

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

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## **I. Mission and Goal Statements**

A. The mission of the C. E. Weldon Public Library is to enrich the lives of the citizens of Martin and the surrounding area by providing quality materials and services which fulfill educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the entire community in an atmosphere that is welcoming, respectful, and businesslike.

B. The general library goals of the C. E. Weldon Public Library shall be:

- ❖ To serve all residents of the community and the surrounding area.
- ❖ To make available to all residents of the above area such books and other services that will address their needs to a) become well informed, b) locate answers to important questions, c) cultivate the imagination and creative expression, d) develop skills for career and vocational advancement, and e) enjoy leisure by means of reading and other media services.
- ❖ To acquire the means to provide the most frequently requested material.
- ❖ To maintain a program of service which locates information, guides reading, organizes and interprets material for people of various backgrounds, and stimulates thinking and intellectual development in individuals of any age.
- ❖ To strive consistently to discover new methods and improvements for better service for the library's customers.
- ❖ To review regularly these goals of the C. E. Weldon Public Library and, if necessary, revise them in the light of new developments.

## **II. Who May Use the Library**

A. The library will serve all residents of Martin, Weakley County, and surrounding areas. Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status; or because of mental, emotional, or physical condition; age; or sexual orientation.

B. The use of the library may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return library materials or to pay penalties, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other illegal, disruptive, or objectionable conduct on library premises. Upon registration, a new library borrower and patron will voluntarily complete a demographic data form to be forwarded to the state annually.

## **III. Patron Responsibilities and Conduct**

It is a patron's responsibility to maintain necessary and proper standards of behavior in order to protect his/her individual rights and the rights and privileges of other patrons. If a patron creates a public nuisance, that patron may be restricted from the Library and from the use of the library facilities. Those who are unwilling to leave or do not leave within a reasonable amount of time, after being instructed to do so by the staff, will be subject to the law.

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

### *Young children:*

The C. E. Weldon Public Library encourages visits by young children and it is our desire to make this important visit both memorable and enjoyable for the child. Library staff is not expected to assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised children in the library.

Therefore, it is library policy that all children under age six must be accompanied by a parent or designated responsible person while in the library. Also, if the young child is attending a library program, we require the parent/responsible person to remain in the library throughout the program.

When a child is left in the library at closing time the library staff will exhaust all options to find the child's parents before escorting the child to the police department.

### *Disruptive children:*

Children of all ages are encouraged to use the library for homework, recreational reading, and program attendance. The library staff realizes that the library will be noisier at busy times and that children by nature can cause more commotion. However, children (whether with parents or not) who are being continually disruptive will be given a warning that he/she must settle down or will be asked to leave the library. If after a second warning the child continues to be disruptive, he/she will be asked to leave the library. If the child needs to contact a parent, they may do so and then wait with a staff person until the parent arrives.

### *Cell Phone Policy*

Cell phone users must turn their phones to "silence" or "vibrate" mode upon entering the library. When a cell phone rings, you will be handed a warning card stating the policy. Anyone needing to make or take a call is asked to move to the front library foyer, outside, or the Conference Room (when empty) where quiet conversations may take place with minimal disturbance to others. Library personnel will ask anyone to move to one of the designated areas or to leave the library if he/she is using a cell phone in a prohibited area in the library. Signs conveying this policy will be posted throughout the library.

## **IV. Services of the Library**

The library provides materials and resources for information, entertainment, intellectual development, and enrichment of the people of the community. The library should endeavor to:

- ❖ Select, organize, and make available necessary books and materials.
- ❖ Provide computers for use by patrons for internet research.
- ❖ Provide guidance and assistance to patrons, including technical assistance.
- ❖ Sponsor and implement programs, exhibits, displays, book lists, etc., which would appeal to children and adults.
- ❖ Cooperate with other community agencies and organizations.

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

- ❖ Secure information beyond its own resources when requested. (Using interlibrary loan and other resource sharing methods provided through the system and state.)
- ❖ Lend to other libraries upon request.
- ❖ Develop and provide services to patrons with special needs.
- ❖ Maintain a balance in its services to various age groups.
- ❖ Cooperate with, but not perform the functions of, school or other institutional libraries.
- ❖ Provide service during hours which best meet the needs of the community.
- ❖ Regularly review library services being offered.
- ❖ Use media and other public relations mechanisms to promote the full range of available library services.

## **V. Responsibilities and Authorities of the Library Board**

Library Boards have been created by law to act as the governing body of the library {TCA 10-3-101, 103, 104}. Thus library trustees are public officials, and the powers delegated to library boards are a public trust. Duties and responsibilities include legal responsibilities as established by statute and the establishment of policies governing the day to day operation of the library.

The C. E. Weldon Public Library encourages each library trustee to take advantage of training opportunities for trustees offered by the public library system or statewide agencies and organizations. Likewise, the Library encourages trustees to be active in the state library organization and its efforts to inform the governor and legislature of the benefits and needs of public libraries. For duties and responsibilities of trustees see the Trustee Handbook.

## **VI. Volunteers and Friends**

The Library Board encourages individuals and groups to volunteer their time and efforts in the service of the C. E. Weldon Public Library. In appreciation of volunteer services, the Library acknowledges the need to organize volunteer activities and provide for appropriate recognition of the benefit to the library and the communities it serves.

A library friends group is a formal association of people who unite to plan and execute, in conjunction with library goals and the needs of the library director, programs and events to benefit the library. In particular, a friends group is often heavily involved in fund-raising for the library and often oversees periodic events. Friends groups always serve at the pleasure of the library board which is the only body with legal authority to set policy for the development of the library.

