



RAWSON MEMORIAL DISTRICT LIBRARY

Policy Manual

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I. MISSION AND GOAL STATEMENTS

The mission of Rawson Memorial Library is to provide quality materials and services, which fulfill the entire community's educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs in an atmosphere that is welcoming, respectful, and businesslike.

The general library goals of Rawson Memorial Library shall be:

1. To serve residents of the community and the surrounding region.
2. To acquire and make available such books, periodicals, audio-visual materials, and other services as will address their needs to:
 - a. Become well informed
 - b. Locate answers to important questions
 - c. Cultivate the imagination and creative expression
 - d. Develop skills for career and vocational advancement
 - e. Enjoy leisure by means of reading and other media services
 - f. Access computers for Internet and other applications
3. To acquire the means to provide the most frequently requested material locally and upon demand.
4. To work closely with community agencies and organizations to provide social, cultural, and recreational services.
5. To strive consistently to discover new methods and improvements for better service for the library's customers.
6. To review regularly these goals of Rawson Memorial Library and, if necessary, revise them in light of new developments.

II. SERVICES OF RAWSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The library provides materials and resources for information, entertainment, intellectual development, and enrichment of the people of the community. The library should endeavor to:

1. Select, organize, and make available necessary books, periodicals, and audio-visual materials.
2. Provide guidance and assistance to patrons.
3. Provide computers, software applications, and Internet access for patrons.
4. Sponsor and implement programs, exhibits, displays, book lists, etc., which appeal to children and adults.
5. Cooperate with other community agencies and organizations.
6. Secure information beyond its own resources when requested by using interlibrary loan and other resource-sharing methods provided through the system and state.
7. Lend to other libraries upon request.
8. Develop and provide services to patrons with special needs.
9. Maintain a balance in its services to various age groups.
10. Cooperate with, but not perform the functions of, school or other institutional libraries.
11. Provide service during hours that best meet the needs of the community including evenings and weekends.
12. Regularly review library services being offered.
13. Use media and other public relations mechanisms to promote the full range of available library services.

III. WHO MAY USE RAWSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Rawson Memorial Library is a District Library made up of Elkland, Elmwood, and Novesta Townships and the Village of Cass City. The Library Board contracts to serve residents of several surrounding townships. In addition, cards are issued, without charge, to anyone requesting one as long as they reside in an area that has a legal contract with some library for service. Residents of any area that do not have a legal contract with some library for service will be allowed to use library material in the library, but will not be allowed to check out material. The Board of Trustees of Rawson Memorial Library concurs with the American Library Association in its statement that:

“The community library renders a public service that affects public policy; therefore, it must be supported basically with public monies. The cost of public library service should be borne by the appropriate governmental units. The practice of providing service through nonresident fees delays the assumption of responsibility of governmental units and should be eliminated.”

Residents of areas that have no legal contract for library service will not be given service for a fee.

Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status; or because of mental, emotional, or physical condition; age; or sexual orientation.

The use of the library may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return library materials or to pay penalties, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other illegal, disruptive, or objectionable conduct on library premises.

IV. PATRON RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT

It is a patron's responsibility to maintain necessary and proper standards of behavior in order to protect his/her individual rights and the rights and privileges of other patrons. If a patron creates a public nuisance, that patron may be restricted from the library and from the use of the library facilities. Those who are unwilling to leave or do not leave within a reasonable amount of time, after being instructed to do so by the staff, will be subject to the law.

A. Young Children

Rawson Memorial Library encourages visits by young children and it is our desire to make this important visit both memorable and enjoyable for the child. However, library staff is not expected to assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised children in the library. Young children should be accompanied by a parent or designated responsible person while in the library.

B. Disruptive Children

Children of all ages are encouraged to use the library for homework, recreational reading, and program attendance. The library staff realizes that the library will be noisier at busy times and that children by nature can cause more commotion. However, children (whether with parents or not) who are being continually disruptive will be given a warning that he/she must settle down or will be asked to leave the library. If after a second warning the child continues to be disruptive, he/she will be asked to leave the library. If the child needs to contact a parent, they may do so and then wait with a staff person until the parent arrives.

C. Smoking

Smoking of all kinds is prohibited within the library building.

D. Cell Phone Use

Signage upon entering the library and within the library proper alert patrons to turn their cell phone off or place the phone on silent/vibrate while using the facilities. Patrons will be asked to use their cell phone in the lobby if it rings while using library services; however, staff realizes the need to use a cell phone in conjunction with a computer in certain situations.

V. CIRCULATION POLICY

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Rawson Memorial Library Circulation Policy is to:

1. Make material widely available
2. Provide maximum use of the material collection
3. Facilitate requests for material
4. Provide uniform policy for the retrieval of overdue material

B. Eligibility Requirements

See Section III “Who May Use the Library” page 4.

C. Library Cards

Library cards will be issued to anyone who qualifies under the eligibility requirement. Patrons will fill out an application with a complete address and a reference. A telephone number and a reference with a telephone number are required. Lacking that information, a library card will be issued at the discretion of the Library Director. All new patrons will be limited to four items for 2 months. After 2 months, if the patron has established a good borrowing pattern as decided by the Library Director, there will be no limit to the number of materials checked out.

Children under 18 years old may get a library card, but the signature of the parent must be on the application.

Persons are responsible for all material borrowed on their card and agree to abide by library lending rules and all policies and regulations. If a card is lost there is a \$5.00 charge for a replacement. Lost cards should be reported immediately.

Library records will not be given out (see Privacy portion). The list will not be given to any other persons or organizations.

D. Loan Periods

1. These items check out for two weeks: audiobooks, books, Chromebooks, doll sets, hotspots, cake pans, and other “Library of Things” items.
2. Items that check out for one week are DVDs and magazines.
3. Special arrangements will be made depending on circumstances.
4. Interloan material are due on the date indicated by the lending library.

