Statement of Concern Policy

Adopted by the Mediapolis Public Library Board of Trustees
January 14, 2025

By providing access to information and ideas, the Mediapolis Public Library upholds our mission to "The mission of the Mediapolis Public Library is to provide places and services to connect the community to the world and to each other." The Mediapolis Public Library upholds the First Amendment, the Library Bill of Rights, and the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement by allowing individuals to freely access resources to make their own informed decisions.

Patrons are welcome to self-censor and reject for themselves resources that they do not approve of; however, they cannot exercise that right of censorship to restrict the freedom of access to others.

Because the library attempts to represent all sides of issues and ideas it is inevitable that some people in the community might find some of the materials objectionable. The library, however, has a responsibility to serve the minority, as well as the majority of the community and firmly believes that no one has the right to prevent another from reading or using specific materials.

The Mediapolis Public Library intentionally maintains a diverse and rich array of resources and recognizes that patrons may take issue with the inclusion of specific items, programs, or practices. The library welcomes expressions of concern from any resident of Mediapolis and will handle such concerns as detailed in this policy.

Concerned patrons may request a 'Statement of Concern' packet from the library which contains the following:

- The Library Bill of Rights
- The Freedom to Read Statement by the American Library Association
- The First Amendment
- Statement of Concern
- Library Director's business card

After reviewing the information within the packet, concerned patrons shall complete the Statement of Concern form and submit it to the library director. Once received, the library director will set up a meeting with the patron via phone or email to discuss the concern directly. This meeting will be set within 30 days after submission of the Statement of Concern form. If their concern cannot be adequately addressed through this discussion, they may request to appeal to the Library Board of Trustees. The item in question will remain in the collection and available during the review process. Upon request for an appeal, a committee will be formed consisting of at least two board members, the library director, and one library professional whose job description includes responsibilities relevant to the patron's concern.
The committee will use the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, the First Amendment, Iowa Code, U.S. law, and MPL policies to examine and review the item, program or practice outlined in the submitted statement of concern. This policy will ensure that the library and trustees adhere to all duly enacted laws against obscenity as that term has been interpreted by the United States Supreme Court, the Iowa or 8th Circuit appellate courts, or the laws of the United States or the State of Iowa.

A trustee representing the committee will submit the written recommendation to the full BPL board of trustees along with the original statement of concern within 60 days of the appeal and will be on the next regularly scheduled board

agenda. The purpose of this committee is to create a balanced and informed recommendation to the Board of Trustees; however, the final decision lies with the governing board.

Upon submission the MPL board will consider the committee recommendation and statement of concern at their next regularly scheduled board meeting. All board meetings adhere to the Iowa Open Meeting Law, and all documents submitted will be made public. Comments from the concerned patron, as well as other interested parties, are welcome at this meeting. No decision will be made at this board meeting.

The decision of the board of trustees regarding the statement of concern will be made at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. Their decision will be communicated in writing to the concerned patron.

Once a resource has been challenged and a final decision is made by the trustees, that decision stands for ten years from the date of the decision. Patrons concerned about a particular resource already decided on will be given all documentation regarding the process and decision making for review.

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