

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

The public library is the institution in our society that attempts to provide a diversity of viewpoints on a wide range of topics of interest, including political, social, and religious ones—no matter how controversial or objectionable those ideas may be to some people. The future of libraries will depend upon their ability to provide information to the public as a whole. Free speech and the open exchange of information cannot depend solely on the traditional producers of mass communications. Because of this, the Madison County Library System chooses materials representing different points of view, limited only by our selection criteria, budget, and the space in our facilities.

The primary objectives of the Madison County Library System are to collect, organize, produce, and make easily available materials of contemporary significance and of long-term value. The Libraries will always be guided by a sense of responsibility to both present and future in adding materials that will enrich their collections. At the same time, the Libraries recognize an immediate duty to make available materials for enlightenment and recreation, even though such materials may not have enduring interest or value.

All staff members are expected to keep these objectives in mind when selecting materials.

Final staff responsibility lies with the Director. The Director delegates to staff members the authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day decisions. Problems that cannot be resolved by the Director will be referred to the Board of Trustees of the Madison County Library System.

The Libraries seek to select materials of varying complexity and format.

Each book or type of material is judged on the basis of its overall content or style, not by isolated or random portions. In considering materials to place in the libraries, MCLS will not automatically include or exclude an item based on any of the following:

- Race, religion, nationality or political views of the author
- Frankness or coarseness of language
- Controversial nature of an item
- Endorsement or disapproval of an item by any individual or organization in the community

MCLS supports the Library Bill of Rights and the Intellectual Freedom Statement (see appendices) in providing free access to materials. Children are not restricted to particular areas of the Libraries. Staff does not monitor the materials that children choose. The responsibility for the reading or viewing choices of children rests entirely with parents or legal guardians.

Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and materials are sequestered only for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

MCLS will reconsider any material in its collections upon written request of a patron by using Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form (See appendix).