## **VII. Personnel Policy**

### **A. Management Policy:**

The duly appointed library board shall have all management rights, authorities, and responsibilities as stated in the Tennessee Code Annotated.

The library board shall select, appoint, and when necessary for valid reasons, dismiss the director of the library.

The library board shall provide an effective orientation for new directors to assure that the director understands a) the policies and processes related to the daily operation of the library, b) reporting and budgetary requirements that assure accountability and compliance with the law, c) the expectations of the board in regard to administrative processes and protocol, particularly as they relate to conducting effective and efficient board meetings, and d) rules and requirements for state certification and any assistance which is provided by the Library to acquire and maintain appropriate certification.

The library board shall conduct annual appraisals of the library director's performance, at which time personal and management goals can be discussed and negotiated.

### **B. Administrative Policy:**

The person appointed as library director shall be charged with the sole administration of the library.

The director shall be responsible to the library board in matters pertaining to and concerning the library; be present at monthly board meetings and prepare and present such reports and meeting documents as requested.

The director shall have the responsibility of recommending competent staff and overseeing and assigning work schedules.

The director shall maintain financial records in an efficient manner; present regular reports to the library board and to the municipal governing body; prepare the draft of the annual budget to be presented to the library board, and assist trustees with presentation of the adopted request for appropriation to the municipal governing body; present all transactions over \$500.00 from the Gifts and Grants Fund to the Board for approval and all purchase orders over \$500.00 must be signed by the chair of the Board or his/her designee.

The director shall hold regular meetings with staff and/or volunteers for training and interpreting board policy.

The director will be responsible for preparing annual performance assessments for library staff and volunteers.

The director shall have the responsibility for collection development for all materials in the library; this includes selection, ordering, processing, weeding, and inventory of the collections according to the guidelines in the policy.

The director will recommend changes in or additions to library policies as needed.

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The director will perform preparatory work to assist the board with regular library planning.

All travel by the Director and his/her staff must be approved by the C. E. Weldon Public Library Board.

The Library Board must be informed by the next board meeting about any activity assumed by the Director outside his/her responsibility as Library Director. Any activity that is required of the Director by the City of Martin should not detract from his/her duties as Library Director.

All contracts entered into by the C. E. Weldon Public Library must be approved by the Library Board and each contract signed by the chair or his/her designee.

### **C. Salaries**

A classification and salary schedule has been approved by the City of Martin. The director and the library staff are under the regulations and guidelines adopted by the City of Martin relating to City Employees.

### **D. Health Insurance Policy (see City Employee Handbook)**

### **E. Vacation Policy (see City Employee Handbook)**

### **F. Holiday Policy (see City Employee Handbook)**

### **G. Sick Leave (see City Employee Handbook)**

### **H. Leave of Absence:**

Leaves of absence without pay may be granted to library employees for maternity, adoption, illness, travel, or graduate or certification training. All leaves are considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the director. A leave for the director must be approved by the library board.

Requests for leave should be submitted in writing well in advance of the time when the leave is to begin. Written requests should indicate both a beginning and ending date for the leave. Vacation time must be used before an unpaid leave will be approved for reasons other than maternity, adoption, or military training.

When an employee is on unpaid leave he/she is responsible for all health insurance costs and other benefit premiums/deductions that may apply.

In some instances it may be necessary to deny requests for leaves of absence. Leaves are a privilege and can be granted only if the best interests of the library can be maintained.

**I. Bereavement Leave (see City Employee Handbook)**

**J. Military Leave (see City Employee Handbook)**

**K. Jury Duty (see City Employee Handbook)**

**L. Work Schedule Policy**

Major changes in the director's schedule or other circumstances may not be made without approval of the library board. Requests for such shall be made in writing to the library board. Requests for changes in the work schedule of other staff or volunteers shall be made in writing to the library director.

**M. Meetings, Conventions, and Workshops**

The director, staff and trustees attending continuing education opportunities to aid the library shall be allowed expenses at the discretion of the library board according to the amount appropriated in budget for such. The director, staff and trustees are encouraged to attend and participate in continuing education activities.

**N. Disciplinary Policy**

An employee of the C. E. Weldon Public Library may be dismissed for any action or behavior that causes the Library's image or operation to be diminished. This includes but is not limited to: incompetence, misconduct, inattention to assigned duties, or unapproved absences from work.

Normally termination would be a final step which would follow:

*substandard performance appraisal,  
verbal and/or written warnings,  
suspension, and/or  
extended probation.*

It is important that complete and clear records be maintained of all disciplinary processes for the protection of the employee and the library.

The Library wants each employee to be successful in his/her job and will work with employees to eliminate deficiencies.

While notice of intent to terminate can be expected, the C.E. Weldon Public Library reserves the right to dismiss an employee without notice in cases involving theft, drug or alcohol abuse, criminal activity, or in instances of significant misconduct.

**O. Resignation and Retirement Policy**

A library employee wishing to resign or retire from employment must notify the director or the library board as soon as practicable. The library requests a minimum notice of two weeks. For the library director a notice of at least one month is preferred.

The employee must submit a formal, written resignation statement giving the exact date that employment is to be terminated. Between the time of notice and the time when employment ends a final performance appraisal will be conducted.

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If the employee is entitled to benefits (such as earned, unused vacation) a lump sum payment can be made to the employee.

