

Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest Library Mission Statement

As an innovative and vibrant community center, the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest cultivates dynamic resources, environmentally conscious facilities and opportunities for life-long learning, cultural enrichment, personal empowerment and entertainment for all.

Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest Censorship and Reconsideration of Materials

The choice of library materials by patrons is an individual matter. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for the materials that their children borrow. While a person may reject materials for himself or for his children, he cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to library materials by others.

The Vestavia Hills Public Library Board of Trustees believes that the only acceptable censorship is self-censorship; therefore, the Library has implemented an appropriate procedure for patrons to register complaints concerning materials, which must include appeal to the Vestavia Hills Public Library Board of Trustees.

The Vestavia Hills Public Library subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association June 27, 1967, and its subsequent amendments. This document reads, in part: "As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community." We realize that everyone's tastes are different, and that it is our responsibility to provide materials on a multitude of subjects and viewpoints, in many styles.

The internet makes available a wide variety of material, most of it useful and worthwhile, but some internet sites are unsuitable for children and offensive to many adults. Unfortunately, we cannot filter out such sites without also eliminating access to many good resources. We have no control over internet information, and we caution parents and others that objectionable sites do exist, although they are not usually accessible except by deliberate choice on the part of the browser. Library policy prohibits the use of sites which may reasonably be construed as obscene, and individuals who access such sites may lose their internet privileges.

If a patron adamantly objects to a particular item in the physical collection, the following procedure should be followed:

The patron will fill out the Reconsideration of Library Materials Form detailing objections to the material. The form will be referred to the Materials Review Committee, which shall consist of the Library Director, a Library Department Head, and two designated Trustees. The Library Director will acknowledge receipt of the form within two weeks.

Within two weeks after acknowledgement of the reconsideration recommendation, and reviewing the material, the review committee will decide whether the item will remain in its current library location, relocated within the library or will be removed. The Library Director will notify the patron in writing of said decision. A final appeal may be made by the complainant in writing to the Library Board of Trustees within seven days of the decision, and the Trustees will issue a decision within thirty days of the appeal date. Until a final decision is made, the item will remain in the collection. A copy of the request form without identifying patron information will be mailed to the ALA (American Library Association) Intellectual Freedom Committee. The Library will not convene a Materials Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years.

The Vestavia Hills Public Library believes in the rights of a free press guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America. We further believe that the parents of a child are the only people who should be allowed to monitor the reading, watching or listening activities of that child. Similarly, we believe that it is every parent's duty to monitor his or her child's activity, and that this is not the prerogative of the library.

Adopted by the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest Board of Trustees March 2015
Updated and approved August 2023
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Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest Patron Request for Reconsideration of Materials Form

The Trustees of the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest have established a Collection Development Policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the Library Director.

To submit a request for reconsideration of materials at the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest, you must be a resident of the City of Vestavia Hills and a Library Card holder in good standing. Only one form from a household is accepted at a time. Each household is also limited to no more than 3 challenges per year. **This form must also be completed in full, and the material being challenged must also be read in full. Failure to fully answer all questions will nullify the form and request.**

Title: _____

Author: _____

Format (Book, Video, Magazine, etc.): _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Group you represent (if any): _____

Please provide answers to each question and complete the form in full.

1. How was this material brought to your attention?
2. Did you read/listen/view the entire work? *If you did not read/listen/view the entire work, the material will not be placed under consideration for review.*
3. What positive qualities does the material present?
4. What are your concerns about the material and why do you object?
5. What specifically do you object to in this work? Cite pages, quotes, and/or scenes.

6. For what age group would you recommend this work?
7. Have you read any professional reviews about this work? If so, how has the material been assessed in professional review sources? (Include citations)
8. What do you believe to be the theme of this work and the purpose?
9. How does the material fail to meet local and state educational objectives?
10. Who would be negatively impacted by this material and how? (Citations and evidence required).
11. What would you replace the material with (include titles and professional reviews of replacement).
12. Why do you believe you should be able to restrict the reading choices of community members, including children?
13. Explain how the material fails to meet Intellectual Freedom standards.
By answering this question and providing your signature to this form, you are stating that you have read the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the Library Bill of Rights and Statement of Intellectual Freedom which reads:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Intellectual freedom is the right of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment. Intellectual freedom is one of the core values of the library profession; it promotes access to information and guides the defense against censorship.

