

BLUE EARTH COUNTY LIBRARY POLICIES

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Blue Earth County Library System will provide access to resources, services, activities and information of local interest that encourage life-long learning in a cost-effective manner.

Adopted: 10-2000

Revised/Reviewed: 06-2001, 06-2014, 10-2017

CHILDREN

The Blue Earth County Library System welcomes children of all ages to use its facilities and services. To ensure an enjoyable and safe experience, the Library has established the following guidelines:

- Children ages 8 and older may be in the Library unattended, provided that their behavior is not disruptive to other customers or staff members.
- Children under the age of 8 must be supervised by a responsible caregiver at all times while they are in the Library and attending Library events.
- Children are expected to follow the code of conduct set forth in the Library User Rights and Responsibilities Policy.
- Library staff are not permitted to assume responsibility for the safety, care or supervision of children.
- Parents/guardians should promptly pick up children at closing time. If a child is unattended at closing, library staff will make a reasonable attempt to reach the parent/guardian and will then contact Mankato Public Safety Department.

Adopted: 10-2000

Revised/Reviewed: 02-2002, 02-2005, 05-2007, 06-2014, 10-2017, 12-2021

**BLUE EARTH COUNTY LIBRARY
AFTER-HOURS INCIDENT REPORT**

Incident Information

Date _____ Library Closing Time _____
Library Staff Assisting _____

Child(ren)'s Information

Child(ren) Name _____
Address _____
Telephone Number _____ Age _____
Guardian Name _____ Relationship to Child(ren) _____
Additional Comments _____

Actions Taken

_____ Parent / Caregiver called at _____ (time).
_____ Law Enforcement notified at _____ (time).

Parent / Caregiver Information

The above named child(ren) was picked up by the following person.

Parent / Caregiver Name _____
Address _____
Phone Number _____ Relationship to child(ren) _____
Time Child(ren) Picked Up _____

I understand that the Library does not provide supervision for children after closing time. For the safety of this child in the future, I will make arrangements to pick up the child from the library by closing time. The library reserves the right to suspend library privileges for repeat offenders.

Signature Date

Law Enforcement Information

The above named child was picked up by _____.

Collection Development

Principles

The Library's collection is designed to support the cultural, information, educational, and recreational interests of Blue Earth County residents. It reflects the interests of the general public and supports the demographics and diversity of the community. The collection contains materials on many topics. It has materials in different formats, languages, and levels of difficulty. The Library's objective is to select, organize, and preserve print and non-print materials within the limitation of space and budget, and to make them freely and easily available to the people of the community. The library's goal is to encourage the maximum use of its collection by the greatest number of persons.

Access to material is ensured by the way it is organized, managed, and displayed.

The Library participates in interlibrary loan networks to make materials not in the collection available to users. Electronic resources are also made accessible through web-based environments. To ensure equitable and efficient access, materials may be subject to use limitations. Remote electronic access to the library catalog and electronic resources is provided within technical, budgetary, and licensing constraints.

The Library provides an impartial environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together. Individuals apply their personal interest and values to the materials they choose for themselves. The values of one may not be imposed on another. The Library's selection of materials does not imply an endorsement of the contents.

Parents and legal guardians have the responsibility for their child's use of Library materials. The Blue Earth County Library subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights adopted by the American Library Association and to the Freedom to Read Statement and the Freedom to View Statement as attached herewith. The Library also subscribes to the interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, included in summary form with this policy, as delineated by the American Library Association.

Responsibility for Selection

Final responsibility for materials selection rests with the Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board as well as Blue Earth County. However, the responsibility for initial selection of materials is shared by designated Library staff.

Suggestions from users are always welcomed.

There will be no unauthorized additions/withdrawals from the collection: No items should be added or taken from the collection except by those with the authority to do so.

Guidelines for Materials Selection

Collection development staff use a set of criteria to guide selection decisions. The Library Board, with input from Library Staff, will put together a Collection Development Plan detailing more specific guidelines for selecting and purchasing materials. This plan will be reviewed every 3-5 years.

General criteria for selection:

- Reliability of information

- Timeliness and permanent value
- Literary style and readability
- Popular interest and public appeal
- Existing subject matter in collection
- Integrity of author and publisher
- Availability elsewhere in the system
- Format
- Patron request
- Historical, local, and cultural significance
- Potential appeal
- Cost

Withdrawing Library Materials

Materials with obsolete, incorrect, outdated information, those in poor physical condition, and those no longer being utilized by the community are systematically removed from the collection. Library staff have a schedule for withdraw and review/update schedule regularly. Withdrawn materials deemed suitable for resale will be donated to the Friends of the Deep Valley Library. Proceeds from sales are used to support future Blue Earth County Library material purchases.

