

Guntersville Public Library

Policies and Procedures Manual

Revised September 2021

Patron Registration Policy

The Guntersville Public Library serves residents of the city of Guntersville as well as residents of Marshall County. Library cards are free to residents of Marshall County. Non-residents will be charged a one-time \$5 fee.

1. Patrons will be asked to complete and sign a membership application form and provide proof of residence. This may consist of a picture ID, legal document, or a piece of mail with accurate name and address.
2. A parent or guardian signature will be required for persons age 17 and under who apply for a library card. In addition, the minor's account must be linked to the account that parent or guardian, who will also assume responsibility for fines.
3. Cards will expire every 3 years. Cards not used within a 5-year period may be purged from our files if necessary. Records of patrons with outstanding fines and/or materials not returned will be kept on record.
4. Each person will be responsible for materials checked out on that individual borrower's card. If a card is lost or stolen, it should be reported to library staff.
5. Replacement of a physical library card will cost \$2.
6. If a patron would like to check out books or use other library services without their card, a picture ID may be required to obtain the library card number.
7. If patrons would like to allow partners/friends to checkout materials on their card, staff must have permission from both parties and when applicable, their cards must be linked together to show responsibility connections.
8. A patron may be denied service by library staff for failure to return borrowed items or refusal to pay for lost/damaged items, for destruction of library property, or for objectionable conduct in the library.
9. The Library provides guest passes for computer use for patrons from out of town or who are otherwise without a library card.

Privacy of Patron Records

The information the Library requires for patron membership is of a confidential nature. Except pursuant to a court order or parent/guardian request, no person shall publish or make any information contained in such records available to the public. This restriction shall include the press and any agency of State, Federal, or local government. The release of statistical information is permitted provided no individual is identified in the information released.

On receipt of any legal process, order, or subpoena, the staff member in charge will immediately consult with the Library Director. All requests shall be referred to the Library Director for appropriate disposition. The Library Director may consult with city legal counsel to consider the appropriate action. The Library will resist any issuance of confidential patron information until the legality of such process, order, or subpoena has been assessed.

Circulation Policy

Circulation

Upon first issuance of a library card, the patron will be allowed 3 item checkouts. Once those items are returned to the library, checkout limits will increase. Adult patron cards will have a limit of 20 books, 5 audiobooks, 5 DVDs, and 2 board games out at one time. Juvenile patron cards will have a limit of 10 books, 5 audiobooks, and 5 DVDs, and 2 board games out at one time.

Materials have a checkout period of two weeks, and may be renewed up to two times, provided there are no holds or reserves placed on those items.

Materials may be renewed online or by phone.

Board Games

- Games must be returned inside at the circulation desk and not placed in the book drop.
- Replacement cost for small pieces is \$2.
- For lost or damaged pieces that deem the game unplayable, patron will be charged the full replacement cost of the game.
- All game pieces will be inventoried and counted upon every check-in.
- Lost games or unpaid fines on games will prevent further game checkouts until returned or paid in full.

Reserves

Patrons may reserve up to 5 items at a time. Items on reserve will be held at the circulation desk for the patron up to 4 days after patron has been notified. After the 4 days have passed, the item

will be taken off the reserve list for that patron and either given to the next patron on reserve, or placed back on the shelf for circulation.

Overdue Materials

The Guntersville Public Library no longer charges fines for overdue materials (late fees). We hope this will help ensure that we provide equal access to library materials for all of our patrons.

Materials are still expected to be returned on time so that they can be enjoyed by everyone and we trust that our patrons will continue to do so.

After materials have been overdue for 2 weeks, the library sends out a letter requesting the return of the materials. Repeat letters will be sent at 4 weeks and 6 weeks. A phone call will be attempted to the patron at 6 weeks and if no contact is made the items will be marked lost the following week.

Damaged or Lost Materials

Although we have no late fees, charges may still be applied to a patron's account if materials are returned damaged or if they have been missing so long that we must mark them as lost.

Generally, when a lost item is returned, however late, the fine will be removed from the patron account. There are some cases, however, when an item is deemed so essential to our collection that we must replace it. In this case, if the patron later returns the original, the replacement cost may remain on the patron's account.