The Freedom to Read Statement asserts, "The freedom to read is essential to our democracy." In a democratic society, individuals must be sufficiently knowledgeable to make informed decisions. Libraries provide their users with necessary information through a wide selection of materials from varying points of view. It is essential that library resources remain free to use for all, regardless of age.
14. Additional comments:

The choice of library materials by patrons is an individual matter. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for the materials that their children borrow. While you may reject materials for yourself or for your children, you cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to library materials by others.

*Patron Printed Name: _____

*Patron Signature: _____

Date: _____

Library Director Signature: _____ Date Received: _____

***Forms that are not fully completed and signed will be void. Only completed forms will be considered. The Library Director will acknowledge receipt of the form within two weeks and will begin the review process.**

Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest Materials Selection Criteria for Adults

Materials are selected by professional librarians/department heads to maintain a well-balanced, up-to-date, attractive, and useful collection of materials that will meet the needs of the community. Librarians utilize the reviews in professional journals such as *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *VOYA*, and *Publisher's Weekly* as well as patron and staff requests during the selection process. Factors affecting materials selection include suitability of a material's format for Library purposes, availability of funds, availability of new materials in needed subject areas, replacement of outdated and worn materials (weeding), and space. Materials are offered in a variety of formats including print, large print, digital, audio, video, and pre-loaded devices.

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to the Library's collection. Budget considerations, community needs and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format. The selection of material in any new format may result in the Library's decision to discard specific items or material formats from its collections to responsibly accommodate trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

General Criteria for the Selection of Library Materials

In selecting materials, Professional Librarians use the following criteria:

- Appropriateness to library's mission and service roles
- Relationship to existing collection and other titles available
- Availability elsewhere or more in keeping with other institutions roles
- Availability to purchase or access
- Requests by patrons, advisory groups, and staff
- Suitability of format for user's needs and subject
- Community interests and needs
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Levels of funding and cost of item
- Anticipated use
- Physical quality of material
- Value of resource in relation to its cost
- Authority, accuracy and accessibility of presentation
- Currency of information
- Reputation of author, publisher or issuing body
- Attention and response of critics, reviewers and general public
- Subject matter and scope
- Historical significance
- Quality and style of writing
- Inclusion of work in bibliographies, recommendation lists, and indexes

ADULT COLLECTION

Fiction

The collection focuses on popular literature including classics and standard titles, diverse genres and special interests. There is no single standard for inclusion in the fiction collection. Because of the large volume of fiction published, it is possible to purchase only a representative selection with emphasis on major authors and the most popular examples of a genre. Patron requests for fiction are purchased whenever possible and influence the addition of more copies.

Genre fiction such as mysteries, romances, espionage, horror, thrillers, science fiction, fantasy and westerns are purchased in proportion to demand and use statistics. Efforts are made to complete series, purchase award winning titles and to represent local authors, publishers and subject matter.

Non-Fiction

The non-fiction collection emphasizes timely, accurate and useful informational materials to support individual and community interests. It emphasizes materials that are current and in high demand. Resources are available for all ages and reading levels in a variety of formats. Materials are selected to represent a continuum of opinions and viewpoints when available. Titles with sustaining value and those of current, accepted authority are part of the library collection. As a new field of knowledge emerges, the Library responds with timely additions. The Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest emphasizes non-scholarly materials. For more in-depth research, patrons are directed to use the Alabama Virtual Library, PLJC databases, and other available search engines. Some priority areas for The Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest include medical, general religion, job-search and resumes, personal finance, law for lay persons, test study materials, home repair, crafts, holidays, pets, gardening, health, cookbooks, popular biographies, travel and books on contemporary issues.

Reference

Reference materials are for in-house use. They provide quick, concise and up-to-date information. Included are indexes, encyclopedias, bibliographies, biographical resources, dictionaries, almanacs, and directories.

Additional selection criteria for Reference Materials:

- Ease of use
- Format
- Authoritativeness
- Frequency of use
- Scope and depth of coverage
- Demands on subject areas which circulating collection cannot meet

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest maintains a few special collections for which the development and management differ somewhat from the general collections.

A. Genealogy and Local History

The Vestavia Hills Library maintains a growing collection of local history and genealogical materials. Much of this collection is considered as Reference and as such does not circulate.

