

Code: MR

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Policy: Reconsideration of Library Materials

A. Policy

This policy applies to materials owned by the Fayetteville Public Library.

Fayetteville Public Library recognizes the principles of free library services and free inquiry as fundamental concepts of the democratic heritage of the United States of America. The latter principle requires the library to offer different, and sometimes widely divergent, points of view in many areas of knowledge. The library does not approve or endorse any particular viewpoint or belief represented in its collection.

The library considers reading, listening, and viewing to be individual, private matters. The library believes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for citizens to exercise their constitutional rights. While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves or their own minor child(ren), the freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening, and viewing choices of their own minor child(ren). The library does not stand in place of parents (in loco parentis).

The library considers all materials in its collections to be constitutionally protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Arkansas State Constitution. The library's role is to provide materials that will allow individuals to freely examine issues and make their own decisions. In this connection, the library endorses and incorporates by reference herein the "Library Bill of Rights" and the "Freedom to Read" and "Freedom to View" statements adopted by the American Library Association. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting them from theft or damage.

Individuals may raise concerns about library material that does not support their tastes and views. Staff is available to discuss concerns and identify alternate material that may be available. Customer concerns will be dealt with promptly and courteously.

B. Procedure

1. A staff member will listen to the customer's concerns. This discussion may be referred to a manager, an administrator or the assigned in-charge person at either the staff member's or the customer's request.
2. If this discussion proves unsatisfactory to the customer, the customer may make a formal, written request using the "Patron Request for Reconsideration of a Work" form (the "Form"). This form will be provided by a manager, administrator or the assigned in-charge person.
3. For the request to be considered, the Form must be completed in full including signature and submitted to the Director of Library Services. Only specific works or titles will be considered for reconsideration; requests for reconsideration of general topics or subject areas will not be considered.



4. The customer submitting the Form must be a resident of Fayetteville and hold a valid Fayetteville Public Library borrower's card.
5. The material under consideration will remain in the library's collection pending the outcome of the customer's request. In the event that the material under consideration is lost during the evaluation process, replacement materials will be purchased until a final determination has been made.
6. Upon receipt of a completed Form, the Director of Library Services will establish if the request Form is proper, applies to the material in question and is complete. If so, the Form will be forwarded to the Executive Director who will appoint an ad hoc committee from the professional staff including, but not limited to, the selector for the subject area of the item in question and the appropriate department manager.
7. Based on all applicable library policies and procedures, the committee will evaluate the material and make a written recommendation to the Executive Director, who will then make a decision regarding the disposition of the material.
8. The Executive Director's decision will be communicated in writing at the earliest possible date to the customer who initiated the request for reconsideration. The response will indicate the action to be taken and reasons for or against the request.
9. Requests for reclassification of library material will be considered by the Executive Director in consultation with library staff. The Executive Director will decide what action, if any, is to be taken and will notify the customer in writing of this decision at the earliest possible date.
10. An item will only be evaluated for reconsideration and/or reclassification once in a twelve-month period.
11. The Executive Director will inform the Library Board of all requests for reconsideration of library materials and their disposition.
12. If not satisfied with the Executive Director's decision, the customer may file an appeal with the Library Board within three weeks (21 days) of issuance of the written decision. The appeal should be presented in writing to the President of the Board.
13. In the event of an appeal, the Library Board will be given a copy of the customer's completed Form, the committee's recommendation and the Executive Director's response to the customer. The Library Board will hear an appeal during their normal meeting. The Board reserves the right to limit the length of presentation and number of speakers at the hearing.
14. The Board will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with and the decision conforms to all applicable policies and procedures of the Fayetteville Public Library. On the basis of this determination, the Board may vote to uphold or override the decision of the Executive Director.
15. The decision of the Library Board is final.