Patrons with lost/damaged materials on their account will not be able to use their library card to check out more materials until they take care of those fines. Patrons experiencing a financial hardship that prevents them from paying for lost/damaged materials can speak privately with library management to work out a payment plan, or in some cases a fine waiver.

Access to Resources and Services to Minors

Patrons will not be denied access to resources, services, or materials based on age. Staff will not limit access or censor materials to minors. Staff may provide professional opinions about the appropriateness of content only when asked to do so by a parent or guardian.

Computer and Internet Use Policy

The Guntersville Library is committed to providing the community with access to a wide variety of information in different formats. Free use of the internet is available to all library users.

The internet, as an information resource, enables the library to provide information beyond its physical collection. Because there is so much on the internet that would not be considered safe for consumption by all library users, the library utilizes internet filtering software to limit access to obscene or sexually explicit material. Library users are responsible for their own information gathering, meaning that the library cannot be held responsible for access to unsafe web environments.

The library cannot guarantee the effectiveness of the filtering software, and cannot be held responsible for any failure on the part of the software to filter offensive or inappropriate materials. The library is not responsible for the inadvertent restriction of access to desirable, necessary, or appropriate information that results from use of the filtering software.

Computer Use

Internet access will not be used for illegal activity, to access illegal materials, or to access sexually explicit or obscene materials.

Library staff may limit use of computer equipment purchased by grant funds according to the terms or intent of the grant agreement.

Users will respect copyright laws and licensing agreements.

Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files or networks, or to damage or modify computer equipment or software.

Users will pay for prints upon printing. No tabs will be allowed.

Computer sessions begin at 30 minutes. Users may have up to 2 hours (120 minutes) a day if there are no other patrons waiting for computer use. The computer timing software will end a user's access when time is up. A library staff member can authorize longer computer use time if the user is completing school work or job applications, as long as no other patron is waiting for a computer.

Users will respect the privacy of other users, and will refrain from attempting to view or read material being used by others.

Users will not be blocked from computer usage based on fines from late, lost, or damaged library materials.

Computer Use by Children

We strongly urge parents to discuss the use of the internet with their children, to determine its most appropriate use. Restriction of a child's access to the internet is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian. Library staff are not responsible for the internet information selected and accessed by children.

Computer Use Termination

When a library user fails to comply with the Library Computer and Internet Use Policy, library staff is authorized to terminate that user's session or to prohibit that user from future sessions. Patrons can be permanently barred from internet use in the library for violations of the agreement.

Collection Development Policy

The Guntersville Public Library collects materials in a variety of formats to support the Library's mission of serving the educational, recreational, and entertainment needs of the community as a whole. Materials are selected in an effort to maintain a well-balanced, up-to-date, attractive, and useful collection of materials to meet the diverse needs of the community. Librarians shall follow accepted professional standards and practices when selecting (and deselecting) materials.

Selection Criteria

All materials, purchased or donated, are subject to the following criteria:

- Current and anticipated needs and interests of the public
- Physical condition and durability/quality of production
- Cost and availability
- Reviews in professional journals
- Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject
- Suitability and availability of the format
- Space and budgetary constraints

Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive rather than exclusive. Materials will not be excluded based on the origin, background, or views of the creator, potential of the content to incite controversy, or potential of material to be accessible to minors.

Board Game Collection Development Policy

- Games will be from reputable and reliable board game publishers.
- Preference will be given to experimentation/interaction (hobby and modern board games) variety rather than comfort/familiarity (classic and mass-market games).
- Games will range in player count, including solitary play.
- Games will be for school-age and up. No preschool games will be collected at this time.
- Games will be easy to moderate in difficulty to learn.
- Award-winning games will be given precedence.
- Card and board games are acceptable.
- Games will not be "collectible card games" (CCGs) or "living card games" (LCGs).
- Cost and availability will be taken into account; games should be "in-print."
- Games will not be directly purchased from crowdfunding sites (Kickstarter, IndieGoGo).
- Preference will be given for "gateway" games (those with simple rules that are easy to teach non-gamers in order to attract new players into board gaming as a hobby).
- Games will have critical reviews from reputable sources.
- Preference will be given to games of some social or educational merit.

