

Dealing with Challenged Materials

Statement of Policy:

Any patron of the Hudson Public Library may formally challenge a library resource on the basis of appropriateness. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the community who are not directly involved in the selection process.

Request for Informal Reconsideration:

Upon receiving a complaint regarding a library resource the library employee shall try to resolve the issue informally.

1. The library employee shall explain to the questioner the library's selection procedure, criteria, and qualifications of those persons selecting the resource.
2. The library employee shall explain the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the library collection, its intended value, or shall refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the value of the resource.
3. If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of the Selection of Library Resources policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form shall be handed or mailed to the party concerned.

Request for Formal Reconsideration:

1. The library will keep on hand and make available the Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form. All formal objections to library resources must be made on this form.
2. The Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the Library Director or Assistant Library Director.
3. The Library Board of Trustees shall be informed of the formal complaint received.
4. The request for reconsideration shall be referred to a reconsideration committee for reevaluation of the resource.

The Reconsideration Committee:

1. Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a library resource, the Library Board President shall appoint a reconsideration committee consisting of the Board President and two other members of the Board of Trustees, the Library Director, and the Assistant Library Director.
2. The Library Board President shall be the convener of the reconsideration committee.
3. The convener shall arrange for a reconsideration committee meeting within 10 working days after the complaint is received.
4. The reconsideration committee may choose to consult professional and/or community persons with knowledge related to the library material in question.
5. The reconsideration committee shall review the challenged resource and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the Selection of Library Resources policy.

Resolution:

1. The reconsideration committee shall:
 - a. Examine the challenged resource.
 - b. Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource.
 - c. Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context.

- d. Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the Selection of Library Resources policy.
 - e. Discuss the challenged item with the individual questioner when appropriate.
 - f. Prepare a written report.
2. The written report shall be discussed with the individual questioner if requested.
 3. The written report shall be retained by the Library Director, with copies forwarded to the Library Board of Trustees and the library staff.
 4. Written reports, once filed, are confidential and available for examination by trustees and library staff only.
 5. The decision of the reconsideration committee is binding.
 6. Notwithstanding any procedure outlined in this policy, the questioner shall have the right to appeal any decision of the reconsideration committee to the Board of Trustees as the final review panel.

Guiding Principles:

1. Any patron of the Hudson Public Library may raise objections to library resources despite the fact that the individuals selecting such resources were duly qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure, and observed the criteria for selecting library resources.
2. The Library Director should review the selection and objection rules with the library staff at least annually. The staff should be reminded that the right to object to library resources is one granted by policies enacted by the Board of Trustees.
3. No parent has the right to determine reading, viewing, or listening matter for youth other than his or her own children.
4. The Hudson Public Library supports the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the American Library Association. (A copy of the Library Bill of Rights is attached to this policy.) When learning resources are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read/listen/view must be defended as well.
5. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
6. The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended use.
7. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of the original selection of or intended use of the material.

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