

Alamance County Public Libraries Statement of Concern Policy

Mission

Alamance County Public Libraries provide learning opportunities for all members of our community to be successful in living a larger life by nurturing the heart and the mind.

Vision

Providing Possibilities. Creating Community.

Values

- Approachable and Inviting
- Knowledgeable and Professional
- Open Minded and Respectful of Diversity
- Supportive and Positive
- Resourceful and Innovative

Goals

1. Access to high quality, trusted information and knowledge across the lifespan
2. Inviting, convenient, and user-friendly spaces and services
3. Innovative educational programs

Open Access to Ideas

Alamance County Public Libraries endorses the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read, and the Freedom to View as adopted by the American Library Association and the Association for Rural & Small Libraries' (ARSL) Access to Information Statement. Resources available in the library present a diversity of viewpoints, enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy. The library also seeks to provide a wide variety of resources that satisfy the diverse interests of our community. The library upholds the right of the individual to secure these resources, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to some. Resources are available to all; however, it is not expected that all resources appeal to everyone.

Responsibility for the reading/viewing/listening of minors rests with their parents and legal guardians. Selection of themes for programs, displays, materials, etc. will not be limited by the possibility that items may come into the possession of minors. Each parent/guardian has the right to determine the appropriateness of library resources for their children and should accord the same right to other families.

The Library seeks to create an environment in which individuals can examine issues freely. Patrons wishing to express concerns regarding library resources, displays, programs, etc. are encouraged to discuss their concerns with a Branch Manager or the Library Director. If unsatisfied with the response, the patron will be provided with the appropriate form to request a formal consideration of the complaint. No library resources should be removed or restricted from use during the review process.

Proceedings

After speaking with a Branch Manager and/or the Library Director, borrowers with continued concerns regarding resources, programs, displays, etc. should complete the 'Statement of Concern' form. Forms are available at all branch libraries in Alamance County and from the library website.

Statements of Concern will be reviewed by a committee composed of the Library Director, the Leadership Management Team, and the Racial Equity Team. The committee will read, listen to and/or view the item(s) under concern; consider the theme/subject in relation to the Library policies; discuss; and make a decision.

The decision of the Committee will be promptly communicated in writing to the individual who expressed concern.

If the borrower wishes to appeal the decision, this should be requested in writing and submitted to the Library Director.

Following this, the concern will be forwarded to the Alamance County Library Committee (Advisory Library Board). The decision of the Alamance County Library Committee will be final.

Access to Information Statement

Public libraries are uniquely American institutions, providing opportunities for lifelong learning and open discourse. The expression of differing ideas has a long history in our country and is a core aspect of our national character. Banning, removing, or censoring materials, speakers, or displays without due process violates people's Constitutional rights.

The Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) represents library professionals serving diverse communities across the United States. As a professional organization:

ARSL stands in firm support of the freedom to read and free speech as inalienable rights protected by the First Amendment. We are committed to defending those rights for all individuals and recommend library policies that support the selection of library materials that represent a broad range of topics and ideas.

ARSL stands in support of small and rural librarians' expertise in selecting materials and affirms their dedication to the communities they serve. Librarians use their professional training to develop collections and programs that are reflective and supportive of the communities they serve while providing opportunities to learn about other communities that may be different from their own. Materials are carefully selected following established collection development policies and professional standards. If library users voice concerns about materials or services that they find objectionable, libraries have procedures in place for reevaluating those selections.

ARSL stands in support of caregivers' rights to guide their own children's use of the library, and to determine which materials are appropriate or beneficial for their children. We recognize that not every book is right for every reader; however, no one person or group has the authority to determine what is appropriate for someone else's child. Access to a wide variety of reading materials increases the chances that children will become lifelong learners.

This statement was drafted by the Association of Small and Rural Libraries (ARSL) Advocacy Committee and approved by the Board following multiple member requests to provide a tool for defending against the increase in materials challenges and other intellectual freedom assaults in 2022.

ALAMANCE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
STATEMENT OF CONCERN

DATE: _____, 20____

Programs, displays, etc.:

Creator/Presenter:

Location:

Name and contact information of individual completing this form:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Address: _____

Email: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

This form represents only the concerns of the individual identified above. If you represent a group or organization, please name them: _____

Your comments will help us understand your concerns. Please fill out as much of the information below as you would like. Typed responses may be stapled to this form.

- 1) Did you read/view/listen to the entire program/display? _____ Yes_____No
If no, what parts have you read, viewed or listened to?

2) What do you find objectionable about the material? It would be helpful to us if you could be specific by indicating phrases, images or ideas that concern you.

3) What would you like the library to do about this item?

_____ Move it to another collection/area in the library. If so, where do you recommend we place it? _____

_____ Review for potential discontinuation of promotion or activity.

_____ Other (example: replace with a more current theme, different cover art).
Please elaborate below:

4) Please feel free to make additional comments or express additional concerns about the material or program.

Our mission at Alamance County Public Libraries is to provide learning opportunities for all members of our community to be successful in living a larger life by nurturing the heart and the mind. We do this by providing approachable and inviting spaces, having knowledgeable and professional staff, being open minded and respectful of diversity, being supportive and positive, while being resourceful and innovative. We appreciate your concerns and recommendations that will help us achieve our goal.

Please return this form to:

Susana Goldman
Director of Alamance County Public Libraries
342 S. Spring St.
Burlington, NC 27215