Deselection (Weeding)

To maintain a relevant, useful, and appealing collection, the Library will remove materials regularly in accordance to professional standards and practices.

Patron Requests

Patrons can complete an Order Request Form found at the circulation desk for materials they wish the library to purchase for the collection. Library staff will follow the Collection Development Policy when considering the request.

Reconsideration Policy

While the Library adheres to the American Library Association *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Freedom to Read Statement*, we also believe that all patrons deserve to have their concerns heard. If a patron wishes the Library to reconsider the inclusion of a material, a Reconsideration Form must be filled out completely and returned to the Library Director. Material will not be removed from the collection while a request for reconsideration is being evaluated. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated.

Upon receipt of a completed Reconsideration Form, a review committee consisting of the Library Director, appropriate subject librarian, and members of the Library Board will meet to review the form and to re-evaluate the material in question. The committee will provide a written decision to the challenger within 30 days of the meeting.

Interlibrary Loan Policy

The Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system provides access to other library catalogues, and borrowing is made available through the system. If the Guntersville Public Library does not have a book a patron needs, then an ILL request can be made through another system.

ILL service is available to any library user in good standing with a current Guntersville Public Library card.

To request an Interlibrary Loan, a patron must fill out an ILL Request Form located at the circulation desk. Having the full title, author's full name, and publication date is helpful when requesting ILL books.

A \$3 fee per book will be charged to cover shipping costs. Other items, such as microfilm rolls, can cost up to \$15 for shipping. Payment is only made after item is received.

ILL requests cannot always be fulfilled, though every reasonable attempt will be made.

Circulation of ILL Materials

The library lending the material sets the due date. Patrons typically have a standard two week lending period for loaned books.

Occasionally, an ILL can be renewed through the lending institution. Renewals are only permitted if the lending library approved a renewal request.

The borrower will be responsible for lost or damaged ILL materials.

Exam Proctoring Policy

The Library may proctor exams to members of the community, subject to availability of authorized library staff and requirements set by testing institutions. A minimum of one week advanced scheduling is required before any test can be proctored.

Exam Fees

There is no charge for proctoring, however, the individual taking the exam will be financially responsible for any prints or postage needed to complete the requirements of the exam.

Safety Procedures and Policy

No person will engage in inappropriate conduct on the premises of the Guntersville Public Library or when participating in library programs. Inappropriate conduct includes any individual or group activity which is disruptive to other person's lawful use of library premises or otherwise inconsistent with standard library activities.

Library staff will use their best judgment when confronting a patron, and when necessary will be supported by their supervisor and the Library Director. The police may be called in any event that a library staff member feels like the situation is unsafe or dangerous. Police may also be notified if illegal activity is suspected. Emergency responders will be called in the event of a medical emergency.

Staff may need to respectfully remind patrons that are exhibiting symptoms of contagious illness to consider the health and safety of the staff and other community members.

Due to safety and liability concerns, no person or group other than staff will be allowed inside library facilities during non-operating hours, with the exception of groups who have reserved the auditorium. For library programs that take place outside of normal operating hours, staff will open doors a minimum of 15 minutes before the start of the program.

Safe Child Policy

Children age 6 and under must be accompanied by a responsible adult (age 18 or older) at all times while in the library and on the grounds. Children ages 7-10 must have a responsible adult

present inside the library and on the grounds. The Library cannot assume responsibility for the safety of young children.

All patrons will be expected to display appropriate behavior, conducive to maintaining a safe and peaceful atmosphere while in the building.

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS, NOT LIBRARY STAFF, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN VISITING THE LIBRARY.

Behavior Policy

The library is a place where users can study, research, browse, read, participate in programs, and use computers in a welcoming, respectful, and non-threatening environment. Library users are expected to respect the rights of others who require a quiet environment in which to study, compute, research, and write. Problem behavior is any behavior that is disruptive to library use. Users who disrupt others' ability to concentrate on their work will be given one warning regarding the specific behavior. Upon a second occurrence, the offender will be required to leave the library for the remainder of the day. Upon a third occurrence, the offender will lose library privileges and must successfully petition the Library Director by letter to regain access. These relevant occurrences/warnings will be documented by library management.