Challenged Materials and Reconsideration

Individuals may request a selection decision to be reconsidered by submitting a written “Request for Reconsideration of materials” available at any Library service desk. The Library Director will review request and respond accordingly. The Library Board, upon request, hears appeals of the Library’s response and will make a decision based on review of objection, the material, and Library Board policies including: this policy, Library Bills of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View. The same title may be reconsidered and brought to the Library Board once every five years.

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.

The Freedom to Read Statement

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:

1. *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.

2. *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.

3. *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.

4. *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.

5. *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.

6. *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 no 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.

7. *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 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.

Freedom to View Statement

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices.

Following are those documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the [Library Bill of Rights](#) and background statements detailing the philosophy and history of each. For convenience and easy reference, the documents are presented in alphabetical order. These documents are policies of the American Library Association, having been adopted by the [ALA Council](#).

[Access to Digital Information, Services, and Networks](#): Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. Libraries and librarians protect and promote these rights by selecting, producing, providing access to, identifying, retrieving, organizing, providing instruction in the use of, and preserving recorded expression regardless of the format or technology.

[Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors](#): Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources available to other users violate the Library Bill of Rights. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

[Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, or Sexual Orientation](#): The American Library Association stringently and unequivocally maintains that libraries and librarians have an obligation to resist efforts that systematically exclude materials dealing with any subject matter, including sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

[Access to Resources and Services in the School Library](#): The school library plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shapes the resources and services of a school library, the principles of the Library Bill of Rights apply equally to all libraries, including school libraries.

[Advocating for Intellectual Freedom](#): Through education programming and instruction in information skills, libraries empower individuals to explore ideas, access, and evaluate information, draw meaning from information presented in a variety of formats, develop valid conclusions, and express new ideas. Such education facilitates intellectual access to information and offers a path to intellectual freedom.

[Challenged Resources](#): ALA declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources.

[Diversity in Collection Development](#): Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Toleration is meaningless without tolerance for what some may consider detestable. Librarians cannot justly permit their own preferences to limit their degree of tolerance in collection development, because freedom is indivisible.

[Economic Barriers to Information Access](#): A democracy presupposes an informed citizenry. The First Amendment mandates the right of all persons to free expression, and the corollary right to receive the constitutionally protected expression of others. The publicly supported library provides free, equal, and equitable access to information for all people of the community the library serves. While the roles, goals and objectives of publicly supported libraries may differ, they share this common mission.

[Equity, Diversity, Inclusion](#): Libraries are essential to democracy and self-government, to personal development and social progress, and to every individual's inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To that end, libraries and library workers should embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion in everything that they do.

[Evaluating Library Collections](#): The continuous review of library materials is necessary as a means of maintaining an active library collection of current interest to users. In the process, materials may be added and physically deteriorated or obsolete materials may be replaced or removed in accordance with the collection maintenance policy of a given library and the needs of the community it serves. Continued evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of all libraries and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or disapproved of by segments of the community.

[Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards](#): Libraries often provide exhibit spaces and bulletin boards. The uses made of these spaces should conform to the Library Bill of Rights: Article I states, "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." Article II states, "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Article VI maintains that exhibit space should be made available "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

[Expurgation of Library Materials](#): Expurgating library materials is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agent, or its parent institution (if any).

[Internet Filtering](#): The negative effects of content filters on Internet access in public libraries and schools are demonstrable and documented. Consequently, consistent with previous resolutions, the American Library Association cannot recommend filtering. However the ALA recognizes that local libraries and schools are governed by local decision makers and local considerations and often must rely on federal or state funding for computers and internet access. Because adults and, to a lesser degree minors, have First Amendment rights, libraries and schools that choose to use content filters should implement policies and procedures that mitigate the negative effects of filtering to the greatest extent possible. The process should encourage and allow users to ask for filtered websites and content to be unblocked, with minimal delay and due respect for user privacy.

[Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries](#): A strong intellectual freedom perspective is critical to the development of academic library collections and services that dispassionately meet the education and research needs of a college or university community. The purpose of this statement is to outline how and where intellectual freedom principles fit into an academic library setting, thereby raising consciousness of the intellectual freedom context within which academic librarians work.

[Labeling Systems](#): The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

[Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource](#): Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for information, education, and recreation.