The loan of high demand material, such as new best sellers or material that school classes are using may be limited at the discretion of the Library Director.

Material may be renewed twice if there is no reserve list for the material. Further renewals will be at the discretion of the Library Director. Material with reserves will not be renewed. Material may be reserved but it must be picked up as soon as available. No material will be “booked” for a particular date.

Material may be renewed over the phone or online via the library website at www.rawsonlibrary.org.

For Reference materials that do not circulate, up to 10 pages will be copied for patrons without charge.

Material checked out to other libraries on interlibrary loan is loaned for 1 month. Rawson Memorial Library will make every effort to cooperate with other libraries through interlibrary loan; however, the needs of the local patrons will come first. Material in high demand or that has a waiting list will not be interloaned.

E. Overdue Material

Public library services are based on the principle that library patrons assume certain responsibilities to cooperate in providing a community resource. One of these responsibilities is to return borrowed material promptly so that the material will be available to others.

To encourage the prompt return of material, the library has established an “extended user fee” or “fine” to those patrons who fail to return material by the due date. When material is not returned promptly, this penalizes other patrons who may wish to use the material, and causes the library to incur additional expenses. In no case will the fine charged exceed the value of the item. See APPENDIX D for detailed listing.

F. Lost Material

Material that is lost, except magazines, will be billed at the price to replace it. Replacement charges will be taken from various sources including Baker & Taylor and Amazon. A receipt will be given for the amount paid. No refund will be made for material that has been lost and later found.

Due to the difficulty involved to replace magazines, a minimum charge of \$5.00 each will be assessed for magazines. If patrons can find a replacement issue in good condition on their own, that will be accepted.

No refund will be made for interlibrary loan material that has been lost and later found, unless there is a special circumstance in which the lending library would want it returned because of it being a rare or irreplaceable item.

G. Damaged Material

Minor damage that does not make the book unusable will not be charged. If the book is unusable, the price of replacing the book will be charged.

H. Claims Returned Material

When a patron claims a book has been returned a search will be made of the library shelves to determine if the material is back. If the material cannot be located, the patron will be asked to keep looking and assured that the library will also continue to search. It will be left to the discretion of the Library Director, but most times patrons will be given the benefit of the doubt for the first time. A message will be placed on the patron’s record, and material claimed returned in the future will be billed as lost material.

I. Overdue Notices

The following procedure will be used to retrieve overdue material:

1. A printout and search is done every two weeks for all material 14 days or more overdue, including material listed as lost.
2. A first notice is sent for materials two weeks overdue (14-28 days).
3. A second reminder is sent for material four weeks overdue (29-43 days).
4. A third reminder is sent for materials six weeks overdue (44-58 days) and a courtesy phone call to the patron is also placed.
5. A final courtesy call and an invoice is sent for material eight weeks or more overdue (59-73 days).
6. If the patron does not return items by the time the material is ten weeks overdue, the materials are marked as LOST and the patron account is blocked. The cost of the materials is added to the account. The patron must clear these charges to use any of the library services in the future.

J. Revocation or Limiting of Borrowing Privileges

Patrons will not be able to check out library material or access the Internet if they have

1. Received a notice/bill for the materials that have not been returned.
2. Owe \$5.00 or more in outstanding fines for material that has been returned.
3. Owe for lost or damaged material.

Exceptions to suspending privileges due to reasons #2 or #3 can be made when the patron shows good faith by making payment on an existing fine or bill.

K. Privacy

All records, formal and informal, in Rawson Memorial Library relating to patron registration and the subsequent circulation by patrons of material provided by the library are considered to be confidential in nature. In order to prevent an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy, the contents of registration and circulation records shall not be made available to anyone, except under the written order of the Library Director, such order having been issued pursuant to a proper legal process, order, or subpoena under the law. Upon receipt of any process, order, or subpoena, the person named and/or served shall immediately report to and consult with the Library Director and legal counsel to determine if such process, order, or subpoena is proper and in full compliance with proper legal authority. In the event the legal process fails to sufficiently identify or name in specific terms or specifications the records on file in respect to an identified patron, the request is considered to be defective and not binding upon the library and its personnel, except under further due process of law.

Some guidelines for everyday problems are:

- Address, phone numbers or any other personal information from a patron's record will not be given out.
- If a library card is found, it should be returned to the library and the staff will contact the owner.

- If a library card with other personal belongings is found, take the phone number of the person who found them. The patron will be contacted by the library staff and given the number of the person.
- If a card is found at the scene of a crime, the request for information should be referred to the Library Director.

L. U.S. Patriot Act -Section 215 Order

Library staff who are served with a Federal search warrant or court order as part of FBI investigation MAY NOT disclose to anyone its existence or that federal officers have obtained what it sought, except to those necessary to obtain the items sought in the warrant. The library attorney may be present during actual search and execution of the order.

M. MeLCat Reciprocal Borrowing

Rawson Memorial Library allows and encourages visiting patron reciprocal borrowing. If a patron from another reciprocal borrowing library is in good standing at their home library, they will be able to access and check out materials at Rawson Memorial Library. If a patron is blocked at their home library, they will be prohibited from borrowing materials or getting a library card at Rawson Memorial Library. The patron will have to discuss the blocked status with their home library as this information, by law, is not accessible by Rawson staff.

VI. MATERIALS SELECTION / COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

A. Objectives

The purpose of Rawson Memorial Library is to provide all individuals in the community with carefully selected books and other materials to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time.

Due to the volume of publishing, as well as the limitations of budget and space, the library must have a selection policy with which to meet community interests and needs.

The Materials Selection / Collection Development Policy is used by the library staff in the selection of materials and also serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection.

