

Cromwell Belden Public Library

Policy Manual

Updated December 14, 2022

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CROMWELL BELDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Cromwell Belden Public Library is to provide a free place to discover, create, enjoy, share and inspire lifelong learning.

Adopted 12/14/2022

I. CROMWELL BELDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the Cromwell Belden Public Library shall be:

- A. To serve the community as a place where inquiring minds can find new and reliable information and experiences.
- B. To acquire and make available materials to address the public need 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.
 - e. enjoy leisure by means of reading and other media services.
- C. To provide access to ever-changing technology for Library users and efficient operation of Library services.
- D. To seek continually to identify, anticipate, and respond to changing community needs.
- E. To support the collection and preservation of materials of historic interest and value to Cromwell.

Adopted 1/10/1994

Revised 12/14/2022

II. LIBRARY ACCESS POLICY

- A. The Library will provide equal access to library services for all individuals and shall not discriminate upon the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin/ancestry, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or any other legally protected status.
- B. The use of the Library may be denied for due cause. Such causes may be failure to return materials or pay penalties, destruction or theft of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other objectionable conduct on the Library premises.
- C. There will be no person-to-person solicitations permitted on the Library premises. Space may be provided for materials and information at the discretion of the Library Director and in keeping with Library policies.
- D. The Library Director is responsible for scheduling the use of Library space, in accordance with policies established by the Town Manager (see Appendix). Event space within the Library may be available for meetings and activities of Cromwell non-profit civic, cultural, and educational organizations. Priority in scheduling will be given to Library programs and Library-sponsored activities. Permission to use Library space does not constitute an endorsement by the Town or the Library of any group's beliefs, policies, or activities.

Adopted 1/10/1994

Revised 12/14/2022

III. SERVICES OF THE LIBRARY

- A. The Library will select and organize, for easy access, those books and materials which best meet the needs of the community.
- B. The Library Staff will provide guidance and assistance for people to obtain the information and/or materials they seek.
- C. The Library will initiate programs, exhibits, displays, etc., to encourage the use of Library materials.
- D. The Library will cooperate with other community agencies and organizations as it is able.
- E. The Library will attempt to secure information beyond its own resources by use of:
 - 1. Library Consortium
 - 2. Inter-Library Cooperation
 - 3. The Connecticut State Library
- F. Patrons of the Cromwell Belden Public Library will have priority access to all materials owned by the Library. The Library may lend materials to other Connecticut libraries when they are not immediately available at the borrowing library.
- G. The Library will cooperate with, but cannot perform the functions of, school or other institutional libraries which are designed to meet curricular needs.
- H. The Library will attempt to meet the needs of special groups of individuals who may be unable to utilize the Library building.
- I. Library services may be added, discontinued, or modified based on community need and as determined by the Library Director.
- J. In communication with the Town Manager, the Library Director may change the hours and services of the Library as needed.

Adopted 01/10/1994

Revised 12/14/2022

IV. LIBRARY MATERIALS POLICY

The Cromwell Belden Public Library strives to provide a collection of materials that will:

1. Promote the free exchange of the diversity of human thought.
2. Serve as a center of reliable information.
3. Provide the resources for self-education.
4. Present opportunities for relaxation and recreation.

The following are officially adopted as part of this statement:

The Library subscribes to the “Library Bill of Rights” of the American Library Association (see appendix).

The Library subscribes to the “Freedom to Read” statement prepared by the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers’ Council (see appendix).

The Library subscribes to the “Freedom to View” statement drafted by the Educational Film Library Association’s Freedom to View Committee, and adopted by the Educational Film Library Association (see appendix).

SCOPE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The Library will provide materials which help to meet its objectives or mission. Materials may include but are not limited to: books, equipment, databases, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, films, music scores, maps, recordings, and digital materials.

Materials which are no longer useful in the light of the stated objectives of the Library will be systematically removed from the collection according to accepted professional practices. Such materials will be disposed of in accordance with Town of Cromwell policies and at the discretion of the Library Director or the Library Director’s designee(s).

SOURCES USED TO SELECT LIBRARY MATERIALS

Sources used for the selection of materials will include book reviews, pertinent bibliographies, requests made by Library patrons, and demonstrated usage, within the restrictions of the budget.