[Meeting Rooms](#): Many libraries provide meeting rooms and other spaces designated for use by the public for meetings and other events as a service to their communities. Article VI of the Library Bill of Rights states, “Libraries which make ... 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.”

[Minors and Internet Activity](#): The digital environment offers opportunities for accessing, creating, and sharing information. The rights of minors to retrieve, interact with, and create information posted on the Internet in schools and libraries are extensions of their First Amendment rights.

[Politics in American Libraries](#): The Library Bill of Rights specifically states that "all people" and "all points of view" should be included in library materials and information. There are no limiting qualifiers for viewpoint, origin, or politics.

[Prisoners' Right to Read](#): ALA asserts a compelling public interest in the preservation of intellectual freedom for individuals of any age held in jails, prisons, detention facilities, juvenile facilities, immigration facilities, prison work camps, and segregated units within any facility, whether public or private.

[Privacy](#): Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. See also [Questions and Answers on Privacy and Confidentiality](#).

[Rating Systems](#): Libraries, no matter their size, contain an enormous wealth of viewpoints and are responsible for making those viewpoints available to all. However, libraries do not advocate or endorse the content found in their collections or in resources made accessible through the library. Rating systems appearing in library public access catalogs or resource discovery tools present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

[Religion in American Libraries](#): The First Amendment guarantees the right of individuals to believe and practice their religion or practice no religion at all and prohibits government from establishing or endorsing a religion or religions. Thus the freedom of, for and from religion, are similarly guaranteed.

[Restricted Access to Library Materials](#): Libraries are a traditional forum for the open exchange of information. Attempts to restrict access to library materials violate the basic tenets of the Library Bill of Rights.

[Services to People with Disabilities](#): Libraries should be fully inclusive of all members of their community and strive to break down barriers to access. The library can play a transformational role in helping facilitate more complete participation in society by providing fully accessible resources and services.

[The Universal Right to Free Expression](#): Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedoms of speech, press, religion, assembly, and association, and the corollary right to receive information.

[User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems](#): Libraries offer a variety of discovery systems to provide access to the resources in their collections. Such systems can include online public access catalogs (OPAC), library discovery products, institutional repositories, and archival systems. With the widespread use of library technology that incorporates social media components, intelligent objects, and knowledge-sharing tools comes the ability of libraries to provide greater opportunities for patron engagement in those discovery systems through user-generated content. These features may include the ability of users to contribute commentary such as reviews, simple point-and-click rating systems (e.g. one star to five stars), or to engage in extensive discussions or other social interactions. This kind of content could transform authoritative files, alter information architecture, and change the flow of information within the library discovery system.

[Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries](#): Visual images and performances in the library should not be restricted based on content. Librarians and library staff should be proactive in seeking out

a wide variety of representational and abstract artwork and performance art, with limitations or parameters set only with respect to space, installation, fiscal, and technical constraints.

Collection Development

Adopted: June 2019

Reviewed: August 2021, October 2022

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Blue Earth County Library affirms its commitment to the value of cultural diversity. The Blue Earth County Library subscribes to the principles set forth by the American Library Association's (ALA) commitment to diversity and inclusion as can be found in the ALA's Core Values of Librarianship (included in this policy). The Blue Earth County Library will continue to formulate policies and services consistent with the ALA's Diversity Policy that can be found at: [B.3 Diversity \(Old Number 60\) | About ALA](#)

The Blue Earth County Library will:

- create a welcoming environment where the multicultural character of our clientele and staff is recognized and valued.
- when needed or appropriate, develop policies which foster a respect for and awareness of diversity.
- advocate for equal access to library services regardless of the race, gender, age, religion, language, socio-economic status, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation of the patron.
- develop a multicultural collection and provide access to information that is relevant to the experiences, cultures, and historic contributions of a diverse population.
- plan and conduct activities and programs incorporating multicultural themes including intergenerational programs.
- form alliances with community and regional organizations, institutions, agencies, and businesses in order to reach diverse user populations.
- serve as a clearinghouse for resources/information concerning diversity.

Adopted: 10-2000

Revised/Reviewed: 06-2001, 02-2005, 06-2014, 10-2017, 12-2020

DATA PRIVACY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to communicate Blue Earth County Library System's role and responsibility to safeguard patron data. The Library values patron privacy and confidentiality and is committed to protecting user's personally identifiable information so that patrons can safely access and use library services.