The Library Bill of Rights [Appendix F] and The Freedom to Read Statement [Appendix G] have been endorsed by the Rawson Memorial Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of the policy.

The Materials Selection / Collection Development Policy, like all other policies, will be reviewed and/or revised as the need arises.

B. Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the Rawson Memorial Library Board of Trustees. This responsibility may be shared with other members of the library staff. However, because the Library Director must be available to answer to the Library Board and the general public for actual selections made, the Library Director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the library staff.

C. Criteria for Selection

1. The main points considered in the selection of materials are:
 - a. Individual merit of each item
 - b. Popular appeal/demand
 - c. Suitability of material for the clientele
 - d. Existing library holdings
 - e. Budget
2. Reviews are a major source of information about new materials. The primary sources of reviews are Library Journal, Kirkus, NY Times Book Review and VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates).
3. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title that is in demand. Consideration is, therefore, given to requests from library patrons and books discussed on public media. Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.

D. Interlibrary Loan

Due to limited budget and space, the library cannot provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of this library's collection.

In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy the needs of our patrons, Rawson Memorial Library agrees to lend its materials to other libraries through the same interlibrary loan network and to make an effort to have its current holdings listed in a tool that is accessible by other libraries throughout the state namely the Michigan eLibrary (MeLCat).

E. Gifts and Donations

The library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. If they are not needed because of duplication, condition, or dated information, the Library Director can dispose of them as he/she sees fit. The same criteria of selection, which are applied to purchased materials, are applied to gifts.

Memorial gifts of books or money are accepted with suitable bookplates placed in the book. Specific memorial books can be ordered for the library on request of a patron if the request meets the criteria established by the Library Board. It is desirable for gifts of or for specific titles to be offered after consultation with the Library Director. The Library Director will make the book selection if no specific book is requested. Rawson Memorial Library encourages and appreciates gifts and donations. The library will make proper acknowledgement of gifts and/or donations.

By law, the library is not allowed to appraise the value of donated materials, though it can provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the items if requested by the donor.

F. Weeding

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the Library Director and is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials.

G. Potential Problems or Challenges

Rawson Memorial Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy.

Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

H. Challenged Materials

Although materials are carefully selected, there can arise differences of opinion regarding suitable materials. Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from or restricted within the collection may complete a "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" form [Appendix C], which is available in the library. The Library Director will respond accordingly. If the patron desires further action, the inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Rawson Memorial Library Board of Trustees.

VII. REFERENCE SERVICE POLICY

Rawson Memorial Library:

- Will provide information in the form of short answers to specific questions and guidance in locating material for patrons who appear in person, call on the telephone, or request information through correspondence;
- Will assist patrons in the use of the library and teach basic research methodology, when appropriate which includes providing help in developing a research strategy and advice on whether a trip to the library would be worthwhile for individuals who telephone;
- Will provide bibliographic verification of items both in the library and not owned by the library and will assist patrons in obtaining materials through interlibrary loan, when appropriate;
- May refer library users to other agencies and libraries in pursuit of needed information;
- May use not only the library's resources in printed form, but consult appropriate digital resources and other agencies by telephone in pursuit of "ready reference" information.

VIII. PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTER INTERNET USE POLICY & WIRELESS INTERNET USE POLICY

COMPUTER INTERNET USE POLICY

A. Purpose of Internet Access

Rawson Memorial Library provides access to a broad range of information and educational resources including those available through the Internet.

B. Disclaimer

Not all sources on the Internet provide information that is accurate, complete, current or legal and the library is unable to monitor or control this content including controversial, sexually explicit or offensive information.

Parents and Guardians of children under the age of 18 are responsible for their children's use of the Internet.

Library patrons use the Internet at their own risk.

C. Staff Assistance

The library staff provides limited assistance for basic start-up and reserves the right to ask an individual to discontinue any activity or display of images that cause a disruption or that do not meet the informational and educational purpose of the Internet station.

D. User Responsibilities

1. Users may check out a public computer for a total of 60 minutes a day by signing up at the computer at the circulation desk and showing their library card with Internet access to the librarian. If research, school work, exams or special circumstances arise, additional time may be granted.
2. No more than one (1) user may be working at a single machine unless authorized by the librarian at the circulation desk.
3. Printing costs \$.15 per page for black and white, and \$.60 for color for 8-1/2" X 11". Users will be responsible for paying for ALL COPIES made. View "Print Preview" before printing to determine if the total pages to print are accurate.
4. The public access computers may only be used for legal and ethical purposes. Users will refrain from sending, receiving, or displaying text or graphics that may be reasonably construed as pornographic or otherwise inappropriate. Viewing of certain materials in the public library may be considered improper in time, place or manner and unacceptable. Unacceptable practices include, but aren't limited to: inappropriate use of email; harassment of others; slandering other users; destruction of or damage to equipment, software or data belonging to the library; disruption of communications; unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material; and display of pornography and obscene materials.
5. Bypassing or attempting to bypass security filters, may result in suspension or revocation of computer access.

6. Patrons are asked to close all open programs before leaving the computer by logging off in the lower right-hand corner below the timer. Notify the librarian at the desk if leaving the computer session early.
7. The library director, trustees and staff shall not be liable for any damages, direct or consequential, including lost profits, for any information obtained or provided on the Internet.
8. Patrons under the age of 18 wishing to access library computers must have a signed Internet Consent Form on file. The parent or guardian is required to sign this form in person at the library. Internet access will be denied to all children under 18 who do not have an Internet Consent Form on file or who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian. Parents or guardians are responsible for the materials selected by their children NOT library staff.

E. Copyright

U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principles of "fair use." Users may not copy or distribute electronic materials (including email, text, images, programs or data) without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Responsibility for any consequences of copyright infringement lies with the user; the library expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from such use.

