



Book Challenge Frequently Asked Questions

Book Challenges? What is happening?

On October 24, 2022, the Glen Ridge Public Library received *Request for Reconsideration* forms for six titles, from eight residents in five households, under the letterhead of the organization Citizens Defending Education. In general those submitting the forms felt that the material in the titles they were requesting reconsideration for was inappropriate for the intended age groups.

What titles are being requested for reconsideration?

- [All Boys Aren't Blue](#) by George M. Johnson (YA BIO JOHNSON)
- [Here and Queer](#) by Rowan Ellis and Jacky Sheridan (YA SOCIAL QUEER ELLIS)
- [It's Not the Stork](#) by Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley (J PARENT 649)
- [It's Perfectly Normal](#) by Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley (YA HEALTH PUBERTY HARRIS)
- [This Book is Gay](#) by James Dawson (YA SOCIAL QUEER DAWSON)
- [You Know, Sex](#) by Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth (YA HEALTH PUBERTY SILVERBERG)

What happened after the requests for reconsideration were received?

The Library Director responded on November 7, 2022 to each individual that submitted a form. The decision of the Director was that all of the titles meet the criteria of the *Library Materials Selection Policy* (see attached) and the titles will remain in the Library's collection.

In December 2022 the Library received a letter from the CDE appealing the Director's decision. Clarification was requested as to which individuals were appealing, and at least two individuals from the original eight have requested an appeal as of January 12, 2023. As all of the titles in question are covered by those individuals, the Board will consider all six items in their review.

How does the Board evaluate the materials that have been appealed?

As per the *Library Materials Selection Policy* "The Board will evaluate in an open meeting the work according to criteria in the Library Materials Selection Policy within three Board meetings from the date the appeal is received. After the evaluation, the Library Board will notify the patron by mail of its decision. All decisions by the Board are final."

When will the Board hear the appeal?

The appeal on these six titles will be heard by the Board at the **February 8, 2023** Board of Trustees meeting. The meeting will be held in-person at the **Ridgewood Avenue School Auditorium** (235 Ridgewood Avenue) at 7:30PM. Doors will open at 7:00PM.

What happens to the books that are being appealed in the meantime?

As per the Library's *Materials Selection Policy* "Until such review takes place and a decision is made, no removal or restriction of the questioned item(s) shall take place."

Can I attend the meeting that the appeal is being discussed at?

Yes! All Library Board meetings are open to the public. The full list of meeting dates, agendas and minutes (as of October 2022), and public comment procedures are available on the Library's website at <https://www.glenridgelibrary.org/board-of-trustees.html>.

What if I can't attend the meeting or want to submit a written comment instead of speaking?

Individuals who wish to submit written correspondence regarding any agenda item or public library issue that a member of the public feels may be of concern to the residents of the Borough of Glen Ridge for distribution to the Board of Trustees, must do so by sending an email to Tina Marie Doody, Library Director at tmdoody@glenridgelibrary.org or by written letter addressed to Ms. Doody at the Glen Ridge Public Library, 240 Ridgewood Avenue, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028. Comments submitted in writing or by email must include the individual's name and address, and clearly indicate that this is correspondence to be shared with the Board of Trustees. All items must be received no later than 3:00 pm the Monday before the Board meeting. Any comments received after this time will be recognized at the next Board meeting. Written comments will be distributed to the members of the Board, acknowledged, and summarized during the Correspondence section of the meeting.

Will the meeting be streamed or recorded so I can watch/listen remotely or at a later date?

No. However, minutes of the Board's public sessions will be available on the Library's website after they are approved. Minutes are available at <https://www.glenridgelibrary.org/board-of-trustees.html>.

Can I speak to someone about this in more detail?

Yes! The Library Director is happy to set up a call or meeting with anyone concerned about this or any other Library related issue. Please contact Tina Marie Doody at 973-748-5482 or tmdoody@glenridgelibrary.org to set up a date/time. **Please note that Tina Marie will be on vacation and unable to answer emails or phone calls starting on Monday, January 30 until Tuesday, February 7.**

GLEN RIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

The intent of this policy is to guide the Director and staff in the selection, maintenance and withdrawal of materials and to inform the public/community about the principles upon which selection judgments are made. Since both the collection and the community are constantly changing, the policy will be reviewed for possible revision every five (5) years. The limitations caused by budgets, changes in population, commercial activities, technological innovations, collections of other institutions, crucial needs in certain areas at times, and other unforeseeable situations are definite factors to be considered and monitored.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Library is to provide a well-balanced and broad collection of materials for all age groups, diverse types of material based on demand of patrons, and materials for the education and recreation of the community. This goal is augmented by the Library's membership in the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS) which provides access to the collections of its member libraries via reciprocal borrowing and lending. Other requests for unique materials are gotten from JerseyCat, New Jersey's statewide interlibrary loan system.

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for selection and withdrawal rests with the Library Director, and other designated employees, who operate within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Basic to this policy is the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association. The Library Bill of Rights 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.
7. 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.