Definition

For the purpose of this policy, patron data is defined as the information that identifies a library patron or information that can be connected to a patron. It is a form of government data that is subject to federal law, Minnesota State Statutes, and Blue Earth County data policies and procedures.

Patron data includes, but is not limited to information associated with borrowing library materials and requesting materials and information, using the library's computers and wireless service, reserving meeting rooms, and accessing e-materials and other resources via third party vendors.

Public Data

In the state of Minnesota, all government data including patron data is public unless it has been classified otherwise by statute or federal law.

Private Patron Data

All records, formal and informal, in the Blue Earth County Library System relating to library registration, library materials requested, and the subsequent circulation of materials by library users of material provided by the library are considered confidential in nature and may not be disclosed for other than library purposes.

Circumstances when private data may be released

1. Patrons may access data about themselves through the online catalog
2. A library may release reserved materials to a family member or other person who resides with a library patron and who is picking up the material on behalf of the patron. A patron may request that reserved materials be released only to the patron.
3. Private data may be disclosed to a parent or guardian of a minor or vulnerable adult. In the case of a minor, the library shall, upon request by the minor, withhold data from parents or guardians if the library determines that withholding the data would be in the best interest of the minor. Minnesota Administrative Rules 1205.0500 outlines the access procedures for a parent or guardian.
4. The Library may release private data pursuant to a court order.
5. The Library may be compelled to disclose private data pursuant to the USA PATRIOT Act.

Disclosing Patron Data

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. The Director may seek 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 library user, the request is considered to be defective and not binding upon the library and its personnel, except under further due process of law.

Collecting and Retaining Patron Data

The Library does not monitor what patrons do while using the library's computers or other devices and internet and/or wireless network. It does not monitor sites patrons visit, documents they produce, transactions they make, or emails they create or view.

Patron library card numbers, and the location and time of patron logins are collected to manage the queues for using library computers. For wireless connections, the date and time of a wireless connection and the MAC address of the device that is connected through the wireless network is retained. The USA PATRIOT Act requires that this data be retained for a reasonable period of time.

The library's collection is also a part of the networked, digitized library environment. Patrons borrow e-books and e-audiobooks by accessing and downloading them via third party vendors. While vendors who are under contract with the Library are subject to the same federal and state data privacy laws as the Library, their compliance is subject to the ethics and integrity of those organizations. The Library actively works with third party vendors to support patron data privacy.

Appeals

Any problems or conditions relating to the privacy of a library user through the records of the Blue Earth County Library system which are not provided in the policy statement shall be referred to the Library Director who, after study and consultation with legal counsel, shall issue a written decision as to whether to heed the request for information.

See also Minnesota Statutes 13.02, 13.05, 13.40 and USA Patriot Act section 215.

***** Adopted: 10-2000

Revised/Reviewed: 06-2001, 10-2003, 02-2005, 06-2014, 12-2015, 10-2017, 04-2021

Distribution of Free Publications and Community Postings Policy

As a public service, the Blue Earth County Library may make limited space available to distribute free publications or post community announcements.

The Library may provide space for copies of free newsletters, flyers, and brochures on subjects of educational, cultural, civic, and recreational interest.

Guidelines

Publications and postings from the community will be made available in a designated space at the discretion of the library director. Priority will be given to Blue Earth County produced material.

When reviewing items for distribution staff will:

- Use their professional judgement to critically evaluate the authority, appropriateness, scope, audience, currency, and accuracy of items submitted for posting and/or distribution.
- Be mindful of the library's mission, vision, and services; and with onsite conditions when considering items for posting and/or in the distribution.

The Library does not endorse nor take a position on any of the views presented in free publications or in items posted for community viewing.

The following items may not be posted or distributed in the Library:

- Advertisements of personal services or products sold for commercial profit
- Religious tracts
- Petitions
- Job postings
- Rental announcements
- Campaign literature
- Any type of money solicitation

Display items should be of reasonable size for display space available. The appearance and content of the material must be suitable for the Library's general public service area.

The Library reserves the right to decide what material is to be posted or distributed based on the availability of space and these guidelines.

The Library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection of materials posted or submitted for posting.

Failure to follow these guidelines will result in the withdrawal of distributions privileges.

Adopted: 10-2022

DONATIONS

The Blue Earth County Library System welcomes and encourages donations. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to those who wish to support the Blue Earth County Library System through a financial or other donation.

MONETARY DONATIONS

The BECL will gratefully accept donations or bequests of any amount.

Individuals may specify that their donation be used for a specific library or system-wide, for the materials collection or library programming. If not specified, the money will be used according to the Library Director's discretion.