WIRELESS INTERNET USE POLICY

Much of the information dealing with the Public Access Computer's Use Policy and Guidelines is the same for wireless (Wi-Fi) access, however these additional use policies and guidelines deal directly with the Wi-Fi access at Rawson Memorial Library.

- A. Patrons need a laptop computer or other wireless device with 802.11b or 802.11g wireless networking. If not sure if the laptop computer or other device has this ability, patrons should check with the manufacturer or supplier of the equipment.
- B. We have tried to make wireless access as available as possible in our library, but there may be some "dead" spots where wireless reception may be limited. If patrons have trouble accessing the Internet or staying online, they should try a different location within the library.
- C. The library's wireless network is not secure. Information sent to and from laptop computers or other wireless devices may be captured by anyone else with a wireless service and appropriate software.
- D. Library staff is not able to provide technical assistance and no guarantee can be made that a wireless connection will be made.
- E. The library assumes no responsibility for the safety of equipment or for laptop computer or other wireless device configurations, security, or data files resulting from connection to the library's wireless access.

IX. EQUIPMENT USE POLICY

Computers are available to patrons on a first-come, first-served basis. If research, school work, exams or special circumstances arise, additional time may be granted. There is no charge for use of the computers; however, in order to make the service available to as many patrons as possible, a time limit for usage has been imposed. That time limit is 60 minutes and if no one is waiting additional time will be granted.

Some machines may be reserved for reference and the on-line catalog. Surfing the Internet will not be permitted on those machines.

Library staff is available for general assistance in using the computer; however, staff is not expected to train patrons in the use of application programs. Tutorial manuals will be provided when available.

A printer is available. Printer paper will cost \$.15 per sheet and must be paid for at the conclusion of the session. If a patron wishes to use his /her own paper, a \$.15 fee will still be charged to cover the cost of printing.

A photocopy machine is available to patrons who wish to copy materials. Rates are listed in Appendix D and next to the copier.

Copy machine users are advised that there are restrictions on copyrighted materials. Any violation of copyright is the responsibility of the copy machine user.

Only library equipment with a valid bar code such as Chromebooks, hotspots, and the Owl will be available to circulate. Any questions should be directed to the Library Director.

X. MOBILE HOTSPOT LENDING POLICY

Guidelines for Borrowing and Use

- Borrowers must be 18 years of age or older.
- Borrowers must have a valid Rawson Memorial Library card in good standing (no outstanding fines or lost items).
- Borrowers must present their library card and government issued photo id to the circulation desk at the time of check out.

Time Limits and Availability

- Hotspots may be checked out for 14 days. There are NO renewals.
- Patrons may only check out one hotspot per valid library card.
- Only one mobile hotspot may be checked out per household at a time.
- Households must wait 24 hours after returning a hotspot before another device can be checked out to any household member.
- The hotspot may not be used internationally.

Fines and Liability

- Overdue fines are \$2.00/day.
- Overdue hotspots will be deactivated within 24 hours of the due date.
- Devices must be returned directly to the circulation desk at least one (1) hour before the library closes. Patrons will be charge \$10 for hotspots returned in the drop box.
- Patrons are responsible for full replacement cost if the device or any parts are lost, stolen, damaged, or otherwise not returned.
- The library is not responsible for any liability, damages or expense resulting from use or misuse of the device, connection of the device to other electronic devices, or data loss resulting from use of the device.

Proper Care and Use

- Hotspots should be kept in a temperature controlled environment. DO NOT leave in a car.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for all content accessed using the mobile hotspot.

XI. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A. Purpose

Social media provides a valuable and timely way for Rawson Memorial Library to disseminate information about and promote library news, events, projects and services. It also serves to inspire conversation and expand the library's connection with the community. This policy sets guidelines for staff and patrons using Rawson Memorial Library's social media sites.

B. Statement of Policy

Social media is defined as any web application, site or account created and maintained by Rawson Memorial Library which facilitates an interactive online environment between library staff and library users. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, library-created blogs, and any other online community the library may be a part of in the future. The goal of these tools is for the library to engage more closely with its patrons, open dialogue between library staff and patrons, exchange information and share ideas about library programs, events, resources and materials.

C. Public Responsibility

Rawson Memorial Library welcomes the comments, posts, and messages of the community and recognizes and respects differences in opinion. Public comments, reviews, posts, photographs and messages are encouraged as long as they pertain to the library, its programs, resources and mission. However, all comments, posts, and messages will be periodically reviewed and Rawson Library reserves the right to, but is not required to, remove any comment, post, or message that it deems inappropriate or off topic. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Obscene content or hate speech
- Personal attacks, insults, profanity and threatening language
- Posts that violate library policy
- Posts which discriminates on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, age, sexual orientation, creed or ancestry
- Pornography
- Copyrighted or plagiarized material
- Unrelated comments
- Private, personal information, including phone numbers and addresses, or request for personal information
- Potentially libelous statements
- Solicitation of funds
- Posts related to organized political activity
- Spam and commercial posts

The library reserves the right to ban or block users who have posted in violation of this policy.

In addition, users are expected to abide by the terms and conditions set by third party social media platforms as well as follow appropriate Federal and State Law. By choosing to comment users are agreeing to these rules.

D. Appeal Process

Participants of Rawson Memorial Library social media who have had their content deleted or been prohibited from participating on Rawson Library's social media pages may submit a formal petition to the Library Director. Upon receipt, the Director will review the appeal and provide a response via email or traditional mail within 5 business days. If the Director is unavailable to review within 5 business days, the appeal will be made to the Assistant Library Director using the same procedure. If the appeal is upheld, the participant will have to repost the deleted content.

E. Staff Responsibility

Rawson Memorial Library staff must be aware that information they display or comments they make on library social media sites may be viewed by other users as representing official library sponsored information or comments. Therefore, in utilizing Rawson Library social media, staff must follow the guidelines set forth below.