B. “Go Green” Sustainable Living

The Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest is LEED Certified and therefore very aware of the importance of “living green.” Our collection on sustainable living provides materials emphasizing ways in which everyone can contribute to sustainable living for our future. The collection, including adult, teen and children’s books, includes information about green building techniques, pollution and recycling, reuse of materials, and much more.

Approved by the Library Board March 2015

Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest Materials Selection for Children and Teens

Materials are selected by professional librarians/department heads in an effort to maintain a well-balanced, up-to-date, attractive, and useful collection of materials that will meet the needs of the community as a whole. Librarians utilize the reviews in professional journals such as *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *VOYA*, and *Publisher's Weekly* as well as patron and staff requests during the selection process. Factors affecting materials selection include suitability of a material's format for Library purposes, availability of funds, availability of new materials in needed subject areas, replacement of outdated and worn materials (weeding), and space. Materials are offered in a variety of formats including print, large print, digital, audio, video, and pre-loaded devices.

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to the Library's collection. Budget considerations, community needs and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format. The selection of material in any new format may result in the Library's decision to discard specific items or material formats from its collections in order to responsibly accommodate trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

General Criteria for the Selection of Library Materials

In selecting materials, Professional Librarians use the following criteria:

- Appropriateness to library's mission and service roles
- Relationship to existing collection and other titles available
- Availability elsewhere or more in keeping with other institutions roles
- Availability to purchase or access
- Requests by patrons, advisory groups, and staff
- Suitability of format for user's needs and subject
- Community interests and needs
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Levels of funding and cost of item
- Anticipated use
- Physical quality of material
- Value of resource in relation to its cost
- Authority, accuracy and accessibility of presentation
- Currency of information
- Reputation of author, publisher or issuing body
- Attention and response of critics, reviewers and general public
- Subject matter and scope
- Historical significance
- Quality and style of writing
- Inclusion of work in bibliographies, recommendations lists, indexes

COLLECTIONS FOR TEENS AND CHILDREN

The range of users served by Young Adult and Children's collections include preschool children, home schooling families, private and public school students, and university students of Education, especially Children's Literature.

The Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest Collection Development Policy applies to materials in the Teen and Children's Departments.

Additional Selection Criteria for Materials for Children and Teens

- Age and interest-appropriate content and presentation
- Emphasis on quality, critically acclaimed materials as demonstrated in awards, specialized bibliographies and/or reviews.
- Quality and aesthetics of illustrations to stimulate the imagination
- Awareness of curriculum-based needs of public, private, and home school students.
- Information and stories, representing a spectrum of family styles, values and interests.
- Materials which represent the richness and diversity of young people's local and world community.
- Materials which meet the particular developmental need of youth at different stages.
- In accordance with the APLS Administrative Code Section 520-2-2-.03, and in an effort to safeguard minors, collections residing in the Children's and Teen Departments will remain free of material containing obscenity, sexually explicit or other material deemed inappropriate for children or youth. Further, the selection criteria prevent the purchase or otherwise acquiring of any material advertised for consumers under the age of 18 which contain obscenity, sexually explicit or other material deemed inappropriate for children or youth."
- If any material is found to be in violation of this policy, it will either be removed or relocated in accordance with the Library's Censorship and Reconsideration policy.
- Age-appropriate materials regarding religion, history, biology, or human anatomy should not be construed to be against this rule.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The library has put in place all precautions to limit minor access to age-inappropriate, obscene, or sexually explicit materials under the Alabama Administrative Code. However, parents and guardians are ultimately responsible for their minor dependent's library use and the condition and return of any library materials lent to them. The library encourages parents and guardians to guide their minor dependent's library use and material selections. This collaborative approach ensures minors can access diverse resources that align with their needs and family values.

CHILDREN'S COLLECTION

- **Easy/Picture Books:** board books, wordless books, simple concept and informational books, classic and contemporary preschool stories and folklore; book and CD packages, book and MP3 device packages, pre-loaded video players.

