

Statement of Concern about Library Resources

Intellectual freedom in a public library necessitates selecting some materials that may be considered controversial by some individuals or groups. Reasons often cited for materials considered offensive include use of profanity, divergent viewpoints, controversial authors, sexual content, and depictions of violence and criminal acts. The acquisition of such materials does not imply approval or endorsement of their contents. The selection criteria used by the St. Tammany Parish Library must remain broad and flexible in order to provide a collection that supports the broad range of interests and diverse backgrounds of the citizens of St. Tammany Parish.

Have you read the attached St. Tammany Parish Library Collection Development policy?

Yes _____ No _____

Have you read the attached St. Tammany Parish Library’s Statements of Concern About Library Resources policy? Yes _____ No _____

Please note that processing a Statement of Concern form entails significant cost and time commitments. Therefore, anyone who has a concern about library resources is encouraged to discuss their concerns with a library staff member before filing a Statement of Concern form.

Date _____ Library Card Number _____

Name _____

Residence Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mailing Address _____
If different from Residence Address

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

How would you prefer to receive correspondence about this Statement of Concern?

Email _____ Residence/Mailing Address _____

Is this complaint related to LA R.S. 25:225 (Access of Materials to Minors)?

Yes _____ No _____

If you answered Yes, please identify specific page numbers that concern you?

Form continues on the next page

Statement of Concern about Library Resources

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

Book ____ Audiovisual ____ Magazine/Newspaper ____ Other:
Library Program ____ Display ____ Electronic Resource ____ _____

2. Title _____

3. Author/Producer _____

4. At which branch library or in which electronic resource did you encounter this material or resource?

5. What brought this resource to your attention?

6. Did you review/read the entire item? If not, what sections did you review/read?

7. What course of action do you recommend in regard to this resource?

Form continues on the next page

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8. Please state your reasons for making this recommendation. To what in the resource do you object? Please be specific: cite pages, scenes, or sections. Please comment on the resource as a whole, as well as being specific on the matters which concern you.

9. In its place, what material or resource would you recommend on this topic?

NOTE: This statement will be forwarded to Library Board of Control. You will be advised in writing of the decision. Thank you for your concern and input. Information submitted to a public body, such as this form, may be subject to public records requests pursuant to the provisions of the Louisiana Public Records Law, La. R.S. 44:1, et seq.

Chapter 4. Collection Development

Section 403. Criteria for Selection

Effective Date: TK

Revision Date: 10/23/2023

The Library Director shall consider several factors follows in making selections. Not all the following factors apply to every book or material format to be considered. Works of imagination are judged on different factors than are works of information or opinion.

- Purpose: use of material, factual information, general knowledge or information.
- Authorship: professional and literary significance of the author.
- Authority: especially inclusion in indexes, bibliographies, other professional references for all material formats.
- Opinions: attention to critics, reviewers and the public.
- Scope: comprehensiveness and depth of treatment.
- Content: objectivity, clarity, accuracy and logic of presentation.
- Presentation: presentation in a manner appropriate for the intended audience.
- Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience.
- Suitability of physical format for library use.
- Timeliness: present and potential relevance to community needs representation of important movement, genre, or trend of culture.
- Relation to existing library collection and other materials on the subject and availability of materials in the surrounding geographic area.
- Cost: budget guidelines, stability and needs.
- Publisher: reputation and sustained presence in the marketplace.
- Gift materials shall be accepted using the same criteria as purchased material.

Community standards for St. Tammany Parish shall be considered when acquiring library material that would be accessible to a minor through donation or purchase.

The library uses a number of metrics to determine community standards:

- Usage statistics gathered from the Integrated Library System, including circulation numbers and number of holds for specific items
- Patron requests
- Feedback from branch staff
- Titles assigned to students in the public and parochial school systems
- Parish demographics

The Library shall follow all Louisiana laws and St. Tammany Parish ordinances that pertain to the purchasing and placement of library materials. Materials cataloged in the children's (Juvenile) and teen's (Young Adult) collections shall not contain sexually explicit material, textual, visual, or audio, produced in any medium, that depicts or describes sexual conduct as defined by La. R.S. 25:225B(3) or the most recent version which is adopted herein by reference.