1. Posts should inform library users about services, resources, programs, events, promote library use, and encourage dialogue between users and library staff.
2. Posts should be positive in tone and should reflect the values and viewpoint of the library rather than personal opinions.
3. Staff must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of Rawson Memorial Library.
4. Staff may not make statements about patrons, or post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential patron information.
5. Staff may not conduct political activities or personal business on library social media.
6. Staff must observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials.
7. Negative comments or complaints should not be deleted. Instead, staff should engage with the patron, preferably by moving the discussion to a private venue. For example:
Thank you for telling us about your experience in the library. We want to address your concern, please check your direct messages.
8. Complaints and negative posts may be deleted if they are harassing, obscene, personally name staff members, or meet the other criteria in this policy. If a post is deleted, send a direct message to the poster explaining why. For example:
Thank you for telling us about your experience in the library. We removed your post because it contained language that violates our social media policy. However, we would like to address your concern.
9. Library staff is available to respond to comments and questions during library open hours only.

XII. PROGRAMMING POLICY

A “program” is a planned interaction between the library staff and the program participants for the purpose of promoting library materials, facilities, or services, as well as offering the community an informational, entertaining, or cultural experience.

Programming includes but is not limited to such activities as story times, films and activities, Summer Reading Program for all ages, speakers for adults, and book or author discussion groups.

The library staff will teach basic computer skills and other extensive computer related topics on an individual basis by appointment.

A budget and goals for programming to facilitate the effective implementation of this service will be established.

XIII. BULLETIN BOARD POLICY

Bulletin board materials may be submitted for posting by nonprofit organizations for civic, educational, or cultural purposes. Such organizations may submit literature publicizing a specific event. Limited space generally allows only short-term notices. Generally, material should be no larger than a standard sheet of paper. Exceptions can be made for larger postings if space permits.

Personal notices are not permitted.

The Library Director must approve all postings and may prohibit postings that do not meet library standards. Unauthorized postings will be removed.

XIV. DISPLAYS AND EXHIBITS POLICY

As an educational and cultural institution, Rawson Memorial Library welcomes exhibits and displays of interest, information and enlightenment to the community. Displays of handiwork, historical material, nature study, or any other material deemed of general interest may be exhibited. The Library Director shall accept or reject material offered for display based on its suitability and availability.

The library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection, and no liability for possible damage or theft of any item displayed or exhibited. All items placed in the library are there at the owner's risk.

Areas available to the public for displays and exhibits are the glass exhibit case, the meeting room, and some areas in the library proper.

XV. MEETING ROOM POLICY

A. General Regulations

1. As a public service function of Rawson Memorial Library, the meeting rooms within the library shall be offered to public groups for use as a meeting facility. Use of these facilities shall at all times be subject to the operating requirements of the library's main purpose and at no time shall use of the meeting room interfere with the orderly and efficient operation of the library.
2. The meeting rooms are available to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities. The rooms will not be available to political parties, commercial businesses or religious denominations, although associations of such bodies seeking community advancement and public betterment of a general nature will not be precluded from use of the facility. The meeting rooms will not be available for purely personal events (reunions, showers, etc.)
3. The fact that a group is permitted to meet at the library does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the group's policies or beliefs.
4. No admission will be charged or other fees assessed for activities or exhibits held in the meeting rooms without permission from the Library Board.
5. Sales or bartering of products or services will not be permitted without permission of the Library Board.
6. Noise, which disrupts library services, will not be permitted.
7. All groups using the room must be under adequate adult supervision, with an adult in attendance at all times. The supervising adult will accept responsibility for the repair or replacement of damaged facility or equipment.

B. Scheduling

1. Library sponsored programs and library meetings shall take priority over other reservations, but every attempt shall be made to reschedule other reservations to the group's satisfaction.
2. The rooms should be reserved two weeks in advance. Requests made later may be honored at the discretion of the Library Director if the facility is vacant on the requested date. Because both library and public groups use the rooms extensively, scheduling the room far in advance may be limited.
3. As a general rule, the meeting rooms may not be reserved for consecutive dates. Exceptions are at the discretion of the Library Director. The room may not be used to provide space on a frequent and permanent basis to support the primary activities of a group or organization.
4. The library must be notified of any cancellation at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting time.
5. Study Rooms may be used up to four (4) hours at a time per day. Additional time may be granted at the Library Director's discretion. **[Point #5 added May 21, 2024]**

C. Responsibility

1. Setting up and taking down equipment will be the responsibility of the group using the room.
2. Groups shall be responsible for making sure that the facilities and equipment are left in the same condition as they were found, including the removal of trash. If not left in this condition, the group will be given notice and continued offense will result in being denied further use of the room. Groups shall accept the responsibility for the repair or replacement of damaged equipment and facilities.

D. Equipment

1. Groups may use tables and chairs. It is the group's responsibility to properly put them away after use.
2. A request for use of meeting room equipment must be made at the time the room is scheduled. It is not the responsibility of library staff to work equipment. If arrangements are made for use of the equipment, the group will take responsibility for the proper use and care.

E. Charges

1. Fees will not be charged to groups using the meeting rooms during regularly scheduled library hours.
2. Groups wishing to use the rooms during hours the library is closed will be charged an hourly rate since a library staff member must be present and paid for supervision. The group will be advised as to the rate ahead of time and a minimum of two hours must be paid.

F. Decorations, Exhibits, Refreshments

1. Exterior signs, limited to the meeting announcement, are allowed upon approval of the Library Director.
2. No decorations may be fastened to the wall with tape or tacks or any other method, which might mar the walls.
3. Light refreshments may be served.
4. The use of alcoholic beverages or smoking is strictly forbidden in all parts of the library. Violation of this rule subjects the group to immediate dismissal from the facility.