REAL PROPERTY

Items such as works of art may be donated to the BECL. The decision to accept and utilize donated art is made by the discretion of the Library Director and in consultation with the Library Board when deemed necessary.

Donated items become the property of the Blue Earth County Library, which has the authority on retention, location, and disposition. A good faith effort will be made to keep donated art in the library as intended by the donor.

GIFTS OF MATERIALS

The Blue Earth County Library welcomes gifts of selected materials for the collection based on the following criteria:

- The Library, in accepting a gift of materials for the collection, assumes free and complete legal title to those materials.
- The decision regarding the acceptance or rejection of gifts will be determined by the staff member responsible for selecting materials for that part of the collection.
- The Library will place in its collection only materials which meet the criteria stated in its Collection Development Policy.
- The Library may dispose of materials which are deemed unsuitable for inclusion in the Library's collection.
- Individuals who wish an appraisal of the materials they are giving to the Library must indicate so.
- An acknowledgment of a gift of materials for the collection will be sent to a donor when, in the judgment of the staff member responsible for selecting materials for that part of the collection, it is a significant contribution.
- Due to staffing limitations, the Library is not able to pick up donations of materials.

The Library does not accept gifts of encyclopedias, textbooks, computer manuals, VHS or cassette tapes or any materials that are worn, stained, or mildewed.

GIFTS OF LOCAL & SELF PUBLISHED MATERIALS

For the purposes of this policy, local authors are defined as current residents of Minnesota. In general, the Library does not collect self-published materials from non-Minnesota residents.

The Library does not purchase unsolicited materials. Whenever possible, the Library wishes to recognize the literary efforts of local authors by including their works in the collection. However, we are not able to add all donated material to the collection. Works must meet the selection criteria and standards as detailed in the Library's Collection Development Policy. These criteria include professional reviews, author qualifications and community demand.

Attempts are made to acquire titles by local authors who are published by mainstream publishers. Titles that are self-published are not added to the collection unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

The author is encouraged to provide any available professional reviews of the material. Reader reviews on Amazon or other online sites are not considered as part of the review process.

Adopted: 10-2000

Revised/Reviewed: 06-2001, 02-2005, 03-2012, 06-2014, 10-2017, 06-2021, 12-2022

Equipment and Internet Use Policy

The Blue Earth County Library provides free access to the internet and a variety of technology equipment. Doing so furthers the mission to providing access to resources, services, activities and information that encourages life-long learning in a cost-effective manner. Visitors are expected to follow the guidelines for use mandated in the policy below.

Computer/Laptop Use Guidelines:

Computers require user sign in. Library cards are required to do this. Guest passes are available. Computer users should not attempt to restart the library computers or in any way intervene with the normal operations of the computer/laptop equipment or software. Users may not alter, delete, copy, tamper, with any software loaded on the laptop or otherwise change its existing configuration. Patrons may not install software on the laptops.

Patrons should save their work on their own external memory device. All documents are automatically deleted when the patron is logged off.

The Library is not responsible for damage to an external device (i.e. a flash drive or other external device) or for the loss of data that may occur while the laptop is in use.

Headphones are required for playing audio and video files.

Designated online library catalog computers are to be used only for library catalog material searches. Westlaw computer users will be given priority for legal research and law information.

Computer/laptop users must comply with time limits. Time use on library computers is monitored by software. Customers are allowed 60 minutes per day. Time may be extended upon request.

Computer use is limited to one hour per day per user. Times may be extended for homework and job related activities

Computers will automatically shut down 15 minutes before closing.

Laptop Specific Guidelines:

- Laptops are available for check-out.
- Users are expected to review Laptop Check-Out Agreement prior to use. Check-out dictates users concede to the agreement.
- Library laptops are for use within Library building only.

Computers and laptops may not be reserved in advance.

Immediately report any damage or problems with Library equipment to Library staff.

Internet/Wireless Use:

The internet is not a secure environment. Visitors using the library internet/wireless are doing so at their own risk.

Library power outlets may not always be available. Visitors must refrain from blocking aisles with electrical and other cords.

Audio-Visual Equipment:

The Library's auditorium and conference rooms have projection equipment available for a variety of activities in the space. Users of the space must review and abide by the meeting room policy and equipment procedures for that equipment.

Other Library Equipment:

The Library has a printer and copy machine available for visitor use. Visitors will be expected to pay current rate per page.

The Library has a microfilm machine available for use. No reservations will be taken to use the machine. There is an informational guide available. Visitors are expected to use machine as specified in guide and not circumvent any established programs.