GENERAL GUIDELINES IN THE SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

1. The Library does not attempt to acquire textbooks or other curriculum-related materials except as such materials also serve the general public.

2. Because the library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading skills, it will always seek to select material of varying complexity.
3. Gift materials will be subject to the same standards for inclusion, classification, housing, circulation, and weeding as are purchased materials.

CENSORSHIP OF LIBRARY MATERIALS - STATEMENT

The selection of any given material is not an endorsement by the Library of the viewpoint expressed. Selections are not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval by the public, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of a collection, and in serving the needs of Library users. The Library may provide materials representing conflicting points of view concerning controversial issues.

While the Library is aware that one or more persons may take issue with the selection of any items, the Library is not required to remove from the shelves items purchased in accordance with the policy outlined here, nor will Library materials be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval. All Library materials will stand on open shelves equally accessible to all patrons, except to protect a valuable item from damage or theft, or to hold aside items placed on reserve.

LIBRARY MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN - STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for Library material used by children resides with the parent or guardian of each individual child. Selections of material for the Library will not be inhibited by the possibility that items may come into the possession of children.

REQUESTS FOR REMOVAL OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

In order for the Library Director to consider a request for the removal of Library material, the patron will first be required to fill out the Cromwell Belden Public Library "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form (see appendix). The Library Director will issue a judgment based on this request. The patron has the right to appeal this decision to the Library Commission, and further appeal any additional decisions to the Town Manager and then to the Town Council. The decision for or against removal made by the Town Council will be considered final.

DUPLICATE COPIES

The Library does take into consideration the number of reserved requests placed on a single title, in order that duplicate copies may be purchased if required.

REPLACEMENT

It is not the Library's policy to automatically replace all material when lost or worn out. Adequate coverage of a subject, other similar materials in the collection, and demand for the specific title or subject are considered when making the decision to replace a lost or damaged item.

MATERIALS DE-SELECTION PROCESS (WEEDING)

To keep the collection up to date, and to make room for new materials, the materials in the Library's circulating collections will be re-evaluated regularly, with decisions made whether to dispose of, repair, or replace materials. Weeding of items will be directed by the Librarians in their respective departments. Materials may be checked against industry standard catalogs, accepted professional practices relating to weeding methods and guides, consortium and state level catalogs, and other resources. Materials will also be evaluated based on their individual value to the Library's collection and to the needs of the community.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER LIBRARIES

1. Inter-Library Loan: The Library cannot purchase all materials requested but will attempt to extend its resources through cooperation with other libraries and active use of inter-library loan.
2. Library Consortium: As a member of a large library consortium, the Library is in a unique position to more easily acquire items on loan via the consortium-level shared catalog. Whenever possible, the Library will prioritize Cromwell patrons' requests for Cromwell Library materials.
3. Public School System: The Library attempts to be aware of materials owned and used by the local schools; however, development of curriculum-related materials is not the responsibility of the Cromwell Belden Public Library.

Adopted 01/10/1994

Revised 12/14/2022

V. SPECIAL FORMATS POLICY

The Library may have materials that lie outside the existing loan and fine structure. The Library will make this loan period and fine information accessible to the public (see appendix).

Adopted 12/14/2022

VI. GIFTS POLICY

The Cromwell Library Commission adopts the following policies regarding gifts to the Library.

- A. Books and other materials will be accepted on the condition that the Library Director has the authority to make whatever disposition he or she deems advisable (see policy on Library materials).
- B. Gifts of money, real property and/or stock will be accepted if conditions attached thereto are acceptable to the Library Director and in accordance with town policy.
- C. Personal property, art objects, portraits, antiques, and other museum objects will be accepted at the discretion of the Library Director and only in accordance with town policy.

Adopted 01/10/1994

Reaffirmed 12/14/2022

VII. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The primary public communications goals of the Library are:

1. To inform the community at large of the Library's objectives and services.
2. To encourage and increase active participation by the community in the varied services offered by the Library.

PROCEDURES FOR MEDIA COMMUNICATION

1. Materials to be used by the media will be approved by the Library Director, with the exception of common or routine programming and events promotion.
2. All publicity about the Cromwell Belden Public Library shall originate within the Library.

PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The following will be a means for the general public to offer their ideas covering the operations of the Library:

1. The form "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" will be made available to anyone having a complaint regarding materials which the Library distributes (see appendix).
2. The general public may present in writing to the Library Director a suggestion or complaint on the appropriate form (see appendix).

Adopted 01/10/1994

Revised 12/14/2022

VIII. LIBRARY CARD POLICY

- A. Any Cromwell resident, at least fourteen (14) years of age, may receive a Library card free of charge upon completing a registration form and presenting proof of identity and residency.
 - a. Cromwell student ID shall suffice as proof of residency for those residents between the ages of fourteen (14) and eighteen (18) years of age.
 - b. In the event that a Cromwell resident under the age of eighteen (18) attends a school outside the bounds of Cromwell, Library staff shall work with the student to determine a satisfactory proof of address.

- B. Children under the age of fourteen (14) may obtain a Library card at whatever age the parent or guardian deems appropriate.
 - a. The parent or guardian shall assume financial responsibility for fines incurred.
 - b. Proof of residency by the parent or guardian shall be required at the time of registration.
 - c. The child to whom the card belongs must be present during the registration process.

- C. Students at Holy Apostles College and Seminary must present a college I.D. or other proof of residency to obtain a Library card. Students are issued a card for one year.

- D. Educators working in Cromwell may obtain a Cromwell Teacher Card to be used to access Cromwell materials and/or keep items checked out for a professional setting separate from items checked out on a personal account. Teacher cards are issued for one year. In order to obtain a Teacher Card, educators must:
 - a. Present proof of employment by Cromwell Public Schools or by a childcare facility in Cromwell.
 - b. Agree to only use the Teacher Card at the Cromwell Belden Public Library.
 - c. Agree to only use the Teacher Card to check out materials for use in their classroom(s).

Adopted 10/13/2012

Revised 12/14/2022

IX. FINES AND REPLACEMENTS POLICY

The Cromwell Belden Public Library agrees with the American Library Association policy statement that the “imposition of monetary library fines creates a barrier to the provision of library and information services.” Therefore, the Cromwell Belden Library does not impose late fees on the majority of its circulating collection.

A. Fines relating to Library Items:

1. Items in the general collections of the Cromwell Belden Public Library are free to use and will not incur fines if returned past their due date, except where explicitly noted otherwise. Exceptions to this “fine-free” policy may include collections of particularly valuable materials and/or collections of materials that are in very high demand with the public. See appendix for a full schedule of fees and fines.
2. The Library Director has the right to adjust which collections fall outside of the “fine-free” policy as determined by the changing needs of the Library and its community.
3. Changes to the overall fines and fees structure will be approved by the Town Council upon the recommendation of the Library Director, the Library Commission, and the Town Manager.

B. Replacement of Library Items:

1. Patrons will be billed for the replacement cost of each item not returned to the Library. At the discretion of the Library Director and/or Librarians, patrons may instead replace damaged or missing items with a new copy of the same material.
2. Patrons will not be refunded for materials paid for and later found; all paid bills are final.
3. Patron accounts and privileges may be curtailed or withdrawn if total bills on the account exceed levels set and agreed upon by the library consortium.
4. After sixty days, accounts may be turned over for collection. The charge for such collection will be passed on to the patron.

Adopted 01/10/1994

Revised 12/14/2022

X. EXHIBITS, BULLETIN BOARDS, AND DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS POLICY

It is the policy of the Library, as part of its mission, to provide information through both displays and exhibits provided by community agencies or individuals. Though the Library may be providing space for a display or an exhibit, this does not indicate endorsement of the position promoted by the exhibit or display.

- A. Exhibits will be permitted at the discretion of the Library Director or designee.
- B. All exhibitors are required to fill out a registration and release form (see appendix) and follow all associated procedures. The Library Director or designee must approve any exceptions.
- C. The Library will make a reasonable effort to protect materials displayed or exhibited but cannot be responsible for damages or loss. Exhibitors should provide their own insurance to cover any loss or damage to materials. The Library will not provide storage for the property of organizations or for individuals displaying at the Library.
- D. Material may be posted on bulletin boards only after review and approval by the Library Director and/or Librarians. Only local and not for profit organizations may display material on bulletin boards.