Section 405. Additional Criteria for the Selection of Non-Book and Special Materials

Effective Date: TK

Revision Date: TK

- A. Audio cassettes/CDs for adults and juveniles shall be selected on the same criteria standards as books and other library material.
- B. Compact discs shall be selected on importance of composers, performing organizations, conductors and quality of reproduction.
- C. A collection of literacy materials shall be maintained to cooperate with local efforts to teach literacy skills to beginning readers.
- D. Newspapers provide a valuable, current source of local and regional information and shall be selected first upon their local value and secondly upon space availability.
- E. Pamphlets shall be selected using the same criteria that are used for books.
- F. Paperbacks or soft cover books which supplement the hardcover book collection of the library shall use the same selection criteria as for hardcover materials.
- G. Periodicals are often the most current source of information that has yet or may never appear in book form. An important consideration shall be the availability of content through indexes, abstracts and bibliographies.
- H. Textbooks are selected only when no other material in a given field is available. Students' demand for textbooks should be satisfied by attending schools/colleges.
- I. Audio Visuals
 - 1. Audio visuals collection shall concentrate on self-education, self-improvement, informational, recreational, and general entertainment videos.
 - 2. To serve all levels of the public, Audio Visuals have no restrictive time frame for purchase.
- J. Electronic Databases shall be selected on many of the same factors as used for print materials.

Section 407. Statements of Concern about Library Resources

Effective Date: 12/13/2022

Revision Date: 10/23/2023

A. General

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. Responsibility for the use of library materials by minor children rests with their parents or legal guardians. While a person may reject material for themselves and for their minor children, an individual may not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others to read, see, or hear.

B. Process

1. Any person residing in St. Tammany Parish who has reached the age of majority and who holds a St. Tammany Parish Library card and wishes to express concerns about library materials, programs, or displays may complete a “Statement of Concern About Library Resources” form, also referred to as a “Request for Reconsideration” pursuant to La. R.S. 25:225. However, processing a Statement of Concern form entails significant cost and time commitments. Therefore, anyone who has a concern about library resources is encouraged to discuss their concerns with a library staff member before filing a Statement of Concern form.

The Statement of Concern form shall be available at the library circulation desk, the library’s website, by email request, and at all Library Board of Control meetings. All completed Statement of Concern forms will be forwarded to the Library Director and to each member of the Library Board of Control. Upon receipt of the Statement of Concern form the Director will confirm receipt to the complainant(s). Statements of Concern that do not meet the submission criteria will not be considered.

Any Statement of Concern seeking to restrict access by a minor to a digital resource categorized as Adult and thus only available to Adult, Juvenile, and Juvenile Unrestricted cards, shall not be considered.

2. The Director will select two or more staff members to serve on an internal committee to review each Statement of Concern and the subject of the concern. Committee members will be chosen by the Director based on the type of material under review and taking into consideration the staff member’s education and experience. A decision will be made within 45 days of the Director receiving the Statement of Concern Form, unless a longer period is authorized by the Library Board of Control, in which case the complainant(s) shall receive notice.

3. The committee members shall:

- a. Review the material in its entirety.
- b. Create and consider a resume of the material which can include:
 - A brief synopsis

- Reviews in standard evaluation guides
 - Topical information concerning the material
 - Circulation information
 - Information about holdings in other public libraries
 - Awards received
 - Biographical information about the author/producer
 - Library of Congress Subject Headings
 - Publisher, vendor, and/or reviewer audience recommendations
 - Indication that purchase was made per patron request, if that information is available
 - Number of copies sold in the United States, if that information is available
- c. Consider the suitability for age level of current placement
 - d. Consider present and potential relevance to community needs
 - e. Conduct a discussion to reach a decision
 - f. Submit a written report to the Director with the decision made based on the result of the committee's efforts.

4. The Director shall notify the complainant in writing of the committee's decision and their right to appeal that decision to the Library Board of Control, except as provided in La. R.S. 25:225C(2)(d)(ii). A copy of the decision will be mailed to each member of the Library Board of Control.

5. Pursuant to La. R.S. 25:225C(2)(d)(ii), any Statements of Concern of a library material that may include sexually explicit material available to minors shall be reviewed by the Library Board of Control under the procedures outlined in Subsection C(2-5) of this Section.

C. Right to Appeal

1. The complainant may appeal to the Library Board of Control by contacting the Assistant Director within 30 days of mailing of the committee's decision and requesting to be placed on the agenda of the next available scheduled board meeting. The Assistant Director must notify the Library Board of Control of the appeal being placed on the agenda.
2. A complainant will have five minutes to address the Library Board of Control about the specific challenged material on the original Statement of Concern form.
3. A period of public comment will precede any action taken by the Board.
4. The Library Board of Control shall vote to affirm, modify, reject, or take under advisement the committee's decision. Matters taken under advisement shall be renoticed for a future meeting. Upon modification or rejection of the decision of the committee, the Board shall decide what action will be taken in response to the

Statement of Concern. The decision of the Board shall be rendered by a majority vote. In the event there is a tie, the committee's decision is affirmed.

5. The complainant(s) will be notified in writing of the decision of the Library Board of Control.

D. The decision on a Statement of Concern about specific materials, programs, or displays will remain in effect for five years. Within this five-year period complainants submitting a new Statement of Concern on a decided title, program, or display shall receive a copy of the current decision.