### **P. Grievance Procedure**

It is the intent of the C. E. Weldon Public Library that every employee shall have the opportunity to express concerns relating to the physical surroundings in which the employee works, procedures and conditions of the specific position, relationships with fellow workers or supervisors, and library rules as they apply to staff. A concern or grievance should follow the procedure below:

If possible, discuss the problem with the director. In the case of the director having a concern, this should be discussed with the board chair.

If the director is part of the problem, or if the board chair is part of the director's problem, the concern/grievance should be submitted in writing for the library board and be delivered to the director, who will deliver the statement to the board chair. The board chair will, in turn, present the concern, during closed session, to the full board at the next or a special board meeting.

The board's representative will respond to the employee within five (5) days of the board meeting at which the issue is discussed, either providing a determination, solution, or a strategy for how the board will address the issue over time.

### **Q. Equal Opportunity Employment Policy**

It is the policy of the C. E. Weldon Public Library to provide an equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons. Equal employment opportunity shall be according to the provisions of State and Federal laws and regulations.

### **R. Drug-Free Workplace Policy**

In compliance with the *Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988*, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited while performing work for the C. E. Weldon Public Library, whether that work is carried out in the workplace building or not. All employees shall abide, as a condition of employment, by the terms of this notice and shall notify the library director or board within five (5) days of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace. Failure to comply with the above requirements shall be grounds for appropriate personnel action against such employee up to and including termination or such employee may be required to satisfactorily participate in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

### **S. Sexual Harassment Policy**

Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of *Title VII* (federal law) and *Statute* (state law). Sexual harassment, either verbal or physical, is an unlawful employment practice and will not be tolerated by the C. E. Weldon Public Library.

The C. E. Weldon Public Library accepts and adheres to all definitions and procedures outlined in the law as regards sexual harassment. Any employee who engages in sexual harassment will subject themselves to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

## **VIII. Materials Selection/Collection Development Policy**

### **A. Objectives**

The purpose of the C. E. Weldon Public Library is to provide all individuals in the community with carefully selected books and other materials to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time.

Because of the volume of publishing, as well as the limitations of budget and space, the library must have a selection policy with which to meet community interests and needs.

The materials selection/collection development policy is used by the library staff in the selection of materials and also serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection.

[The Library Bill of Rights \(p. 32\)](#) and [The Freedom to Read Statement \(p. 33\)](#) have been endorsed by the C. E. Weldon Public Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of the policy.

The materials selection/collection development policy, like all other policies, will be reviewed and/or revised as the need arises.

### **B. Responsibility for Selection**

The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the library director who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the C. E. Weldon Public Library Board of Trustees. This responsibility may be shared with other members of the library staff; however, because the director must be available to answer to the library board and the general public for actual selections made, the director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

### **C. Criteria for Selection**

The main points considered in the selection of materials are:

- a) individual merit of each item
- b) popular appeal/demand
- c) suitability of material for the clientele
- d) existing library holdings
- e) budget

Reviews are a major source of information about new materials. The primary sources of reviews are Library Journal, American Libraries, and Booklist.

The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand. Consideration is, therefore, given to requests from library patrons and books discussed on public media. Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.

### **D. Interlibrary Loan**

Because of limited budget and space, the library cannot provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of this library's collection.

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In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy the needs of our patrons, the C. E. Weldon Public Library agrees to lend its materials to other libraries through the same interlibrary loan network, and to make an effort to have its current holdings listed in a tool that is accessible by other libraries throughout the state.

### **E. Gifts and Donations**

The library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. If they are not needed because of duplication, condition, or dated information the director can dispose of them as he/she sees fit. The same criteria of selection which are applied to purchased materials are applied to gifts. Memorial gifts of books or money are also accepted with suitable bookplates placed in the book. Specific memorial books can be ordered for the library on request of a patron if the request meets the criteria established by the Board. It is desirable for gifts of or for specific titles to be offered after consultation with the library director. Book selection will be made by the director if no specific book is requested. The C. E. Weldon Public Library encourages and appreciates gifts and donations. By law, the library is not allowed to appraise the value of donated materials, though it can provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the items if requested by the donor.

### **F. Weeding**

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the library director and is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials.

### **G. Potential Problems or Challenges**

The C. E. Weldon Public Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy.

Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

### **H. Challenged Materials**

Although materials are carefully selected, differences of opinion regarding suitable materials can arise. Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from or restricted within the collection may complete a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Material" form which is available in the library. The inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the C. E. Weldon Public Library Board of Trustees.

## **IX. Circulation Policy**

### **A. Registration Policy**

In order to obtain a library card to check out library materials, use the public access computers, or use the Genealogy Room, all borrowers:

- Must fill out an application form
- Must show proof of ID with current local address

For proof of ID with a current local address, a patron may present one of the following:

- Driver's license
- Envelope mailed to patron
- Checkbook
- Paperwork from local water, electric or telephone installation, insurance card, or voter registration card.
- Reference number where the library staff can call to verify address
- An address to which the library staff can mail a postcard. When received and returned to the library, privileges will be granted.

All patrons are required to present a valid library card every time to check out materials, use the public access computers, or use the Genealogy Room. There is no charge for the initial card. Replacement cards are \$2 each. If library card is lost, patron must inform the library immediately to prevent misuse of the card.

Patrons agree to be responsible for all items borrowed including materials checked out by others with or without their consent unless they have notified the library.

Applicants under 18 years of age must have a parent or guardian give their consent on the application form before borrowing privileges can be extended.