Adopted 07/14/2008

Revised 12/14/2022

XI. SOLICITATIONS POLICY

- A. The Library does not permit soliciting within the building, except at the discretion of the Library Director and as outlined by section 178-1 of the Cromwell Town Charter.

Adopted 08/11/1997

Revised 12/14/2022

XII. LIBRARY PROGRAMS POLICY

The Cromwell Belden Public Library offers programs intended to further the Library's mission to be a cultural, educational, and informational resource for the Cromwell community. Programs are intended as a means for the community to share experiences, focus on special interests, and exchange information.

1. The Library will endeavor to present a wide variety of programs geared towards a diverse audience, reflective of our diverse world. Programming schedules and types of programs offered will also be influenced by community input. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute or imply an endorsement of its policies, beliefs, or program by the Library, any Library personnel, or by the Town of Cromwell.
2. Every attempt will be made to accommodate all who wish to attend a program. Attendance may be limited, however, when safety or the success of a program requires it. In some cases, the nature of a program may require a limited attendance based on age, especially programs intended for children and teens that are geared to their interests and developmental needs.
3. The Library does not offer programs that support or oppose any political candidate or ballot measure. However, election information, such as candidates' forums that include invitations to all recognized candidates, may be offered.
4. The Library does not offer programs that support or oppose a specific religious conviction.
5. The Public Library is founded on the premise that its programs, materials, and services are equally accessible to all citizens who pay for this public agency through taxes. Anyone involved in presenting programs or exhibits at the Library must observe the "free and open" premise, and refrain from selling or soliciting.
6. All programs will be coordinated through the Youth Services department (programs for children and teens) and the Adult Services departments (programs for adults), both of which will approve and assist with program selection and schedules, publicity efforts, and evaluation.

Adopted 01/10/1994

Revised 12/14/2022

XIII. STUDY ROOM POLICY

The Cromwell Belden Public Library provides study rooms for the purpose of quiet study and group work. Three rooms are available for use in the Library. The Maselli Room is available for groups of 5-8 individuals. Study Room 1 and Study Room 2 are available for groups of 4 or fewer individuals. Study rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis for a maximum of 2 hours per day.

Those wishing to use a study room must present a valid Library card OR a phone number and ID to Library staff, and must agree to the following rules and regulations, which are subject to temporary change based on the needs of the Library and its community:

- Patrons must sign up for a room at the Reference desk in person, or by phone, on the day the room is needed. Room reservations will be held for 15 minutes past the start of the time reserved.
- Repeated no-shows by individuals reserving the room may lead to a loss of reservation privileges, at the discretion of the Library.
- The rooms must be vacated 15 minutes before the Library closes.
- As in accordance with Library policy, covered beverages are permitted in study rooms; bringing meals into the Library and into the study room is prohibited.
- The Library is not responsible for equipment, supplies, materials or any other items owned by an individual or group used in the study rooms. Personal items may not be stored in the study rooms.
- The Cromwell Belden Public Library reserves the right to ask patrons to leave the Library; suspension of study room privileges may also result if the Library's policies are violated, or at the discretion of the Library Director.
- While the use of study rooms by private tutors, coaches, and similar is allowed, individuals must not advertise the Library as their place of business, nor may they advertise in such a way as to appear affiliated with or sponsored by the Library. Failure to abide by this requirement may lead to the revocation of study room access.

Adopted 12/14/2022

XIV. HISTORICAL ROOM POLICY

The Historical Room of the Cromwell Belden Public Library exists to store, display, preserve, and make accessible books and other materials reflecting the history of Cromwell, Middlesex County, or Connecticut, as well as materials describing the history of the present Library and its collection.

In addition to general Library policies, the following policies apply specifically to the Historical Room:

1. The Library Director will direct the acquisition of books, materials, and furnishings to be placed in the Historical Room. The Library Director may transfer items from the circulating collection or add items donated to the library as gifts.
2. The contents of the Historical Room are available to anyone engaged in study of the history of Cromwell, Middlesex County, or of the Belden Library Association. Visitors wishing to use materials in the Historical Room must secure permission from the Library Director or other authorized library employees.
3. Books and other materials in the Historical Room may not be borrowed or circulated and should not leave the Historical Room unless temporarily authorized by Library staff. Since many of the historical materials are delicate and difficult to replace, only authorized Library staff may make photocopies of historical materials for Library patrons.
4. Only designated Library staff will have access to keys to the locked cabinets in the Historical Room.