Threats of violence, whether imminent or in the future, which appear to be a danger to library staff and/or users, are strictly prohibited. These include assault, fighting, and other acts of violence, or the threat or attempt to commit such acts of violence. There shall be zero tolerance for any threats, confrontational behavior, or violent actions of any kind toward library staff or users and such actions shall be reported to the police.

General Patron Behavior Guidelines:

- Patrons may not engage in any activity in violation of federal, state, local, or other applicable law or library policy.
- Possession of a weapon, except as permitted by law, or exhibiting any item in a threatening manner is not permitted.
- Patrons may not demonstrate disruptive, drunken, or threatening behavior that may jeopardize the personal safety of library users, staff, or facilities.
- Acts of sexual misconduct or stalking are not tolerated; this includes indecent exposure; offensive touching; sexual harassment; displaying pornography; and any conduct that alarms or harasses another patron or staff member.
- Physical displays of affection or sexual acts are inappropriate behavior for the library.
- Those who steal, damage, or deface library materials or property may be prosecuted. This includes property inside the library as well as the exterior building, library grounds, and landscaping. Parents can be liable for damage done by a child under the age of eighteen.
- Smoking and the use of tobacco products is prohibited in the library. This includes the use of e-cigarettes/vape pens, etc. Controlled substances may not be used in the library or on library property.

- Interfering with another person's right to use the library or with the library staff's performance of their duties is not allowed.
- Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, or engaging in other disruptive conduct is not allowed. The children's play area can understandably get louder at times and while we expect parents to monitor their children's noise level, library staff may intervene if it becomes a disturbance.
- Soliciting patrons and staff for donations, to obtain signatures on petitions, to conduct surveys is not authorized by the library and is not allowed on library property.
- Political campaigning in any form is not authorized by the library and is not allowed on library property.
- Patrons may not conduct a for-profit business in the library.
- Personal possessions should not be left with staff for safekeeping. The library is unable to guarantee the security of such items. Patrons should not leave personal items unattended.
- Misusing the restrooms is not allowed. This includes using the restrooms for bathing, doing laundry, or smoking.
- Animals may enter the library as long as they are closely monitored by their owner and remain carried or on a leash at all times. If an animal in the library were to leave a mess or behave in a loud or threatening manner, the owner will be asked to remove the animal from the building. Animals may not be left unattended or tethered to library property for more than ten minutes and only in areas that do not obstruct public walkways and entrances.
- Audio devices must be used with consideration for others. Cell phones should be turned off or muted while in the library. Loud phone/Skype/Facetime conversations must be conducted outside the library or in a closed meeting space.
- Habitual sleepers, noisy sleepers, and those who are sprawled on furniture or the floor in a manner that is disturbing to other persons will not be tolerated. Library users who simply doze off for a short time will ordinarily be left alone.
- In order to maintain clean and attractive library facilities and furniture, it is forbidden to sit on tables, place feet on furniture, lie on floors, or to deface walls. Only one person may sit in each chair.
- Food and beverages are allowed in the library as long as patrons do not leave behind a mess. Beverages should be in secured, lidded containers. No food and beverages should be consumed at computer stations.
- Shirts and shoes must be worn in the library.
- Parents are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children. (See safe child policy).
- Running and climbing are not allowed in the library building.
- Patrons may not use bicycles, skateboards, scooters, roller skates, or similar equipment in the library building. Public entrances and parking spaces must not be blocked by use or placement of such equipment.

Gifts and Donations Policy

Monetary Gifts

The Library accepts monetary donations without conditions on their use for materials or projects approved by the Library Board of Trustees.

Memorials/Honoring

The Library actively encourages donations as memorials and as tributes to living individuals on special occasions. Such acts provide the Library with an opportunity to add materials or equipment which it might not otherwise be able to afford. In addition, it is felt that such donations provide individuals with a rich opportunity to honor loved ones with a lasting statement of admiration and respect.

Except in rare circumstances, memorials and tributes are accepted in the form of monetary donations to Guntersville Public Library. The Library will make every effort to honor the donor's wishes regarding the selection to be purchased. However, the final decision rests with the Library in accordance with its needs and selection criteria.