### **B. Loan Period Policy**

All materials (books, periodicals, audio books, books on CD, DVDs, videos and music CDs) are checked out for two weeks, with the following exception (see below).

Generally, Reference books, Genealogy books, Tennessee history books and current periodicals do not circulate. Upon request, some of these materials may be checked out overnight. The director may grant permission and establish the loan period for special collections or materials which are temporarily in great demand, such as for student projects.

Interlibrary loans are due the date indicated by the lending library.

There is a limit of three (3) items a new patron can borrow at one time for a probationary period of 6 months, with one exception – during the summer reading program there is a limit of 10 items borrowed per student. If, after the probationary period, the patron has

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returned materials on a timely basis in good condition, the limit of three (3) items will be changed to a limit of six (6) items.

### **C. Renewal Policy**

All materials may be renewed if there is not a waiting list for the title.

All materials may be renewed by phone before they become 21 days overdue. If materials that are more than 21 days overdue must be brought to the library to be renewed.

All materials may be renewed online before they become overdue.

All materials have a renewal limit of 6 times. Patron must bring the book in for renewal after 3 renewals.

### **D. Reserves Policy**

Reserves may be placed by patrons either in person, over the phone or online. Patrons will be notified by postcard or telephone when the materials are available. There is no charge to the patron for placing a reserve or for interlibrary loan services.

### **E. Overdue Policy**

There are no fines for overdue materials. Fine-free patrons are expected to return materials in a timely manner, as others are usually waiting for these materials. In lieu of fines, patrons will be encouraged to make a tax-deductible donation to the Weldon Public Library.

The library staff calls and sends overdue notices to patrons as a courtesy to remind them of materials kept past the due date. Failure to receive a notice either by phone, email or delivered through the postal system will not be considered grounds for excusing patron responsibility, as library users are responsible for keeping track of the due date of the materials they have borrowed.

A phone call or email notice is sent after the material is one (1) day overdue. If patron cannot be contacted within two days by phone, a notice will be sent by mail.

In order to remind library users that they have outstanding materials, two notices will be sent out:

- First notice is sent after materials are seven (7) days overdue (after the phone call or email notice fails to bring any results in obtaining overdue materials).
- Second notice will be sent after materials are twenty-one (21) days overdue (after first notice fails to bring any results in obtaining overdue materials). All materials will be considered long overdue if 21 days past the due date.

Titles of materials will be given out over the phone only to the patron who checked out the materials.

All overdue notices will be sent out in envelopes to protect the privacy of the patron.

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A patron may not borrow additional materials or use the public access computers until all overdue materials are renewed or returned. Library privileges will be reinstated when books are renewed or returned with the understanding that patron returns to new patron status whereupon they may only check out 3 items for six months (refer to Loan Period Policy)

The parent or guardian, who signed the original application card for any child under 17, is responsible for making sure all materials are returned to the library.

When a child (under 18) enters into adulthood and has overdue items on his record, this new adult patron will not be held responsible for paying any fees on lost or damaged materials. That responsibility lies with the parent of said child. This new adult patron will be forgiven for the overdue items, will be told that the library will give them a second chance, and the patron will be asked to fill out and sign a new application card with the statement of responsibility. This new adult patron will be reminded that as an adult he/she will now be held responsible for any future overdue, lost or damaged items. As a new adult patron he/ she must follow the library's probation policy for borrowing materials.

When a child (under 18) enters into adulthood and has overdue items on his record, it is the responsibility of the parent to pay any fees on lost or damaged materials. At this time, the parent or guardian, who signed the original registration card, may not borrow additional materials until all overdue materials are returned or paid for in full.

### **F. Lost and Damaged Materials Policy**

Lost or damaged materials remain the responsibility of the borrower. Once materials have been determined lost the material(s) will be marked lost. A notice of replacement cost plus processing fee will be sent to the borrower.

Damaged materials are any item returned in such condition that renders the material unusable. Upon this determination, a notice of replacement cost plus processing fee will be sent to the borrower.

Library privileges (all library services including Internet use) will be withdrawn from borrowers until all lost or damaged materials are returned and/or paid for in full. Partial payments will be accepted upon consultation with library staff. Library privileges will be reinstated when partial payments commence, replacement copies are donated (see explanation below) or all outstanding fees are paid.

The replacement cost will be waived in the event that a patron is able to provide the library with a replacement copy for the lost item that is identical in title and format and the condition is acceptable to management. In some cases the patron may provide a substitute copy upon consultation with library staff. A substitute copy must be new or in very good condition and must conform to the criteria established for selection of purchased materials. Substitute copies are considered with the explicit understanding that such factors as duplication and lack of community interest may prevent their addition to the library's collection.

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### Schedule of payment:

• Replacement cost (books, CDs, DVDs, Videos, Cassettes)	Original cost
• Lost cases	\$1.00
• Lost covers	\$ .50
• Processing fee	\$2.00

The replacement fee for lost or damaged materials will be the original retail cost of the material plus a processing fee. The original cost of the material minus the processing fee will be refunded for lost items returned in good condition within 6 months of payment. Refund checks will be made by City Hall upon receipt of Library authorization and will be sent to the patron by mail.

Patron will receive a receipt for payment when paying for a lost or damaged item. The patron may keep any damaged items for which they have paid.

### **G. Claims Returned Policy**

If patron believes they have returned the overdue material(s), they may request that a search be initiated. The library staff will search for the material(s) for six weeks. If the material is found during the search, the material(s) will be discharged from the patron's record. Patron will be notified either in person, by email, postal system, or by phone of the status of their record.