Adopted 07/14/1986

Revised 12/14/2022

XV. CROMWELL BELDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY CODE OF CONDUCT

The Cromwell Belden Public Library provides free and open access to its resources and services. Visitors to the Library are expected to respect the rights of other Library patrons, Library staff, and Library space and property. The Cromwell Belden Public Library requires that all visitors act in a manner that does not go against the Library's code of conduct:

- Conversation, at a normal level, is permitted. Loud noise and profanity are considered inappropriate behavior. Cell phone use should not interfere with other's use of the Library.
- Proper attire including shoes and shirts is required.
- Non-alcoholic beverages are permitted in covered containers. Food, except at special functions, may only be consumed outside of the Library building.
- Visitors should not move Library furniture from its designated area.
- Sleeping and/or lying down is not permitted.
- In accordance with Connecticut state law, children under the age of 12 are required to have a responsible family member or caregiver in attendance.
- Service animals are welcome. Pets and comfort animals are not permitted.
- The Library is not responsible for personal items that are lost, stolen, or damaged on the premises. Personal items are not to be left unattended.

The following are strictly prohibited in the Library and on its grounds:

- Smoking, vaping, alcohol, or illegal drugs anywhere on the premises.
- Littering.
- Making unreasonable use of the rest rooms, including laundering clothes and bathing.
- Damaging, defacing, or misusing any Library materials or property. This includes disabling Library equipment, changing the hardware or software settings on a Library computer, or using a Library computer for a purpose other than that designated by the Library.
- Weapons of any kind.
- Bringing bicycles or scooters inside of the Library. Skates, skateboards and similar items may not be worn and must be carried while inside the Library. Library property is not to be used for recreational biking or skating.
- Soliciting, petitioning, canvassing, or selling any goods or services.
- Disorderly conduct or any behavior which disrupts use of the Library or interferes with the Library's operation. Such conduct includes verbal or physical abuse; harassing or threatening behavior; using obscene or abusive language or gestures; and displaying, broadcasting, and/or webcasting content that is inappropriate in a library setting.
- Any other unlawful behaviors not otherwise defined.

Visitors who do not follow the Library's Code of Conduct may be asked to leave and may lose their Library privileges, under the General Statutes of Connecticut (see appendix). Visitors who break the law may also be arrested and/or subject to other legal action.

Adopted 01/13/2010

Revised 12/14/2022

XVI. UNATTENDED MINORS POLICY

The Cromwell Belden Public Library welcomes and encourages children to visit the Library, use Library resources and services, and attend Library events. Staff members are available to assist children in using the Library. However, the Library is not able to provide short- or long-term child-care, or to be responsible for unattended children. The well-being and safety of young children left alone is a serious concern. The Library is a public building, open to all members of the public. Children on their own are vulnerable. It is not the Library's intention to seek out unattended children, but rather to have a reasoned response prepared when a problem presents itself. For these reasons, the following policy has been established:

Parents/caregivers are responsible for the conduct of their children/minors at all times while on Library premises. The Cromwell Belden Public Library staff assumes no responsibility for the safety, care, or supervision of children/minors. All children/minors are expected to follow the Library's Code of Conduct.

Children Under the Age of Twelve (12)

- All children under twelve (12) years of age must have a parent/caregiver in the immediate vicinity of the child.
- Children ages eight (8) to eleven (11) years of age may attend Library programs appropriate to their age without the parent/caregiver in the room provided the parent/caregiver remains within the Library facility for the duration of the program and immediately joins the child at the conclusion of the program.

Children Ages Twelve (12) and Older

- Children ages twelve (12) years and over may use the Library on their own, if their parent/caregiver deems them responsible. If problems arise, they may still be asked to leave the Library.

The Library is not responsible for unattended children outside of the building. Should a Library staff member encounter unattended children in the building, they will follow a set of established procedures as listed in the staff manual.