A bookplate will be placed in the item purchased with the memorial and tribute gift funds. The bookplate will record the honoree as well as the donor. The Library will send letters to notify all parties of this gift.

In those instances where an individual wishes to donate a memorial book from his personal library, the decision to accept the gift will be based on the principles described in the Library's Collection Development Policy. If accepted, the bookplate and notification will be handled in the normal manner. If it is not accepted, the book will be returned to the donor.

Library Materials

The Library gladly accepts the donation of books and other items with the understanding that the Library may do with them as it sees fit.

Donations accepted for the collection become the property of the Guntersville Public Library. Donated materials will be added to the collection if they are needed and if they meet the selection standards that are applied to all materials added to the collection. Gifts not added to the collection will be disposed of in a way that will be most advantageous to the Library. Typically this means they will either be given to the Friends of the Library to be sold in the book store or biannual book sales, or they will be recycled by the City of Guntersville. Upon receipt of donated materials, a receipt is given to the donor acknowledging the donated items, if requested. Due to Internal Revenue Service regulations, the Library is prohibited from providing an estimate of monetary value of the donation.

We accept:

- Hardbacks and paperbacks
- DVDs
- Current magazines (past 3 months)

We cannot accept:

- Encyclopedias
- Dictionaries
- Textbooks
- Cookbooks older than 5 years
- Magazines older than 3 months
- VHS or cassette tapes
- Any material that is wet, moldy, or dirty

Any material donated to the Library that is in poor enough condition that is is deemed best to be placed in the trash may not be included the giver's donation count. This includes materials that are wet, moldy, dirty, or have bugs/animal droppings.

Surplus Library Materials, Furniture, and Equipment Policy

It is the policy of Guntersville Public Library to dispose of library materials, furniture, and equipment that is no longer functional or useful. When an item no longer has value to the Library, it will be removed from inventory and disposed of based on the following procedures:

- Books and other materials no longer deemed appropriate for the collection will be donated to the Friends of Guntersville Public Library for disposal through their regular book sales. Computer equipment no longer of use to the Library may be donated to local groups in need or recycled as the Library sees fit.
- Items not covered by the above may be sold through auction or publicly advertised sale with any proceeds from such sale going toward Library funds. Prior to such sale, the Director will prepare a list of those items to be included in the sale for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- If an item is determined by the Director to have marginal or no resale value, or it does not sell through auction or publicly advertised sale, it may be sold, discarded, or donated in the best interest of the Library.

Volunteer Policy

The Guntersville Public Library currently does not accept volunteers, including required community service, unless we are mandated to do so by local authority. Our library is well-staffed and the work given to volunteers typically takes away work from our paid employees. The time it takes to train volunteers can also drain employee work time. We do make an exception for former library employees who have been previously trained. Those wishing to volunteer are encouraged to contact the Friends of the Guntersville Public Library.

Meeting Room Policy

The Meeting Rooms of the Guntersville Public Library are provided to further the Library's mission to meet the informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community. The Library's facilities are available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use. The Library does not advocate for or endorse the viewpoints expressed in meetings by meeting room users. The primary use of the meeting rooms is for Library programs.

Eligible Organizations: In addition to library programming, the rooms are available to organizations located in Guntersville or Marshall County. The following types of organizations are eligible:

1. Friends of the Guntersville Public Library
2. Educational
3. Civic/Governmental
4. Business
5. Cultural
6. Recreational
7. Political
8. Religious - While no group shall be denied access based on the content of their meetings or religious views expressed therein, the meeting rooms are not designed to be used for regular church services.

A group that meets the eligibility requirements above but is not based in Guntersville or Marshall County may be considered for use of a meeting room if the organization is providing a service to local residents.

Unacceptable Uses of Rooms: Rooms are not available for the following:

1. Private social purposes, such as weddings, family reunions, receptions, dinners, birthday parties, baby showers, etc.
2. Sale of commercial products or services.
3. Paid tutoring sessions.

4. Events that require admission/fees or solicit monetary donations.

In other words, any citizen should be able to attend any meeting/event without a group membership or fee/purchase of any kind being required.