If the staff does not find the material(s) in question, a message will be placed on the patron's record until the material is located or paid in full. The message will include the title of material(s) that have been "claimed returned" along with the due date and bar code number.

If not found after six weeks of searching, the patron is responsible for the replacement cost of the material(s). Patron will notified either in person, email, postal system or by phone of the status of the lost item along with the replacement cost.

### **H. Confidentiality**

As specified in Tennessee Statutes, "records of any library which is in whole or in part supported by public funds, including the records of a public library system, indicating the identity of any individual who borrows or uses the library's documents or other materials, resources or services may not be disclosed except by court order or to persons acting within the scope of their duties in the administration of the library or library system, to persons authorized by the individual to inspect such records, or to libraries authorized under subs. (2) and (3)."

The C.E Weldon Public Library adheres strictly to all sections of this Statute regarding the protection of the confidentiality of its users.

## **X. Reference Service Policy**

The C. E. Weldon Public Library:

- ❖ will provide guidance in locating material for patrons who appear in person, call on the telephone, or request information through correspondence except in the case of student research.
- ❖ will assist patrons in the use of the Library and teach basic research methodology, when appropriate (this includes providing help in developing a research strategy and advice on whether a trip to the Library would be worthwhile for individuals who telephone);
- ❖ will provide bibliographic verification of items both in the Library and not owned by the Library and will assist patrons in obtaining materials through interlibrary loan, when appropriate;
- ❖ may refer library users to other agencies and libraries in pursuit of needed information;
- ❖ may use not only the Library's resources in printed form, but consult appropriate digital resources as well as the regional resource library and other agencies by telephone in pursuit of "ready reference" information.

## **XI. Programming Policy**

A "program" is a planned interaction between the library staff and the program participants for the purpose of promoting library materials, facilities, or services, as well as offering the community an informational, entertaining, or cultural experience.

Programming includes such activities as: storytimes, films and activities on no-school days, summer library program for children, speakers for young adults, book or author discussion groups for adults, and special interest seminars.

The board, in conjunction with the library director, will establish a budget and goals for programming to facilitate the effective implementation of this service.

## **XII. Public Relations Policy**

- A. Public relations goals of the C. E. Weldon Public Library are:
  - to promote a good understanding of the Library's objectives and services among governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public; to promote active participation in the varied services offered by the library to people of all ages.
- B. The Board recognizes that public relations involves every person who has connection with the Library. The Board urges its own members and every staff member to realize that he or she represents the library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations.
- C. The director will be expected to make presentations and to participate in community activities to promote library services. A reasonable amount of library

time will be allowed for preparation and speaking. Materials to be used by press, radio, or television will be approved by the director.

- D. The board will establish a publications budget to cover costs related to printing, publication, supplies, and miscellaneous needs related to the public relations effort.

### **XIII. Equipment Use Policy**

A computer is available to patrons on a first-come, first-served basis. Instructions for operating hardware are displayed near the computer. There is no charge for use of the computer; however, in order to make the service available to as many patrons as possible, a time limit for usage has been imposed. That time limit is 60 minutes. Library staff members are available for general assistance in using the computer. However, staff is not expected to train patrons in the use of application programs. Tutorial manuals will be provided when available.

A printer is available. Copies will cost \$ .15 per sheet and must be paid for at the conclusion of the session, with the exception of students who are given the first 5 pages free for educational research.

A photocopy machine is available to patrons who wish to copy materials at the rate of \$.15 per page, with the exception of students who are given the first 5 pages free for educational research

Copy machine users are advised that there are restrictions on copyrighted materials. Any violation of copyright is the responsibility of the copy machine user.

### **XIV. Computer/Internet Policy for Patron Access**

#### **Introduction**

The C. E. Weldon Public Library is pleased to offer use of the Internet as part of the library's mission of providing free and open access to materials and services as a means to enhance the information and learning opportunities for the citizens of the Martin area. The Board of Trustees has established the Internet use policy to ensure appropriate and effective use of this resource. The library's computer system provides the opportunity to integrate resources from around the world with the library's other resources.

In order to offer quality Internet service to all of our patrons, potential users must agree to follow the policy guidelines outlined below.

Computers are available to patrons on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no charge for use of the computer; however, in order to make the service available to as many patrons as possible, a time limit for usage will be imposed. That time limit is 60 minutes, with this exception. If there is at least one computer available, your time can be extended with staff permission. The staff reserves the right to ask you to leave the workstation, if you have been on the computer longer than an hour and all computers are in use.

Library staff is available for general assistance in using the computer. However, staff is not expected to train patrons in the use of application programs. Tutorial manuals will be provided when available.

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

A printer is available. Copies will cost \$.15 per sheet black and white, and \$.50 color and must be paid for at the conclusion of the session, with the exception of students who are given the first 5 pages free for educational research.

### **Responsibility**

As with all library resources, the library affirms the right and responsibility of parents and guardians to determine and monitor their children's use of the Internet.

There is no age limit for use of any materials provided on the Internet.

Parents or legal guardians who believe that their children cannot responsibly use the library's Internet access are requested to monitor their children's Internet use and must assume responsibility for their children's use of the library's Internet service.

Prior to being granted access to the Internet, a parent or legal guardian must sign the Internet Use Agreement for children under 18 years of age.

Access to the Internet is available to all patrons; however, this service may be restricted at any time for use not consistent with the guidelines.

All users must check out the computer at the circulation desk, just as you would check out a book. Each prospective Internet user must be registered as a patron of the library and must present identification that is current. When finished, the user must check the computer back in by telling the staff at the circulation desk that they are finished.

