

W.H. Walters Free Public Library

Request for Reconsideration/Removal of Library Material **Policy**

LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the W.H. Walters Free Public Library to put books and information into the hands of people whose lives will be enriched and whose purposes furthered thereby. The W.H. Walters Free Public Library is the child's gateway to learning, the institution where individuals may seek self-development on their own terms, and the means whereby all people may refresh old insights and gain new knowledge of the world around them. The Board of Trustees adheres to the philosophy expressed in the ALA Bill of Rights, Freedom to View and Freedom to Read statements.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Library Request for Removal policy establishes a fair and consistent process for reviewing formal requests concerning materials in the Library's collection. The policy supports the principles of intellectual freedom and ensures the Library's collection is developed and maintained in accordance with the Library's mission, collection development policy, and applicable New Jersey law.

REASON FOR POLICY

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Provide standards and procedures for the review of requests concerning Library materials;
- Establish criteria for the removal, retention, or limitation of Library materials; and
- Provide protection against attempts to censor Library materials based solely on disagreement with a viewpoint, idea, or concept.

DEFINITIONS

Censorship. Means to block, suppress, or remove Library material based on disagreement with a viewpoint, idea, or concept, or solely because an individual finds certain content offensive. It

does not include limiting or restricting access to Library material that the Library determines is developmentally inappropriate for certain age groups.

Governing Body. Means a board of trustees, director or other chief administrative officer, a county library commission, or board of county commissioners of a public library. For purposes of the W.H. Walters Free Public Library, the Governing Body is the Board of Trustees of the W.H. Walters Free Public Library.

Individual with a Vested Interest. Any resident served by the W.H. Walters Free Public Library, including residents of the municipality or county in which the Library is located.

Library Material. Means any material, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital materials, software, and instructional material, belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of the Library.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OR REMOVAL PROCEDURE

An individual with a vested interest may submit a formal *Request for Reconsideration/Removal of Library Material Form* to the Library Board of Trustees for the purpose of initiating a review of a specific Library material.

A separate request shall be submitted for each material being challenged.

The individual submitting the request must use the Library's approved *Request for Reconsideration/Removal of Library Material Form* and provide the information requested on the form, including:

- The individual's name and contact information;
- The title and identifying information of the Library material being challenged;
- Confirmation that the individual has read, viewed, or listened to the entire work;
- A description of the material;
- The specific sections, passages, pages, chapters, scenes, timestamps, or other content to which the individual objects;
- An explanation of the reasons for the objection;
- The action being requested; and
- Any alternative resources that the individual believes the Library should consider.

Requests must address a specific Library material and may not be submitted to challenge an entire category or subject area.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Library Director and Library Board of Trustees shall consider the following principles when reviewing requests for reconsideration or removal:

1. Library materials shall not be removed because of the origin, background, or views of the material or those contributing to its creation.

2. The Library shall recognize the importance of voluntary inquiry and the free exchange of ideas.
3. Challenged materials shall remain available to patrons during the review process unless otherwise required by law or Library policy.
4. Decisions shall be based on the Library material as a whole rather than on isolated passages or sections.
5. The Library's collection as a whole should provide materials representing diverse viewpoints and interests.
6. The Library's established collection development criteria shall be considered when reviewing a request.
7. A Library material that has been formally challenged and reviewed shall not be subject to another *Request for Reconsideration/Removal of Library Material Form* for **five (5) years following the Board of Trustees' final determination**, except when the Library Director or Board determines that significant new information, substantially changed circumstances, a substantial change to the material, or other compelling reasons warrant reconsideration.
8. Requests concerning identical or substantially similar materials may be consolidated when appropriate.
9. The Library Board of Trustees shall make the final determination regarding whether a challenged Library material will be retained, removed, or limited in use.

INITIAL REVIEW

Upon receiving a completed *Request for Reconsideration/Removal of Library Material Form*:

1. The Library Director shall acknowledge receipt of the request.
2. The Library Director shall review the request to determine whether the form has been completed and whether the request concerns a specific Library material.
3. If additional information or clarification is necessary, the Library Director may contact the individual who submitted the request.
4. Once the request is determined to be complete and eligible for formal review, the Library Director shall forward the request to the Library Board of Trustees.
5. The challenged material shall remain in the Library's collection and available for circulation during the review process, unless otherwise required by law or Library policy.

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES REVIEW

The Library Board of Trustees shall review each completed and eligible *Request for Reconsideration/Removal of Library Material Form*.

The Board shall:

1. Review the completed *Request for Reconsideration/Removal of Library Material Form*.
2. Review the challenged Library material in its entirety.
3. Consider the concerns raised by the individual submitting the request.

4. Consider the Library's *Collection Development Policy* and applicable selection and removal criteria.
5. Consider applicable law, including the **New Jersey Freedom to Read Act**.
6. Consider other information the Board determines relevant to the review.

The Board may request additional information from the Library Director, the individual submitting the request, or other appropriate sources when necessary to complete its review.

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES DECISION

The Library Board of Trustees shall make the final determination regarding the challenged Library material.

The Board may determine that the material should:

- Remain in the Library's collection;
- Be removed from the Library's collection; or
- Have its use or access limited in accordance with applicable law and Library policy.

The Board's decision shall be based on the Library's mission, *Collection Development Policy*, applicable selection and removal criteria, principles of intellectual freedom, and applicable law.

The decision of the Library Board of Trustees shall constitute the final determination of the Library regarding the Request for Reconsideration or Removal.

RESPONSE

The Library Board of Trustees shall provide the individual who submitted the request with written notification of the Board's final determination.

The response shall include:

- The Board's decision regarding removal, limitation, or retention of the Library material; and
- The reasons supporting the decision.

DOCUMENTATION

All formal Requests for Reconsideration or Removal, Board decisions, and related correspondence shall be documented and maintained in accordance with applicable Library recordkeeping requirements and applicable law.

CONTACT

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Date(s) Revised: September 21, 2026.