Immediately report any damage or problems with Library equipment to Library staff.

Youth:

Parents are responsible for their child's access on internet workstations and should offer guidance to their child's usage. The Library staff will not oversee children's use of the internet, except when the staff is aware that the child's use violates this policy.

Adults should not use the computers in the children's space if they do not have children in that space.

Unacceptable Conduct:

- Displaying graphics that would be considered obscene or harmful to others. This would include images that contain exceptionally violent or sexually explicit content.
- Using the computer/laptops for any illegal purpose, including but not limited to software piracy, circumventing security measures in place, misrepresenting oneself as another user, copyright infringement, or transmission of threatening or harassing materials.
- Misrepresenting oneself as another user.

Blue Earth County Library users are required to comply with the library's policies and rules of conduct while using library resources. Patrons violating these rules will be asked to discontinue such activities and/or leave the library. Misuse of library computers may result in loss of computer privileges and/or loss of library privileges.

To ensure compliance with the policy, the library reserves the right to monitor use of all library equipment and to set rules as necessary.

ADOPTED: 08-2022

Exhibits and Displays Policy

The Blue Earth County Library schedules exhibits and displays of interest, information, and enlightenment to the community. The primary purpose of exhibits/displays in the Library is to extend the Library's role as a cultural, educational, and community-centered institution.

The Library Board of Trustees subscribes to the Library Bill of rights, Article VI states,

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.

The Library attempts to present a wide spectrum of interests, viewpoints and opinions. The presence of an exhibit or display does not constitute an endorsement by the Blue Earth County Library administration, staff or Library Board.

Types

1. Exhibit Cases- Enclosed floor showcases located around the fountain space, against south wall of the fountain space, and Maud Hart Lovelace Wing. Priority for these spaces will be given to the Blue Earth County and the Blue Earth County Library. Exhibits are approved and scheduled for this space by the Library staff. Preference will be giving for local partners and non-profit organizations.
2. Displays of Library Materials- Library staff schedules and prepares displays of Library materials to make materials more accessible to users, to feature different segments of the Library collection, and to increase or reflect awareness of current issues and/or events. Displays are changed frequently. Circulating materials may be borrowed directly from the display. All displays must have prior approval by the Director or the Director's designee.
3. Freestanding Exhibits & Impromptu Displays- Eligible for display subject to the availability of appropriate space as determined and approved by the Library Director. Guidelines for these types of display mirror that of the aforementioned display types.

Statement of Responsibility

The Library assumes no responsibility for the preservation, protection, possible damage or theft of any item displayed or exhibited.

The Library does not carry insurance covering displayed materials and cannot provide storage for the property of organizations or individuals displaying at the Library.

Exhibits will be scheduled for a designated period of time.

Exhibit and display content should be appropriate for public library use (free and suitable to all ages) and contain nothing illegal or discriminatory.

The Library reserves the right to cancel an exhibit or display post at any time.

Adopted, June 2019

Reviewed, October 2022

Library Board By-Laws

The purpose of the Blue Earth County Library is to establish and maintain excellent library services for the citizens of Blue Earth County within the fiscal limits set by the Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners. The Library Board shall establish rules and regulations for the accomplishments of the goals and objectives they collectively establish as well as approve policies governing the operations of the library.

The Library Director shall supervise the employees and resources of the library and be responsible for the accomplishment of the goals and objectives and compliance with the limitations established by the Library Board. No individual member of the Library Board shall direct the employees or appropriate the resources of the library (except as specifically authorized in writing by the Library Board.)

1. **Library Board.** The Blue Earth County Library Board shall be composed of five residents of Blue Earth County, one of whom being a County Commissioner. Terms of office shall be three years. Library Board Members shall be appointed by the Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners. No Library Board member shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive three year terms.
2. **Selection of Officers.** The officers of the Blue Earth County Library Board shall be a Chairperson and Co-Chairperson and any other officers it may from time to time deem necessary. All officers of the Board shall be elevated by the Library Board from within its membership. Such elections shall be held at the first meeting of the year. Officers will serve for a one year term or until their successor is appointed.
3. **Duties and Powers.**
 - a. **Chairperson.** The Chairperson shall be presiding officer of the Library Board at all meetings of the Library Board. In the event of vacancies on the Library Board, the Library Director shall inform the Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners of such vacancies. The Library Director, in cooperation with the Library Board, and County Board of Commissioners will work to promptly fill the vacancy.
 - b. **Co-Chairperson.** In the absence or incapacity of the Chairperson, the Co-Chairperson shall preside.
 - c. **Duties of the Library Board:**
 - i. Develop polices & procedures for the operation & administration of the Library. Submit to County Board for approval.
 - ii. Accept donations to the library on behalf of Blue Earth County.
 - iii. **Collection.** Library Board has sole authority and discretion in maintaining and developing the materials collections.
 - iv. **Library meeting room.** The Library Board is responsible for the use and scheduling of Library meeting rooms.
 - v. **Planning.** The Library Board is responsible for long-range planning for the Libraries.