G. Miscellaneous

1. The decision of the Library Director, as a representative of the Library Board, shall be final in the interpretation of rules not specifically covered by these policies.
2. The library staff shall have access to the room at all times since library materials are stored within the meeting room. However, every effort will be made to respect the privacy of the group using the room.
3. Groups must vacate the meeting room 15 minutes in advance of the library's closing time.
4. Guns or weapons of any kind are not permitted in the library or on library property without prior written permission of the Library Director.
5. The library may cancel any meeting because of adverse weather conditions or for other emergency reasons.

XVI. CAMPAIGNING, PETITIONING, INTERVIEWING AND SIMILAR ACTIVITIES

As a limited public forum, the Library reserves the right to regulate the time, place, and manner for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting on Library grounds as follows:

- A. Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting are prohibited inside the Library building.
- B. Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting outside the Library building but on Library property are subject to the following requirements:
 - 1. Persons or groups are requested to sign in at the Checkout Desk in advance.
 - 2. Use of the Library property does not indicate the Library's opposition or endorsement of the candidate or issue that is the subject of the petition, interview, campaign or discussion.
 - 3. Permitted areas for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting outside of the Library building shall be limited to the areas at least 25 feet from any entrance.
 - 4. No person shall block ingress or egress from the Library building.
 - 5. Permitted times will be limited to the operating hours of the Library.
 - 6. Campaign material, literature or petitions may not be brought into the Library, posted at the Library or left on Library property."

Added May 21, 2024

XVII. PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY

- A. Public relations goals of Rawson Memorial Library are:
 - 1. To promote a good understanding of the library's objectives and services among governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public;
 - 2. To promote active participation in the varied services offered by the library to people of all ages.
- B. The Library Board recognizes that public relations involve every person who has connection with the library. The Library Board urges its own members and staff to realize that he/she represents the library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations.
- C. The Library Director will be expected to make presentations and to participate in community activities to promote library services. A reasonable amount of library time will be allowed for preparation and speaking. Materials to be used by press, radio, or television will be approved by the Library Director.
- D. A budget will be established to cover costs related to printing, publication, supplies, and miscellaneous needs related to the public relations effort.

XVIII. CAPITALIZATION POLICY

A. Equipment and Furnishings

All equipment and furnishings, other than technology related, owned by Rawson Memorial Library having an acquisition cost of \$2,000 or more and a useful life of more than one year will be capitalized beginning FY 2004.

B. Technology

Technology related equipment, owned by Rawson Memorial Library having an acquisition cost of \$1,000 or more and a useful life of more than one year will also be capitalized beginning FY 2004.

The acquisition cost is defined as historical cost or fair market value at date of donation.

XIX. INVESTMENT POLICY

A. Statement of Purpose

It is the policy of Rawson Memorial Library to invest its funds in a manner which will provide the highest investment return with the maximum security while meeting the daily cash flow needs of the library and comply with all state statutes governing the investment of public funds.

B. Scope

This investment policy applies to all financial assets of Rawson Memorial Library. These assets are accounted for in the various funds of the library and include the general fund, special revenue funds, debt service funds, capital project funds, trust and agency funds and any new fund established by the Library Board.

C. Investment Objectives

The primary objectives, in priority order, of Rawson Memorial Library investment activities shall be:

1. **Safety:** Safety of principal is the foremost objective of the investment program. Investments shall be undertaken in a manner that seeks to insure the preservation of capital in the overall portfolio.
2. **Diversification:** The investments will be diversified by security type and institution in order that potential losses on individual securities do not exceed the income generated from the remainder of the portfolio.
3. **Liquidity:** The investment portfolio shall remain sufficiently liquid to meet all operating requirements that may be reasonably anticipated.
4. **Return on Investment:** The investment portfolio shall be designed with the objective of obtaining a rate of return throughout the budgetary and economic cycles, taking into account the investment risk constraints and the cash flow characteristics of the portfolio.

D. Delegation of Authority to Make Investments

Authority to manage the investment program is derived from MCL 41.76 and Rawson Memorial Library Board resolution naming the Treasurer as the investment officer. Management responsibility for the investment program is hereby delegated to the Board Treasurer per MLC 41.76, who shall establish written procedures and internal controls for operating the investment program consistent with this investment policy, as approved by the Board of Trustees. Procedure should include references to: safekeeping, delivery vs. payment, investment accounting, repurchase agreements, wire transfer agreements, collateral/depository agreements and banking service contracts. No person may engage in an investment transaction except as provided under the terms of this policy and the procedures established by the Board Treasurer. The Board Treasurer shall be responsible for all transactions undertaken and shall establish a system of controls to regulate the activities of subordinate officials.

E. Authorized Investment Instruments

The library is limited to investments authorized by Act 20 of 1943, as amended, and may invest in the following:

1. In bonds, securities, and other obligations of the United States or an agency or instrumentality of the United States in which the principal and interest is fully guaranteed by the United States. This subdivision shall include securities issued or guaranteed by the government National Mortgage Association.
2. In certificates of deposit, savings accounts, deposit accounts, or depository receipts of a bank which is a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or a savings and loan association which is a member of the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation or a credit union which is insured by the National Credit Union Administration, but only if the bank, savings and loan association or credit union is eligible to be a depository of surplus funds belonging to the State under Section 5 and 6 of Act 105 of the Public Acts of 1855, as amended.
3. In commercial paper rated at the time of purchase within the three highest classifications established by not less than two standard rating services and which matures not more than 270 days after the date of purchase. Not more than 50% of any fund may be invested in commercial paper at any time.
4. In bankers' acceptance of United States banks.
5. In mutual funds composed of investment vehicles which are legal for direct investment by local units of government in Michigan. Funds may be either of the types limited to securities whose intention is to maintain a net asset value of \$1.00 per share or those including securities whose net asset value per share may fluctuate on a periodic basis.

