



North Shelby Library District Frequently Asked Questions

Policies and Books

1. What policy changes have been made this year?
 - Strengthened the **Unattended Child Policy** to include children birth through 5th grade and to only allow adults as responsible caregivers for those children
 - Updated the **Reconsideration Procedures** part of the Collection Development Policy:
 - o Removed board member from review committee
 - o More clearly defined the categories for committee members so that the five positions are:
 - One Alabama certified K-12 educator
 - One public librarian from the community
 - One North Shelby Library District Librarian
 - One member of either the Friends of North Shelby Library or Mt Laurel Library
 - One Patron residing in the North Shelby Library District current on assessments
 - o Created an application process for committee members who will be called upon as needed
 - o Updated reconsideration form and limits to challenges

2. What motion failed at the June 2023 meeting?

The motion that was put forward in June was “If the board believes a display or program is age-inappropriate, the board may vote to remove or change the display or cancel the program.” The Board voted to stand by the policies already in place which provided avenues for complaints to be heard. Approved board minutes are available on our website (<https://northshelbylibrary.org/library-board-minutes/>).

3. Why do you have books about _____ in the children’s department?

Picture books are a great way for parents to begin conversations with their children about the world around them. Picture books are usually read to children, not by children. Some books help children learn their numbers, others help them understand their feelings about starting school, and some help them deal with the loss of a loved one. Books reflect our world and help patrons of all ages gain understanding of their lives and the lives of others.

Our collection development policy states:

The public library is the institution in our society that attempts to provide a diversity of viewpoints on a wide range of topics of interest including political, social, and religious ones – no matter how controversial or objectionable those ideas may be to some people. Selection of books or other library materials shall be made on the basis of their value of interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community. No book or library material shall be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, sexuality, or the political or social views of the author. A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers. Materials are chosen representing different points of view, limited only by our selection criteria, budget, and space available in our facilities.

4. Why do you have sexually explicit books in the children's department?

We do not have sexually explicit books in the children's department at North Shelby Library or Mt Laurel Library.

5. How can I make sure the books my child checks out don't violate our family's beliefs?

The responsibility for the choice of library material for minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. If you are unfamiliar with the book in question:

- Ask the librarians for help finding books. They will ask you questions about what you are looking for and you will have the opportunity to tell them what you are not looking for as well.
- Consult the book jacket or the library's online catalog for a description of the contents of the book.
- Visit review sites such as Goodreads, Common Sense Media, or even Amazon, to find out what other parents are saying about the book.
- Read the book before allowing your child to read it.

6. What can I do if I don't like a book or a program?

- Our first suggestion is to talk to the librarian about your concerns and to get recommendations for other books or programs that may fit your needs.
- If you wish to submit a formal complaint, the forms and information about the process are available from our staff or on our website (<https://northshelbylibrary.org/library-policies/>).

ALA

7. What is the ALA?

The American Library Association is a professional organization for librarians. It has around 50,000 members from all over the world, mostly from the US and Canada. The ALA provides professional development, leadership opportunities, and grant access to librarians who are members. The ALA is not a governing body and has no say in local library decisions.

8. Does the North Shelby Library or Mt Laurel Library belong to ALA?

Our libraries do not have institutional memberships in ALA, nor have they ever.

9. What would a library purchase from ALA?

ALA offers training at national conferences and through webinars.

ALA also sells:

- professional development books written by librarians and other experts;
- patron education items such as Dewey Decimal posters and literacy calendars; and
- promotional items such as bookmarks and READ posters.

10. Why do you use the Library Bill of Rights in your policies?

The Library Bill of Rights is a plain text explanation of the First Amendment as it applies to libraries. It was first adopted in 1939. We use it as a guide to our policies because it is so clear and easy to understand. Removing the Library Bill of Rights from our policies would not change the First Amendment of the Constitution and our patrons' right to access materials.