4. **Meetings.**
 - a. **Regular Meetings:** The regular meetings of the Library Board shall be the first Thursday of every even month at 4pm at the Blue Earth County Library, 100 East Main Street, Mankato, MN.
 - b. **Quorum.** A quorum for purposes of regular and special meetings of the Library Board shall consists of three members.
 - c. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings may only be called at the request of the Library Board Chairperson.
5. **Agenda. The agenda for the regular meetings shall be as follows:**
 1. Call to Order
 2. Adoption/Additions of the Agenda
 3. Approval of Minutes
 4. Old Business
 5. New Business
 6. Adjournment
6. **Amendments.** Amendments of these by-laws may be offered by any Library Board member at any regular meeting. Such amendments must be submitted in writing and will automatically lay over until the next regular meeting except on the affirmative vote of four members of the Board. Any amendment must be approved by a majority of the members of the Library Board.
7. **Reports.** The Library Board shall approve the State Annual Report required by the MN Department of education. The Library Board will approve and submit such other reports as required by state law. The Library Board may also request such other information and reports as necessary to assess the operation of the library.
8. **Goals and Objectives.** The Library Board shall routinely adopt the annual goals and objectives and long range (i.e. five year) goals for the library with respect to the overall goals, objectives and long range goals of Blue Earth County. Upon adoption, these goals and objective will be forwarded to the Blue Earth county board of commissioners for their review and comments.
9. **Parliamentary Procedure.** Unless specifically accepted, the meetings of the Library Board shall be conducted pursuant to the Robert's Rules of Order.

Adopted: 06-2019

Revised/Reviewed: 02-2021

LIBRARY USER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY

Library user rights and responsibilities have been established to maintain a peaceful atmosphere that promotes the use and enjoyment of library resources; protects the safety of the general public, staff and library property; and creates a welcoming environment for all. This policy applies on all library property including the patios and to off site locations where the library is hosting an event.

To ensure a welcoming environment, the responsible use and care of all library materials and property is essential.

1. Covered beverages are permitted in the library. Consumption of food is not allowed in public areas of the library with exception of meetings held in the meeting rooms and programs approved by the library.
2. The library is not responsible for a library user's personal belongings. Any items that are found and turned in will be kept in the library's lost and found which is cleaned out regularly. Items are donated to the Salvation Army Store. Any cash that is found will be securely stored for one month and then will be used to purchase new materials for the library.
3. Those who steal, damage, or deface library materials or property may be prosecuted.
4. Library users are required to comply with the library's policies and procedures regarding computer and internet use.

The safety of library users and staff is essential.

1. Bicycles are not permitted in the library. The library assumes no responsibility for bicycles parked in bicycle racks by the entrances to the library. Athletic equipment such as skateboards, balls, or in-line skates may not be used in the library.
2. Animals: Animals and pets are not permitted in the library except when the animal or pet is part of a special program, or the animal is a designated working, therapy or service animal. The owner should have the appropriate paperwork and/or proper vest/patches available for the designated working, therapy or service animal.
3. Children: Parents and guardians are responsible for the behavior, safety, and supervision of their children at all times. Please see the Children Policy for more information.
4. Sleeping: Sleeping is not allowed in the library and individuals may be awakened by library staff and asked to leave.
5. Drugs/tobacco: Use of illegal drugs and tobacco products is prohibited throughout the library building.
6. Threatening, harassing, or intimidating language or behavior will result in immediate expulsion from the library.

The rights of an individual to use the library without being unreasonably disturbed by another is essential.