### **Disclaimer**

The Internet, as an information resource, enables the library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collection. It allows access to ideas, information, and commentary from around the world. Information access through the Internet is not warranted by the library to be accurate, authoritative, factual, or complete. It is the patron's responsibility to verify the accuracy of any materials found on the Internet.

Internet resources may contain material of a controversial nature. Selection policies that serve to govern the library's purchase of materials are not applicable to protect users from offensive information. It is the responsibility of the user, parent or legal guardian to determine what is appropriate. The C. E. Weldon Public Library does not monitor or have control over content on the Internet. Therefore, library patrons are advised to exercise critical judgment when using information from the Internet. The library assumes no responsibility for any damages, direct or indirect, arising from use of its connection to the Internet.

### **Expectations**

Users should be aware that the inappropriate use of electronic informational resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws and can lead to prosecution. The user will be held responsible for his/her actions using the Internet. Users are expected to abide by the policies below, which include generally accepted rules of network etiquette.

## **Privacy and confidentiality**

The library does not monitor an individual's use of any sites except for length of use in order to ensure equal opportunity to access for everyone, or when material displayed on the screen is not appropriate in a public environment and user responsibilities are violated.

In general, the library will treat information on computers as confidential. Requests for disclosure of information regarding an individual's use will be honored only if approved by the library director, when authorized by the owners of the information, or when required by local, state, and federal law.

## **Guidelines for acceptable use**

In accordance with the Tennessee Code Title 39, Chapter 17, Part 9, sending, receiving, or displaying text or graphics, which may be reasonably construed as obscene by community standards, is prohibited, regardless of age. Any patron violating this guideline will be asked to immediately leave the workstation, and any further Internet access will be denied.

Users must accept all U. S. copyright laws and licensing agreement pertaining to software, files, and other resources obtained via the Internet.

Downloading of images or files from the Internet to the computer's hard drive is strictly prohibited. Patrons may either bring in a floppy disk, recordable compact disc, or other portable storage device, or purchase one from the circulation desk. Unknown files will be purged from the computer periodically. Any patron violating this guideline will be asked to immediately leave the workstation, and any further Internet access will be denied.

All federal, state and local laws remain in effect. This includes, but is not limited to laws governing copyrights, gambling, and display of pornographic materials. Any patron violating this guideline will be asked to immediately leave the workstation, and any further Internet access will be denied. The patron may also be subject to criminal prosecution.

The library will conform to all local, state, and federal laws regarding minors' access to materials harmful to minors.

The Library uses filtering software in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, to prevent access to visual depictions that are: obscene, child pornography, or "harmful to minors". Minors are children or young people under the age of age 17. The term "harmful to minors" is defined by the Communications Act of 1934 (47 USC Section 254 [h] [7]), as meaning any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that

- Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion; depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals.
- Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

Filtering software is not foolproof. Filters often block access to sites that users would consider both inoffensive and useful. If you do not find what you need, please do not hesitate to ask a librarian to unblock the filtered site.

All Internet users should avoid disclosing personal information over the Internet to preserve their own personal safety. Library Internet users are prohibited by law from disclosing, using, or disseminating personal information regarding minors without written authorization of the parent or legal guardian of the minors involved.

Engaging in any of the following activities is a violation of this policy: libeling or slandering others, uploading a worm, virus, or other harmful form of programming or vandalism, participating in hacking activities or any form of unauthorized access to other computers, networks, or information systems.

Internet users are prohibited from using the library computers to compromise the safety and security of minors when using e-mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications. Such use includes, but is not limited to: giving others private information about one's self or others or arranging a face-to-face meeting with someone one has met on the Internet without a parent or legal guardian's permission.

### **Virus Warning**

Although the library uses a program that checks for viruses, there is no guarantee that files downloaded from the Internet will not contain a virus. The library is not responsible for any damages that may arise from saving or downloading files to a diskette.

### **Violations**

The user's access to the library's computer network and Internet is a privilege, not a right. Misuse of the library's computers will result in the loss of computer privileges, and possible criminal prosecution

## **XV. Meeting Room Policy**

For purposes of these policies "conference room" also refers to the entrance and lobby area leading to the conference room. All damage and cleanup policies also refer to this area.

### **A. Availability**

The room is available to individuals or organized groups in the Library service area. The Library Board may make exceptions if the Board deems extenuating circumstances are involved.

Except for library events, the conference room may not be used for social events (including but not limited to showers, receptions, parties of any kind, and teas), political meetings (except with the possibility of a public debate, which would be at Library Board discretion), religious meetings, and any type of event to which admission is charged.

The fact that a group is permitted to meet at the Library does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the group's policies or beliefs by the Library staff or Board.

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

The room may be reserved no more than ninety days in advance; however regular monthly or quarterly meetings of library or city boards or groups will be considered and other regular group meetings at Library Board discretion.

It is understood that library programming will have first priority in room use.

There will be no charge for use of the meeting room.

### **B. Rules for Use**

#### 1. Decorations

Absolutely no tape or other sticky substance may be applied to any surface in the conference room. No items may be hung from the ceiling. Any and all decorations planned by the sponsoring organization must have prior library staff approval.