Responsibility of the reading habits of children rests with the child's parent(s) or legal guardians. Selection should not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

Selection of material of a sexual nature should be made on the basis of whether a book presents life in its true proportions, whether characters and situations are realistically presented, and whether the book has literary value.

SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES

In selecting materials for purchase, adding gift materials or when items are being evaluated for retention or replacement, the following criteria is taken into consideration:

- Accuracy and impartiality
- Attention of critics, reviews, and the public
- Subject matter
- Cost
- Currency of information
- Local importance and/or historical value
- Reputation of the author or publisher
- Quality of organization, readability, and style
- Uniqueness or special features
- Advance notices and pre-publication announcements supplied by publishers and professional reviewing services
- Physical condition of the item and space limitations
- Duplication of material already in the Library
- Availability of material in nearby libraries, if local interest is limited to small or specialized groups

Suggestions for purchase from the general public are always given serious consideration using the above criteria.

Non-book materials will be governed by the same principles and criteria applied to book purchases, including all media, realia, and electronic sources.

The Library accepts gifts that will be added to the collection if they meet the same standards as those required of purchased materials.

The Library will not acquire textbooks or other curriculum-related materials unless such materials also serve the general public.

WITHDRAWAL OF MATERIAL

Weeding is selection in reverse and enhances the reputation and reliability of the collection. Discarding or weeding of materials is the best and most economical utilization of space.

Materials may be withdrawn on the basis of the following:

- Condition - worn, damaged, or soiled items
- Currency - materials containing obsolete or inaccurate information
- Demand - items no longer used
- The Library also follows guidelines as described in [CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries](#)

DISPOSAL OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

This policy safeguards that withdrawn Library materials are disposed of in an orderly and legal manner, and identifies disposal methods.

The Board of Trustees of the Glen Ridge Public Library authorizes the Library Director, or designee(s), to withdraw and dispose of Library materials.

In order to maintain a collection of materials that best serves the community, the Library must periodically withdraw Library materials (books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, etc.) from the collection for a variety of reasons according to Library best practices.

Withdrawn Library materials will be disposed of accordingly:

1. Withdrawn materials will be made available to the Friends of the Glen Ridge Public Library at their request.
2. Withdrawn materials will be made available to the public in a variety of ways.
 - a. In the Library building
 - b. Provided to local teachers and schools at their request
 - c. Distributed to various "little free libraries" or other book distribution sites
 - d. Other methods as available, approved by the Library Director
3. If the withdrawn materials cannot be used or donated they will be recycled or discarded.

OBJECTION TO MATERIAL

In all instances the Library defends the principles of the [ALA Freedom to Read Statement](#) and the use of Library materials. No materials are judged on the basis of the author's race, nationality, or political, social, or religious beliefs. Materials are judged as entire works, not on isolated passages or selections.

Glen Ridge Residents with a current (non-expired) Glen Ridge Public Library card may request reconsideration of a book previously selected by use of the Request for Evaluation of Library Materials form.

REQUEST FOR EVALUATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Glen Ridge residents with a valid (non-expired) Glen Ridge Library card who want to file a complaint regarding Library materials will be asked to fill out the *Request for Evaluation of Library Materials* form (see below). Requests for Evaluation may be placed only by individual residents. Organizations or groups are not eligible to file *Request for Evaluation of Library Materials* forms on behalf of their members.

The Director, or a member of the staff designated by the Director, will review the *Request for Evaluation of Library Materials* form(s) taking into consideration the Library Materials Selection Policy and review sources. The Director will respond to the patron in writing within thirty days of the date of receipt of the completed *Request for Evaluation of Library Materials* form(s). Accompanying the decision will be copies of relevant reviews, the Library Materials Selection Policy, the Library Bill of Rights, and/or the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements. The Director will provide the Library Board with a copy of the completed *Request for Evaluation of Library Materials* form(s) and the written response(s).

The decision of the Director may be appealed by the person submitting the *Request for Evaluation of Library Materials* form(s) in writing to the Library Board within thirty (30) days after initial receipt of the Director's decision. The Board will evaluate in an open meeting the work according to criteria in

the Library Materials Selection Policy within three Board meetings from the date the appeal is received. After the evaluation, the Library Board will notify the patron by mail of its decision. All decisions by the Board are final.

Until such review takes place and a decision is made, no removal or restriction of the questioned item(s) shall take place. Additional challenges to a title the Board of Trustees has made an appeal decision on will not be accepted for thirty-six months from the date of initial Board review.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees on 1/1/23.

REQUEST FOR EVALUATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS FORM

Title: _____

Author: _____

Item Type: _____ Book _____ Periodical _____ Audiobook _____ Video _____ CD _____ Other _____

Evaluation Requested By:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Do you represent:

- Yourself
- An organization (name) _____

1. To what in the work do you object? Please be specific. Cite examples.

2. Do you object to the entire work or only to specific parts? Explain.

3. Have you read/viewed/listened to the entire item? Yes _____ No _____

4. Have you seen/heard a critic's review of this work? If yes, please include a citation for each review.

5. What would you like the Library to do about this work?

Signature _____

Date _____

Employee's Initial _____