

## **Intellectual Freedom Policy and Request for Reconsideration Procedure**

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APPROVED 2/21/23

The mission of the Sweetwater County Library System states:

The Sweetwater County Library System improves the quality of life in our communities by:

- Helping individuals obtain information,
- Providing materials that are reliable and current,
- Encouraging a lifelong joy of reading and learning for all, especially children.

It is with this in mind that the Sweetwater County Library System ensures the freedom of information for all. Public libraries preserve and enhance the people's right to a broader range of ideas than those held by one librarian, publisher, or government. On occasion, there can be diverse opinions by individuals or groups as to what is acceptable or appropriate for the collection. Library collections are not limited to only those ideas and information one person or group believes to be true, good, and proper.

The Board of the Sweetwater County Library System believes that anyone is free to reject for himself or herself library materials of which he or she does not approve. However, the individual cannot restrict the freedom of others to read, view, or hear. Materials selected under the Collection Development Policy for the library collection are considered protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Parents or legal guardians have the responsibility to guide and direct the reading, viewing, or listening of their own minor children, and thus, the library does not restrict access to children. The Library System does not take the place of the parent or guardian.

The Library System does not indicate through the use of labels or other devices particular philosophies outlined in a book. Labeling establishes in a reader's mind a judgment before the reader has had the opportunity to examine the book thoroughly.

The Sweetwater County Library System recognizes that a broad and diverse collection materials may result in requests for reconsideration. The Library Board has developed the following procedure to ensure that complaints are handled in a consistent manner.

Reconsideration of Library Material Procedure:

1. A patron who is concerned with an item in the library collection will receive a copy of the library's mission statement, Collection Development Policy, Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form, and the Library Bill of Rights from the front desk at any Sweetwater County Library System branch.
2. The patron will be required to complete and submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material for to the Sweetwater County Library Director. The patron must be a resident of Sweetwater County in order to submit a request. The Library Board will be notified when a reconsideration is received.

3. The Library Director will review the reconsideration form, the material in question, reviews, staff recommendations and circulation history to consider whether its inclusion in the collection followed the criteria stated in the Collection Development Policy.
4. The decision of the library director will be communicated in writing to the person who made the request. The Library Director will provide the person initiating the complaint with copies of "Library Bill of Rights," "Freedom to Read," "Free Access to Libraries for Minors" and the Collection Development Policy as appropriate to the complaint.
5. Patrons whose concerns are not satisfied by the decision of the Library Director may request in writing to be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of the Sweetwater County Library System. The decision of the library board will be final.