#### 2. Food

If an event is an allowed community board meeting or organizational meeting of associates, board members, or regular members and food is to be served, it must be approved by the Library Board. Refreshments may be served and shall be provided by the group, with the following provisions: 1) Refreshments to be served must be submitted in writing one week prior to event. 2) No fruit punch or other liquid that is red in color may be served. 3) No alcoholic beverages may be served 4) There must be no charge for the refreshments 5) plates, cups, napkins and plastic utensils belonging to the library and stored in the conference room cabinets may not be used 6) No food or dishes of any kind may be put directly on the surface of the conference table. Foods should be put on the kitchen countertop or pads must be put under any item put on the conference table.

#### 3. Smoking

No smoking is allowed inside the building. Smoking is allowed outside the building but leaving cigarette butts outside the building doors is not permitted. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring group to make sure that this does not happen.

#### 4. Cleanup

Garbage must be bagged and taken to the dumpster across the library parking lot immediately after the event, by the sponsoring organization. Garbage bags are available in the conference room, as well as a vacuum cleaner and broom.

The people using the room shall leave it in neat, clean, and orderly condition. The room will be inspected prior to the event by the library staff and organization representative to assure that there are no carpet stains or other trash in the room prior to the event.

After the inspection, any conditions are noted and signed by both the library staff member and the organization representative.

Immediately after the event if there is garbage left for the library custodian to empty or any type of mess left for him to clean up, including the public restrooms, there will be a \$50-100 fee depending upon the extent of the disorder at the discretion of the Library Board. If the carpet needs cleaning the sponsoring organization will pay the cost. If there is any type of damage whatsoever to the building or furniture, including the large

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

conference table, after the event the sponsoring organization will pay for repairs and/or replacement.

### 5. Rearrangement of Furniture

Chairs and tables may be arranged as needed for the meeting with the following provisions: the sponsoring organization and library staff should meet a week prior to the event to discuss moving of the furniture; **ONLY LIBRARY STAFF** may move the large conference table and other tables; and furniture (except for the large conference table or other tables if they have been moved) must be returned to its normal arrangement immediately after the event by the sponsoring organization.

### 6. Damage

Any damage that occurs during an event is the sole responsibility of the sponsoring organization and the person signing this statement agreement as a representative of the sponsoring organization, even though the damage might have been caused by a person, including children, attending the event who is not a member of the group or organization.

If there is any type of damage whatsoever to the building or furniture, including the large conference table (such as circles left by glasses, scratches, damage from hot item to table finish, etc.) library staff will be notified immediately (library staff contact numbers will be provided) and the sponsoring organization will pay for repairs and/or replacement. Work to repair damage or replace damaged items or building structure will be done by persons or companies chosen by the Library Board.

If damage occurs or extensive cleaning must be done and the library staff finds it the next day without any kind of contact from the sponsoring organization, that organization will be charged outlined fees or damage costs by the City of Martin and banned from future use of the room.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization to inspect the conference room, entrance lobby and restrooms after an event to make sure that no damage occurred, that no cleanup is needed by the library custodian, and that the room is arranged as it was before the event began. It is possible that a library event may be scheduled the next morning and the room should be ready for immediate use.

### 7. Locking the Library

The library will be locked down during after hours meetings: the double doors between the restrooms and the main library will be locked; the stairwell door will be unlocked allowing an emergency exit, but stairwell doors to the third and first floors will be locked to prevent access; the elevator will be locked – the doors will be open but the elevator will be inoperable. There is an emergency exit in the conference room and the stairwell as well as the regular entrance.

If the door has been unlocked by the group or organization to allow access for members attending the meeting and there is no direct supervision of the unlocked door during the meeting, the door must be locked to prevent unauthorized entrance to the library by the general public during the meeting.

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

The door to the entrance of the library leading to the conference room must be locked when a group leaves after an event. The group or organization sponsoring the event and the person signing the acceptance of this policy is responsible for any losses incurred as a result of the library having been left unlocked after the event.

In the case of a rare use of the main library for a meeting, the front doors will remain locked. If anyone exits from the front doors, they must be checked to make sure that they are closed. You cannot go out these doors and assume they will close. They must be pushed shut.

### 8. Keys

The person in the group or organization sponsoring the event must sign a release in order for the library to issue a key to that group. If a group is beginning a meeting before 5:30 pm, a key is not issued and the door can be locked from the inside when the event is over.

A key may not be issued 24 hours prior to an event and only to a responsible person in that group or organization known to the library staff. Copies MAY NOT be made under any circumstances whatsoever.

The key must be returned to the library the next day (Monday-Saturday) or arrangements must be made to return the key immediately after the event to a member of the library staff.

The group representative must read and sign the Library Key Responsibility Statement prior to receiving a library key.

### 9. Liability

The Library Board or the City of Martin do not assume any liability for groups or individuals attending a meeting in the library for injuries incurred before, during, or after the event.

### 10. Articles in Meeting Room

The Library is not responsible for any equipment, supplies, materials, clothing, or other items brought to the Library by any group or individual attending a meeting or left in the library after a meeting.

## **Tennessee History/Genealogy Room Policy**

### Food

Refreshments will not be served in the Tennessee History/Genealogy Room. In the event an organization using the Tennessee History/Genealogy Room wishes to serve refreshments and the Conference Room downstairs is available, the organization may serve refreshments to their members and guests in the Conference Room on the main floor. Arrangements must be made with library staff ahead of time in order to use the Conference Room. All guidelines pertaining to the Conference Room must be followed.

### Meeting Room Use Agreement

I have read the regulations regarding use of the conference room and entrance area and agree to its provisions, including possible fees and damage charges. It is my responsibility and the responsibility of my group or organization to adhere to these policies.