- **Readers:** books specifically designed for the emerging reader with controlled and/or progressively constructed vocabularies, book and CD packages, book and MP3 packages, pre-loaded video players.
- **First Chapter/Easy Fiction:** simple chapter books and popular easy chapter series (primarily with chapters less than 10 pages and with some illustrations within the chapters), books on CD, books on MP3 player, book and MP3 packages.
- **Award Winners:** books which have won major children's literary awards including but not limited to Caldecott, Newbery and Coretta Scott King.
- **Juvenile Fiction:** quality contemporary and historical fiction for readers from age eight to twelve. Genres include fantasy, science fiction, mystery, inspirational, realistic fiction, historical fiction, classics, popular series, graphic novels and best sellers.
- **Juvenile Nonfiction:** informational books for youth up to age twelve, including but not limited to mythology and folklore; physical and natural science; arts and crafts; sports; poetry and classical literature; biographies; cultures, customs and history of man; and geography of the U.S. and other countries. Many nonfiction selections include a list of websites and other resources that add an interactive component to these materials.
- **Juvenile Reference:** a highly selective collection of bibliographic resources and encyclopedias for key areas of research by youth.
- **Media:** Music CDs with popular children's performers, preloaded video devices for preschool to elementary, preloaded MP3 devices primarily for elementary to middle school; books on CD for elementary to middle school, DVD and Blu-Ray collection with popular, best-seller and educational selections suitable for preschool to family, nonfiction DVDs, book and CD packages, book and MP3 packages.
- **Periodicals:** magazines and periodicals for children of all ages are chosen based on popularity, diversity of subject matter and target age.

TEEN COLLECTION

The Teen Department provides materials suitable for teens in grades six and up in a variety of formats and in sufficient number to meet the current and anticipated needs of the community.

A young adult, or teen, is generally defined as anyone in or entering grades six through twelve. The types of materials selected are diverse in the social, emotional, and intellectual maturity required to read them due to the wide range of ages served. The collection includes the curricular requirements of local schools, both fiction and nonfiction. Materials are available in a

variety of formats such as print, periodicals, graphic novels, manga, audiobooks (digital, CD and pre-loaded devices), DVDs, Blu Ray, and Video Games.

Parents or legal guardians are solely responsible for supervising or limiting their teen's access to Library materials.

DISPLAYS

Both the Children's and Teen Departments will frequently construct a diverse collection of book displays and/or book recommendations for their respective age groups to promote various library materials and to remain current with popular trends. The Library Director and her designee(s) have authority to approve these book displays and/or book recommendations.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The public library must not deny service to anyone on the basis of age, race, sex, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected class. Exercising discretion in the location of sexually explicit material or other material deemed by the public library board to be inappropriate for children or youth does not constitute a denial of service on the basis of age. Taking age into account when recommending, displaying, or otherwise actively promoting library materials does not constitute a denial of service on the basis of age.

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Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest Materials Selection for Digital and Multi-Media Resources

Materials are selected by professional librarians/department heads in an effort to maintain a well-balanced, up-to-date, attractive, and useful collection of materials that will meet the needs of the community as a whole. Librarians utilize the reviews in professional journals such as *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *VOYA*, and *Publisher's Weekly* as well as patron and staff requests during the selection process. Factors affecting materials selection include suitability of a material's format for Library purposes, availability of funds, availability of new materials in needed subject areas, replacement of outdated and worn materials (weeding), and space. Materials are offered in a variety of formats including print, large print, digital, audio, video, and pre-loaded devices.

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to the Library's collection. Budget considerations, community needs and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format. The selection of material in any new format may result in the Library's decision to discard specific items or material formats from its collections in order to responsibly accommodate trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

General Criteria for the Selection of Library Materials

In selecting materials, Professional Librarians use the following criteria:

- Appropriateness to library's mission and service roles
- Relationship to existing collection and other titles available
- Availability elsewhere or more in keeping with other institutions roles
- Availability to purchase or access
- Requests by patrons, advisory groups, and staff
- Suitability of format for user's needs and subject
- Community interests and needs
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Levels of funding and cost of item
- Anticipated use
- Physical quality of material
- Value of resource in relation to its cost
- Authority, accuracy and accessibility of presentation
- Currency of information
- Reputation of author, publisher or issuing body
- Attention and response of critics, reviewers and general public
- Subject matter and scope
- Historical significance
- Quality and style of writing
- Inclusion of work in bibliographies, recommendations lists, indexes

DIGITAL AND MULTI-MEDIA RESOURCES

The Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest provides access to global digital resources all library patrons. The Library recognizes that the development of digital information and networking poses new challenges as well as new opportunities for patrons, Board and staff. The Library believes that these challenges and opportunities are best addressed by adherence to the fundamental principles of traditional library use and the principles of a free society.