1. Disturbances such as loud noises, talking loudly, whistling, singing, using profanity, running or engaging in other disruptive conduct is prohibited. Disturbances include stalking, prolonged staring at or following another with the intent to annoy, or intentionally behaving in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other customers or staff.
2. Using personal electronic equipment in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other customers or staff or interferes with library service is prohibited.
3. Appropriate attire is required. Shirts and shoes must be worn in the library. Offensive body odor due to poor personal hygiene or overpowering perfume or cologne that causes a nuisance or reasonably interferes with library use by other customers or staff is prohibited.
4. Cell phones should be set to low volume or no-ring (vibrate) or turned off when entering the library. Library users should limit themselves to short, quiet phone calls in designated areas whenever possible. These areas include: the vestibule at the north or south entrances of the library and outside the library building. Extended conversations that might disturb other customers should be moved outside.
5. Being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances that causes a public disturbance or antisocial behaviors is not allowed.

Everyone has the right to use library resources provided his or her behavior does not unreasonably interfere with the rights of others to do the same.

Behavior which violates library policy, interferes with the use of the library by others or interferes with staff in the conduct of their duties is not permitted. Customers engaging in such behavior may be asked to stop the behavior and/or they may be asked to leave the building.

The police may be called and/or the customer's library privileges may be revoked. Unlawful activities will promptly be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Staff is authorized to require a person to leave the library for the day if in the judgment of the staff member the customer's behavior is disorderly or disruptive. If the behavior is repeated or severe, staff will immediately file an incident report and consult with Library Director. A Trespass Notice may be issued.

Your entrance to this public library indicates that you are willing and able to act courteously toward all other persons here, act respectfully with regard to public property, and follow all library rules.

* * * * *

Adopted: 12-2019, Revised: 06-2022

MEETING ROOMS

The Facilities Use Policy had been established to maintain a peaceful atmosphere that promotes the use and enjoyment of library resources; protects the safety of the general public, staff and library property; and creates a welcoming environment for all. This policy guides the reservations and use of the Blue Earth County Library meeting rooms.

Principles

The meeting rooms at the Library are made available to the public on an impartial basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use. The use of the Library's room does not constitute the Library's endorsement or advocacy of a meeting's content or an individual/group.

Definitions

Auditorium: This room capacity is 100 people with a classroom-style set up that accommodates 60 people. Modular tables and chairs provide flexibility. Audio/visual equipment is available.
Conference Room: Seating for 16 people. Modular tables and chairs provide flexibility. Audio/visual equipment is available.

Guidelines

Individuals wishing to use Library meeting spaces must read and comply with the Meeting Room Use Agreement and the User Rights and Responsibilities Policy.

Responsibilities

Meeting room users will comply with all federal, state, and local laws and policies. The contact person for the group utilizing Library meeting rooms is responsible for making all arrangements for the room, leaving the facilities clean and for ensuring that group members abide by the Meeting Room Public Use Agreement and the User Rights and Responsibilities Policy. The contact person will be held liable for any damages that are incurred to the facility and its furnishings.

The Library retains the right to monitor all activities on the premises to ensure compliance with Library regulations.

The Library reserves the right to revoke permission for use of the meeting rooms at any time.

Adopted: 10-2000

Revised/Reviewed: 06-2001, 02-2005, 01-2008, 09-2009, 11-2009, 03-2012, 06-2014, 10-2017, 08-2022

VOLUNTEERS

The Administrative staff of the library will administer the volunteer program and will be primarily responsible for recruitment, application, interviewing and logistics of the volunteers and their duties. Public and/or individual recognition of the volunteers will be acknowledged through the library and County Board as deemed appropriate.

Volunteer duties may include but are not limited to shelving books, shelf reading, cleaning and assistance with adult and children's events. The Administrative staff will determine need and number of volunteers for specific tasks and projects and will contact volunteer applicants on an "as needed" basis. Staff will assist in training and overseeing volunteer duties for the specific tasks and projects required.

Adopted: 10-2000

Revised/Reviewed: 06-2001, 02-2005, 11-2013, 05-2014, 10-2017

BLUE EARTH COUNTY LIBRARY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Applicant Information

Today's Date _____

Name _____

Last

First

Middle

Address _____

Street

City

Zip

Code

Home Number (____) _____

Cell Phone (____) _____

Email Address _____

In an emergency, call _____

Name

Relationship

Phone

Previous Volunteer Experience _____

Volunteering Information

Why would you like to volunteer at the library? _____

Interests: _____ Cleaning

_____ Adult Events

_____ Misc. Children's Events

_____ Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries

_____ Bookstore

_____ Book Sales

_____ Sorting/Pricing Books

_____ Misc. Friends Events

Do you have any physical limitations that should be taken into account when assigning projects?

_____ No _____ Yes (specify) _____

Office Use Only

Start Date _____ End Date _____ Comments _____