F. Safekeeping and Custody

All security transactions, including collateral for repurchase agreements and financial institution deposits, entered into by Rawson Memorial Library shall be on a cash basis. Securities may be held by a third-party custodian designated by the Treasurer and evidenced by safekeeping receipts as determined by the Treasurer.

G. Standard of Prudence

Investments shall be made with judgement and care, under circumstances then prevailing, which persons of prudence, discretion and intelligence exercise in the management of their own affairs, not for speculation, but for investment, considering the probable safety of their capital as well as the probable income to be derived.

XX. ENDOWMENT POLICY

The Rawson Memorial Library Endowment Fund was established May 15, 1990. The gross interest income from this fund will be transferred to the general fund for operating purposes throughout the year. The investment of the fund will be at the discretion of the Library Board.

Under no circumstances will the capital be used except by a two-thirds majority vote of the entire Library Board.

XXI. FUND BALANCE POLICY

In accordance with GASB Statement No. 54

The Fund Balance Policy of Rawson Memorial Library is intended to provide the Board of Trustees with a set of guidelines during the preparation of the annual budget each year and throughout the fiscal year. This policy will help ensure that sufficient reserves are maintained throughout the year, in the event of unforeseen expenditures, as well as shortfalls in revenue. The objective of establishing and maintaining a Fund Balance Policy is to help the library maintain a strong fiscal position that will be able to withstand negative economic trends. The fund balance may consist of four funds: the Restricted Fund Balance, the Committed Fund Balance, the Assigned Fund Balance and the Unassigned Fund Balance.

The Restricted Fund: Funds that are required, by law, to be used for a specific purpose. These Restricted Funds may include funds received through a bond or voted operating millage for a very specific purpose. There is no minimum percentage requirement for this Fund.

The Committed Fund: Funds that have been set aside for a specific purpose by the Library Board of Trustees. There is no minimum percentage requirement for this Fund.

The Assigned Fund: Funds that have not been earmarked for a specific purpose, but the intent can be expressed by the Library Board of Trustees or other group or person given the authority by the Board. There is no maximum amount for this Fund. This amount will ensure that the library has sufficient funds to operate.

The Unassigned Fund: Funds not restricted, committed, or assigned in the General Fund and are available for any purpose.

Should the need arise, the Library Board of Trustees reserves the right to appropriate funds from the Assigned Fund Balance for emergencies and other requirements the Library Board of Trustees believes to be in the best interest of the library. Likewise, if the need arises, the Library Board of Trustees reserves the right to suspend, at any time, the designation of funds for a specific purpose.

XXII. CREDIT CARD POLICY

The purpose of the credit card policy of Rawson Memorial Library is to streamline some library purchases while maintaining accountability. The policy also provides a system of internal controls to ensure that the library will comply with all application laws:

- A. The Library Director will be responsible for the issuance, accounting, monitoring, and retrieval and generally for overseeing compliance with the credit card policy.
- B. The credit card may be used by the Library Board, director or staff designated by the Library Director, only for goods or services for the official business of the Rawson Memorial Library. Documentation detailing the goods or services purchased must be submitted before payment can be approved.
- C. The Library Director is responsible for the protection of the credit card and shall immediately notify the financial institution issuing the card if the card is lost or stolen.
- D. The Library Director must immediately surrender the credit card upon leaving the employ of Rawson Memorial Library, or upon termination.
- E. Rawson Memorial Library will use disciplinary measures consistent with current law for unauthorized use.
- F. The balance due shall be paid within 60 days of the statement date and the total authorized credit limit of the credit card issued to the library shall not exceed \$2,000.00.

XXIII. EMERGENCY POLICY

A. Fire

At the first indication of smoke or flame, library staff will investigate the situation to determine location and extent of the fire. If the fire can obviously be contained and extinguished quickly and safely the library staff will do so. However, if there is any doubt about whether the fire can be controlled, the building will be cleared and 911 or the fire department will be called. There are six (6) fire extinguishers in our building.

The locations are as follows:

1. Next to the EXIT door in the Meeting Room
2. In the hallway by the Meeting Room
3. Next to the copy machine and the Reva Little study room
4. Next to the EXIT door by large print books (soon to be the teen area)
5. By the ENTRANCE/EXIT door to the basement
6. In the furnace room in the basement

There are floor plans throughout the library for patrons to quickly find EXITS if necessary.

B. Health

Caution will be exercised when administering first aid of even a minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the library staff. Without specialized training it is not advisable for library staff to undertake more than keeping the sick or injured patron comfortable and protected from needless disturbance until medical help can be obtained. Since each case is unique, library staff should use their own judgment to do what is prudent and reasonable. The Police/911 should be called immediately in the event of any serious problem. No medication, including aspirin, should ever be dispensed to the public.

C. Bomb Threat

In case of a bomb threat, library staff are to follow these steps:

- Keep the caller on the line as long as possible.
- Ask the caller to repeat the message and try to write down every word spoken by the person.
- If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of possible detonation, ASK FOR THIS INFORMATION.
- Pay particular attention to peculiar background noises such as motors running, background music and any other sounds that may indicate where the location from which the call is originating.
- Listen closely to the voice (male, female), voice quality (calm, excited), accents and speech impediments.
- Immediately after the caller hangs up, call the police.
- Clear the building.
- The police will handle the actual bomb search.

D. Tornado

The community will be notified if a tornado warning or watch is in effect by the sound of a loud siren blast for 2-3 minutes solid. When this is heard, take cover immediately. The basement is the best place for safety. The front doors to the library will remain open for the public to take shelter. The doors leading to the library proper will be closed and locked. Any person or persons not able to use the stairs can seek shelter in the hallway by the bathrooms or in the bathrooms, which will be unlocked. There will be three 10-second blasts to let the public know when the tornado warning/watch is over.