Internet Access

The internet enables the library to provide information resources beyond the confines of its own collection. It allows access to ideas, information and commentary from around the globe. While the Internet offers a wealth of materials that are personally, professionally and culturally enriching to individuals of all ages, it also enables access to some material that may be offensive, disturbing, illegal, inaccurate or incomplete. The Library provides filtered, free access to the internet to the public. The responsibility for what minors read or view on the internet rests with parents or guardians. In support of parental responsibility, the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest requires children under the age of 16 to have parental/guardian permission to obtain a Library card.

Digital Resources

Professional staff will identify and recommend interesting and useful internet destinations and resources from the Library's website, which supports the Library's Mission and service roles, as we do for the in-house library materials collection. Links to information resources are based on staff's judgment of the best resources available and do not imply endorsement. Users should recognize, however, that the Library is not responsible for the content of linked sites, or for the content of sources accessed through subsequent links. The library cannot control or monitor material that may be accessible from internet sources because the internet is a vast and unregulated medium with access points that can and do change rapidly and unpredictably.

Questions considered when evaluating whether to link to a remote website:

1. Is the subject matter and information useful for our patrons?
2. Is the remote site easily accessible?
3. Is it relevant to the overall mission of the Library?
4. Is it a local resource?
5. Is the resource of sufficient quality to merit a link?
6. Who has established the page? (Authority)
7. Is there a sponsor?
8. Is the information accurate?
9. Is there discernable bias?
10. Does the page have a posting and/or revision date?
11. Is the site regularly maintained?

Digital and Online Databases

The State of Alabama offers all citizens of the state access to its premier database collection, the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL). The AVL is a collection of 55 databases encompassing all age groups and a vast range of topics. The Alabama Virtual Library uses geo-location technology to authenticate Alabama residents. This technology allows most Alabama residents access to AVL from their homes without the need for a username and password. If the geolocation technology is unable to "recognize" a user as an Alabama resident, then residents may login with an AVL Card.

Periodicals and Newspapers

Periodicals are an important source of new ideas, current topics, and consumer information and are in high demand as recreational reading material. The Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest subscribes to a broad range of approximately 100 periodicals and newspapers in both print and digital formats. Print periodicals are generally retained for six months and newspapers are

generally retained for six weeks. The periodicals collection is reviewed annually for additions and deletions.

Audio/Visual Materials

As with print materials, the audio/visual collections are selective rather than comprehensive in scope. All materials selected will contribute to the fulfillment of goals of the Library as a whole, and criteria for the selection of audio and video materials are much the same as those used in the selection of other collections.

- *Audio Books (CD's, MP3s, Playaways, downloadables)*
Audio materials are considered an adjunct to the print collection; this collection is not intended to mirror development of literature or to systematically cover non-fiction topics. Unabridged titles are preferred but abridged titles may be purchased and added to the collection upon request. Fiction is emphasized over non-fiction. As patrons move from CDs, MP3s, and Playaways to digital/downloadable formats the ratio of these materials will also change over time.
- *DVDs and Blu Rays*
The goals of the DVD and Blu Ray collection are:
 - To provide basic information on a variety of subjects of interest to patrons. The video collection is considered an adjunct to the print collection, with emphasis placed on purchases in which the nature of the medium adds substantially to the viewer's understanding.
 - To provide children with a quality selection of preschool learning and entertainment ideas such as film versions of children's literature; selected non-fiction DVDs and Blu Rays that reflect areas of interest across generations, and award-winning children's films.
 - To provide patrons with DVDs and Blu Rays including feature films. Specifically collected are family entertainment and literature-based materials. In addition to popular film and movie titles, the collections include quality productions from such entities as PBS, BBC, and classic television series.
 - DVDs are protected by copyright and are for home use only.
- *Music*
Selections for the music collection are in CD and digital formats and cover all music periods and tastes.

Additional selection criteria for Audio/Visual Materials

- Technical quality of audio and visual reproduction
- Presentation or experience that is unique to format and provides an alternative to print
- Significance of performance or diversity in interpretation
- Critical acclaim as demonstrated in awards, nomination for awards, and/or reviews
- Suitability to be circulated or housed in a sturdy, safe and convenient manner

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