Adopted 02/31/1991

Revised 12/14/2022

XVII. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION POLICY

- Information about the borrowing habits of patrons is protected by Connecticut State Statute. Library staff will not provide personal information, except as required by applicable State and Federal laws.
- Library staff will provide information without charge on any reasonable request by patrons, or refer them to an alternative source. Patrons may be responsible for charges incurred by the Library while in the process of obtaining specific information. Examples are photocopying, printing, and postage of certain Inter-Library loan materials.

Adopted 01/10/1994

Revised 12/14/2022

XVIII. LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

All users of Library technology and Library internet are expected to use these resources in a responsible and respectful manner, consistent with the behavior expected when interacting with all other library materials and services. Responsible, ethical use of these resources includes the following:

- Using resources for educational or informational or legal recreational purposes only, not for unauthorized, illegal or unethical purposes.
- Respecting the privacy of others by not misrepresenting oneself as another user; by not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or data belonging to others; by not seeking unauthorized access to any computer system; and by not damaging or altering software components of any network or database.
- Respecting the privacy of others using these resources by not interfering with their use.
- Making only authorized copies of copyrighted or licensed software or data.
- Refraining from sending, receiving or displaying inappropriate materials, which may be reasonably construed as obscene.

The Library is not responsible for damage to technology provided by patrons.

Use of Library technology may be time-limited, at the discretion of the Library Director.

Adopted 02/11/2002

Revised 12/14/2022

APPENDICES

- A. The Library Bill of Rights
- B. The Freedom to Read Statement
- C. The Freedom to View Statement
- D. The General Statutes of Connecticut, Sections 11-32 and 11-35
- E. Town of Cromwell Policy for Use of Municipal Meeting Rooms
- F. Form: Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials
- G. Form: Suggestions
- H. Form: Exhibit Release
- I. Fines and Fees Information

Revised 12/14/2022

A 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.

I. 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.

II. 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.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. 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.

VII. 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.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

B. THE FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

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 or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, 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 counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. 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.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. 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 or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. 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 controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that 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 toward 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 that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by 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 that 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 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 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.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

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 people can flourish that 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 expression 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 values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that 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 the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. 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; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

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 individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish 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. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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 expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they 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 the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's 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 the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans 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 the written word. We do so because we believe that it is 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 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee;
amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association

Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses

The Children's Book Council

Freedom to Read Foundation

National Association of College Stores

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Council of Teachers of English

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

C. THE FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

D. THE GENERAL STATUTES OF CONNECTICUT: SECTIONS 11-32 AND 11-35

From Section 11-32: Such library and reading room shall be free to the use of the inhabitants of the city, subject to such reasonable rules and regulations as the board of trustees may adopt in order to render the use of the library and reading room of the greatest benefit. Such board may exclude from the use of such library and reading room any person who willfully violates such rules, and may extend its privileges to persons residing in this state outside the city upon such terms and conditions as it may prescribe.

Section 11-35: **Penalties for injuries.** The city council of such city may pass ordinances imposing suitable penalties for damaging the grounds or other property of such library and for damaging or failing to return any book belonging to such library. Each library director or board of trustees, having charge or control of such library or property, shall post in one or more conspicuous places connected there with a printed copy of this section.

E. TOWN OF CROMWELL: POLICY FOR USE OF MUNICIPAL MEETING ROOMS

1. Since the facilities to be used are public property, rooms will be available for meetings and activities of Cromwell non-profit civic, cultural, and educational organizations.
2. Out-of-town groups will be allowed only on occasions when the building is NOT scheduled for local use, and the intended use by such group will directly benefit the citizens of Cromwell.
3. Permission to use these facilities does not constitute an endorsement by the Town of any group's beliefs, policies, or activities.
4. Priority will always be given to Official Town Business when there are conflicts of time and space.
5. Town Hall Facilities are normally available Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. (8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. for the Town Hall Gym) exclusive of Legal Holidays.
6. Applicants will be responsible for holding the Town of Cromwell harmless from any liability claim arising from the use of any area. Any applicant not affiliated with the Municipal Function shall provide a certificate of insurance in the amount of one million (\$1,000,000) dollars.
7. The Town Manager is responsible for scheduling and approving the use of any meeting room. Building Use Forms are available in the Town Manager's Office. The Town Manager reserves the right to reject any application or to cancel the privilege of use by any group if, in the Town Manager's opinion, said group might cause undue hardship on staff or the facility.
8. No smoking, consumption of alcoholic beverages or drugs will be allowed in the building.
9. Applications for meeting room use must be submitted to the Town Manager NO LESS than four (4) weeks prior to the event. Annual reservations must be renewed prior to January 31st of each year. Exceptions will only be granted for Official Town Business.
10. Applicants using meeting rooms shall be responsible for providing proper supervision and payments of costs arising from any damages or loss during such use.
11. Furnishings for the meeting rooms will be that only provided by the Town. The Town will not be responsible for equipment, supplies, or materials provided by the applicant.
12. Clean-up from serving refreshments will be the responsibility of the applicant.
13. Soft soled shoes and sneakers will be required during scheduled use of the Town Hall Gym.
14. Applicants using meeting rooms when custodial staff is not scheduled shall be required to have and to pay such fees incurred, for the attendance of a custodian on an overtime basis.

F. REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Cromwell Belden Public Library
39 West Street
Cromwell, CT 06416

Form must be fully completed and signed in order to be considered valid. Acknowledgement of receipt will be sent within 7-10 business days, followed by information on action taken and/or next steps.

Item type: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publisher: _____

Request initiated by: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Library card barcode number: _____

Do you represent:

____ Yourself

____ An organization (name: _____)

____ Other group (name: _____)

To what in the work do you object? (Please be specific. Cite pages.) _____

Did you read the entire work? _____ If the answer is no, what parts did you read?

Have you read the Cromwell Belden Public Library's Materials Policy? _____

What do you feel might be the result of reading this work? _____

For what age group would you recommend this work? _____

What do you believe is the theme of this work? _____

Are you aware of any judgments of this work by literary critics? _____

What would you like the Cromwell Belden Public Library to do about this work? _____

In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated? _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Form Received By: _____ Date: _____

Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Initial Action Taken: _____ Date: _____

G. SUGGESTION FORM

Cromwell Belden Public Library
39 West Street
Cromwell, CT 06416

Form must be fully completed and signed in order to be considered valid. Acknowledgement of receipt will be sent within 7-10 business days, followed by information on action taken and/or next steps.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Library card barcode number: _____

Suggestion Type (Circle One):

Library Materials Library Facilities Library Technology Library Events Other

Suggestion: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Form Received By: _____ Date: _____

Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Initial Action Taken: _____ Date: _____

H. EXHIBIT RELEASE FORM
Cromwell Belden Public Library
39 West Street
Cromwell, CT 06416

DISPLAY AREA _____

FOR

MONTH _____ YEAR _____

EXHIBIT RELEASE

I, the undersigned, hereby agree to place the following works of art or other material in the Cromwell Belden Public Library for exhibit purposes only. In consideration of the privilege of exhibiting them in the Library, I hereby release said library from the responsibility for loss, damage, or destruction while they are on the Library premises.

Exhibit Location: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Description of Materials to be Exhibited: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

I. LIBRARY FINES AND FEES INFORMATION

- A. The Cromwell Belden Public Library does not charge fines for overdue materials, except in the case of certain special formats. However, patrons are expected to return materials by their due dates to ensure that all Library users have equitable access to materials.
- B. Materials are considered overdue if not received by the date due. Materials returned in the book drop when the Library is not open are considered to have been returned on the last open day of the Library.
- C. Patrons are responsible for all materials and equipment checked out on their Library card (including items from other libraries). Patrons are required to pay for material and equipment which is irretrievably lost or has been damaged while checked out to them. The price charged for material which is lost or damaged is based upon the price originally paid by the Library to obtain the item.

CIRCULATION & FEE SCHEDULE

Collection	Circulation Period	Overdue Fee Per Day	Maximum Overdue Fee	Renewable?*
Print Materials	21 Days	-	-	Yes
Individual DVDs	7 Days	-	-	Yes
Individual Music CDs	21 Days	-	-	Yes
Individual Audiobooks	21 Days	-	-	Yes
DVD Binge Boxes	14 Days	-	-	No
Yard Games	7 Days	\$10.00	\$100.00	No
Adventure Kits	7 Days	\$10.00	\$50.00	No

*Items marked as renewable may still not be able to renew, if another patron is waiting for them.