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Printed  
Name\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Group or Organization\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Group or Organization\_\_\_\_\_

Use for Conference Room\_\_\_\_\_

Room was inspected prior to use by:

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Library staff member(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Organization member(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Note any stains or pre-existing  
damage\_\_\_\_\_

The original of this document will be kept on file at the library and copy given the person signing the form.

**Library Key Responsibility Statement**

If a group is beginning a meeting before 5:30 pm, a key is not issued and the door can be locked from the inside when the event is over.

A key may not be issued 24 hours prior to an event and only to a responsible person in that group or organization known to the library staff.

Copies MAY NOT be made under any circumstances whatsoever. If a copy is made the group or organization must pay for lock changes on all library doors.

The key must be returned to the library the next day (Monday-Saturday) or arrangements must be made to return the key immediately after the event to a member of the library staff.

Responsible party and sponsoring group or organization is solely responsible for: returning the key; insuring that no copies are made; insuring that no unauthorized persons enter the library; the library is left locked and secure after the event.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Group or  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Key Number \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Member's signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **XVI. Displays and Exhibits Policy**

As an educational and cultural institution, the C. E. Weldon Public Library welcomes temporary exhibits and displays of interest, information and enlightenment to the community. Displays of handiwork, historical material, nature study, or any other material deemed of general interest may be exhibited. The director shall accept or reject material offered for display based on its suitability and availability.

The Library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection, and no liability for possible damage or theft of any item displayed or exhibited. All items placed in the Library are there at the owner's risk.

Areas available to the public for displays and exhibits are the glass exhibit case, the meeting room, and the general bulletin board. A release must be signed by the exhibitor before any artifact can be placed in the library. An example of the release follows:

### *C. E. Weldon Public Library Display and Exhibit Release*

*I, the undersigned, hereby lend the following works of art or other material to the C. E. Weldon Public Library for exhibit purposes only. In consideration of the privilege of exhibiting them in the Library, I hereby release said Library from responsibility for loss, damage, or destruction while they are in the possession of the Library.*

*Exhibition to be held in the \_\_\_\_\_*

*During \_\_\_\_\_*

*Description of materials loaned \_\_\_\_\_*

*Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_*

*Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_*

## **XVII. Public Notice Bulletin Board Policy**

Materials may be submitted by non profit organizations to be displayed on the circulation desk. Bulletin board materials may be submitted for posting by nonprofit organizations for civic, educational, or cultural purposes. Such organizations may submit literature publicizing a specific event. Limited space generally allows only short-term notices. The director must approve all postings and may prohibit postings which do not meet library standards. Library staff will place and remove postings promptly.

Each item posted must be dated and signed. A request for return of items, along with name and telephone number of person to be contacted, should be printed on the back of each article. Unless such arrangements are specified, items must be picked up the day following the date of the publicized event if the owners want them returned. Otherwise, the library will not be responsible for returning materials.

## **XVIII. Disasters Policy**

### **Fire**

Do not panic, but do not under-estimate the potential danger to customers or staff represented by a fire. At the first indication of smoke or flame, investigate the situation to determine location and extent of the fire. If the fire can obviously be contained and extinguished quickly and safely by staff, proceed to do so. However, if there is any doubt about whether the fire can be controlled, immediately call 911 or the fire department and then clear the building.

The time to think about fires is before they happen. Familiarize yourself with the type, location, and application of the fire extinguisher(s) in the building. Orient all staff and volunteers to this information. If you share a building with another agency and it occasionally initiates fire drills, library staff should respect those training exercises and respond as they would in the case of an actual fire.

### **Health emergencies**

Staff members should exercise caution when administering first aid of even a minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the staff member. Without specialized training it is not advisable for staff to undertake more than keeping the sick or injured patron comfortable and protected from needless disturbance until medical help can be obtained. Since each case is unique, staff members should use their own judgment to do what is prudent and reasonable.

The Rescue Squad/Police (911 if available) should be called immediately in the event of any serious problem.

No medication, including aspirin, should ever be dispensed to the public.

### **Bomb threats**

Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask the caller to repeat the message and try to write down every word spoken by the person.

If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of possible detonation, **ASK FOR THIS INFORMATION.**

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

Pay particular attention to peculiar background noises such as motors running, background music and any other sounds which may indicate where the location from which the call is originating.

Listen closely to the voice (male, female), voice quality (calm, excited), accents and speech impediments.

Immediately after the caller hangs up, call the police. Clear the building. The police will handle the actual bomb search.

### **Snow storms**

The Library will follow the recommendation and actions of the city between 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Closing during other days and hours will be at the discretion of the Library Director.

## **XIX. Revision of Library Policies**

The preceding statements of C. E. Weldon Public Library's policies shall be subject to review and needed revision at least every three years by the Library Board. Individual policies will be reviewed or added as needed.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***The 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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a Library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. 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.

*Adopted June 18, 1948; amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1978, and January 23, 1980, by the ALA Council.*

## ***The Freedom to Read***

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 books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, 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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio, and television. 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.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

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 stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

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 towards 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 which are unorthodox or unpopular with 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 which 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 contained in the books 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 books 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.

## Library Policies for the C. E. Weldon Public Library

*3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

A book should be judged as a book. 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 men can flourish which 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 literature 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 taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which 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 with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.*

The idea of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. 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.*

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 each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes 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.

*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*

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*expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen 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 expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his 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 their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens 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 books. We do so because we believe that they are good, 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 15, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, by the ALA Council.* C.E. Weldon Library Policy last updated September 29, 2006.