E. Inclement Weather

Closing during inclement weather will be at the discretion of the Library Director.

F. Incident Report

If a situation arises where an incident has happened at the library or on library property, the Library Director will fill out an incident report. If the Library Director was not present, a full-time staff member will complete the form and report to the Library Director as soon as possible. Examples of when this form should be used include but are not limited to an injury to a staff member or patron; or damage/vandalism to the building, property or material owned by the library. The Library Director will pursue police or insurance company involvement if necessary.

A copy of the report is located in Appendix E.

XXIV. REVISION OF LIBRARY POLICIES

The preceding statements of Rawson Memorial Library's policies shall be subject to review and needed revision at least every five years by the Library Board. Individual policies will be reviewed or added as needed.

All policies approved September 19, 2000

Amended April 11, 2002

September 20, 2005

September 2007

May 18, 2010

September 20, 2011

August 2023

APPENDIX A: LIBRARY BOARD MEETINGS

The Rawson Memorial Library Board of Trustees meets the third Tuesday of each month at the library. Meeting dates are posted on the library website and at the front door. Meetings are open to the public. If an attendee would like to address the Library Board, they may do so during the Public Comment portion of the meeting. They will state their name and address to be recorded in the minutes. There is a time limit of 5 minutes. If the Library Board determines the matter requires more attention, it may be tabled until the next meeting and may be added to the agenda for further review and/or discussion.

For more information about the Library Board, please contact the Library Director.

APPENDIX B: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)

A. Purpose

It is the intent of Rawson Memorial District Library to perform public business in an open and public manner as required by Michigan's Freedom of Information, Act 442 of 1976, and as amended. This policy prescribes the library's procedures for responding to written public record requests made pursuant to FOIA.

B. Scope

This policy applies to the library whenever a written request for public records is made under Michigan's FOIA law. This policy does not apply to any records that are exempt from disclosure such as, but not limited to:

1. Specific personal information about an individual if the release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of that individual's privacy.
2. Records that may be exempted from disclosure by another statute. (Note: statutes that expressly prohibit public disclosure of records generally supersede the FOIA.)
3. Information subject to attorney-client privilege.
4. Pending public bids to enter into contracts.
5. Records that would disclose the social security number of an individual.

C. Access

Public records shall be open to inspection and copying during the library's regular business hours by the custodian of the requested public records. Reasonable access to and reasonable facilities for copying of these records shall be provided. The library shall provide reasonable assistance in identifying and locating public records in accordance with this policy.

D. Form of FOIA Requests

All FOIA requests shall be made in writing.

All FOIA requests shall adequately describe the records sought in sufficient detail to enable the library to locate such records with reasonable effort. The requesting party shall be as specific as possible when requesting records. To assist in locating the requested records, the library may request that the requesting party provide additional information known to the requesting party, such as the types of records, dates, parties to correspondence, and subject matter of the requested records.

- E. A FOIA request will be answered within 5 business days after receiving it. If needed, the library will notify the requester in writing and extend the time for an additional 10 business days.

- F. Fees: Fees may be charged as permitted by law.

1. \$.10 per sheet
2. Hourly rate for searching, reproducing and postage will be set according to 2015 PA 563

If a request must be denied, the library will respond to the requester with an explanation of the reasons for the denial and the requester's right to submit a written appeal to the head of the public

body (Board Chair) or to seek judicial review with the right to receive attorney fees and collect damages.

APPENDIX C: STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY RESOURCES

RAWSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Resource on which you are commenting:

_____ Book	_____ Audio-visual Resource
_____ Magazine	_____ Content of Library Program
_____ Newspaper	_____ Other

Title : _____

Author/Publisher or Producer/Date: _____

What brought this resource to your attention?

To what do you object? Please be as specific as possible.

Have you read or listened or viewed the entire content? If not, what parts?

What do you feel the effect of the material might be?

For what age group would you recommend this material?

In its place, what material of equal or better quality would you recommend?

What do you want the Library to do with this material?

Additional comments:

APPENDIX D: CHARGES FOR SERVICES

DVD Rental	\$.50 for 1 week
Informational DVD/Video	No charge for checkout
Laminating	\$.50 half page, \$1.00 for 8 ½" x 11"
Black and white copies	\$.15 per page - letter size
	\$.25 per page - legal size
	\$.40 per page - ledger size
Color copies	\$.60 per page - letter size
	\$.70 per page - legal size
	\$.80 per page - ledger size
Scanning from copier	\$1.00 per image or page
Fax machine - sending	\$2.00 first page, \$1.00 per additional page
Fax machine - receiving	\$1.00 per page
Overseas fax - sending	No Longer Provided
Book Jackets through 12" size	\$.50 each
Book Jackets over 12" size	\$.75 each

The extended user fee / fine schedule is:

Books, Audio, Audio Books, Videos, DVD's, Magazines	\$.10 per day, maximum fine is cost of item
Hotspots and Chromebooks	\$2.00 per day
Library Card Replacement	\$5.00

This fine schedule is subject to change as needed or deemed appropriate.

APPENDIX E: INCIDENT REPORT

RAWSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Date_____ Time_____

What happened?

Who was involved?

Action taken?

Any further necessary information?

Signature of librarian on duty

APPENDIX F: THE 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.
- 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.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

APPENDIX G: THE FREEDOM TO READ

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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 not 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.

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 and said. 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 to 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.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

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

Subsequently endorsed by: American Booksellers for Free Expression, The Association of American University Presses, The Children's Book Council, Freedom to Read Foundation, National Association of College Stores, National Coalition Against Censorship, National Council of Teachers of English, The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression.