Library Association opposes these means of predisposing people’s attitudes toward library materials for the following reasons:

1. Labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes and as such, it is a censor’s tool.
2. Some find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging publications as objectionable. However, injustice and ignorance rather than justice and enlightenment result from such practices, and the American Library Association opposes the establishment of such criteria.
3. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library.

A variety of private organizations promulgate rating systems and/or review materials as a means of advising either their members or the general public concerning their opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, or other materials. For the library to adopt or enforce any of these private systems, to attach such ratings to library materials, to include them in bibliographic records, library
catalogs, or other finding aids, or otherwise to endorse them would violate the Library Bill of Rights.

While some attempts have been made to adopt these systems into law, the constitutionality of such measures is extremely questionable. If such legislation is passed which applies within a library’s jurisdiction, the library should seek competent legal advice concerning its applicability to library operations.

Publishers, industry groups, and distributors sometimes add ratings to material or include them as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse such practices. However, removing or obliterating such ratings—if placed there by or with permission of the copyright holder—could constitute expurgation, which is also unacceptable.

The American Library Association opposes efforts which aim at closing any path to knowledge. This statement, however, does not exclude the adoption of organizational schemes designed as directional aids or to facilitate access to materials.


E. Evaluating Library Collections:

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The continuous review of library materials is necessary as a means of maintaining an active library collection of current interest to users. In the process, materials may be added and physically deteriorated or obsolete materials may be replaced or removed in accordance with the collection maintenance policy of a given library and the needs of the community it serves. Continued evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of all libraries and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or disapproved of by segments of the community. Such abuse of the evaluation function violates the principles of intellectual freedom and is in opposition to the Preamble and Articles I and II of the Library Bill of Rights, which state:

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.

The American Library Association opposes such “silent censorship” and strongly urges that libraries adopt guidelines setting forth the positive purposes and principles of evaluation of materials in library collections.

Reconsideration of Library Materials Form

Initiated by: ________________________________________________________________

Telephone: _______________ Email: __________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________

Representing

Self: ____________ Organization or Group: ________________________________

(Name)

Division (circle one)    Lower School   Middle School   Upper School

Material Questioned

Book:
Author _______________ Copyright Date: _______________
Title _______________________________________________________________

Non-print Material:
Type of media ___________________________________________________________
Title __________________________________________________________________

Please respond to the following questions. If sufficient space is not provided, please use additional sheets of paper.

1) Have you seen or read this material in its entirety?
2) To what do you object? Please cite specific passages, pages, etc.
3) What do you believe is the main idea of this material?
4) What do you feel might result from use of this material?
5) What reviews of this material have you read?
6) For what other age group might this material be suitable?
7) What action do you recommend that the school take on this material?
8) In its place, what material do you recommend that would provide adequate information on the subject?

Date ___________________ Signature___________________________________