Library's Right to Deny or Cancel Use: The Library reserves the right to deny or cancel use of a meeting room to qualified groups for the following reasons:

1. Library-sponsored programs and events take precedence over meeting room use by outside organizations. If cancellation of a room reservation is necessary, notice will be given as soon as reasonably possible.
2. The group has violated a rule or has misrepresented the purpose of the organization or meeting to be held at the Library.

Admission Fees and Charges: No fees, admission or other charges, sales of any kind, or solicitation of funds will be allowed for any non-Library sponsored function.

Programs that are sponsored by the Library or a Library-related organization may involve profit-making groups and fees or admission charges. The sale of books or materials may also take place at an event sponsored by the Library or a Library-related organization.

If you are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that seeks to use our room for fundraising purposes (including solicitation of donations), we may ask to see proof of your non-profit status.

Reservations: Reservations are accepted during the Library's regular operating hours. Organizations can schedule regular meetings for up to one full calendar year. The Gunter'sville Public Library allows two reservations per group per month.

Generally, a meeting room should be booked at least one month prior to the event, but not earlier than one year. A meeting room application must be completed and on file at the Library and must be updated annually.

Auditorium Key and Security Alarm: In the event that a scheduled auditorium reservation begins and/or ends outside of Library operating hours, a designated representative of the group will need to checkout a key and get the alarm code from the Library circulation desk. If necessary for a first-time user, Library staff will give key/alarm demonstration. Upon leaving the auditorium, the doors must be securely locked and the alarm set. The key must then be returned to the circulation desk (if the Library is open) or to the exterior book drop (if the Library is closed) to be checked back in.

Room Setup and Cleanup: Any organization using a meeting room is responsible for setting up the room according to its own needs. Staff is not responsible for room setup.

After a meeting, tables and chairs must be returned to their original setup and/or storage, unless instructed differently by library staff. Auditorium chairs should never be stacked more than 4-chairs high.

Equipment: Users of Library equipment are responsible for familiarizing themselves with its operation in advance of the meeting and for the setup and operation of the equipment during the meeting. Users assume financial responsibility for any damage of equipment during use. This may include cost of equipment repair or replacement.

Wireless Internet access is available in the meeting rooms.

Piano: The Library's piano is available for use by groups in need of practice or performance space. The piano is not available for private lessons or individual practice sessions. Groups not meeting at the library for the above allowed use should not use the piano.

Decorations: No wall decorations are allowed. All decorations must be removed at the end of the meeting. Confetti, candles, and other open flames are prohibited.

General Rules: All meetings must abide by the following:

1. No illegal activities are allowed.
2. Distribution and/or consumption of alcohol during non-Library programs is not allowed.
3. All meetings must be open to the general public.
4. Library employees do not take telephone messages for people attending meetings.
5. Groups using the meeting room will be expected to conform to all Library rules required of other patrons.
6. Groups that are not considerate of Library policies will be denied further use of the meeting rooms.
7. Groups which have been approved to use the meeting rooms will receive a copy of this policy and must have a responsible party at least 21 years old sign the accompanying form agreeing that they will abide by these policies.
8. Youth organizations using a meeting room must have at least two adults (21 and over) present at all times.
9. The Library may require proof that any public audiovisual presentation is not in conflict with copyright laws.
10. The Fire Marshall establishes capacity for each room. Groups are responsible for ensuring attendance at meetings does not exceed capacity posted.
11. The Library assumes no responsibility for personal injuries, thefts, or losses of private property while on or using Library facilities.
12. The Library reserves the right to enforce fire codes, noise limitations, or any other rule approved by the Library Board of Trustees.

Appendix

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.

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.

Reconsideration Form

The Guntersville Public Library has established a materials selection policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to:

Library Director
Guntersville Public Library
1240 O'Brig Ave.
Guntersville, Al 35976

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Do you represent yourself? _____

Or an organization? _____

Name of Organization _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

___ Book ___ Audiobook ___ DVD ___ Magazine

___ Digital Resource ___ Newspaper ___ Other

Title

Author/Producer

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

4. What concerns you about the resource?

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?

2021
Meeting Room Application and Agreement Form

Name of Organization _____

Type of Organization **Educational** **Charitable** **Civic/Gov.** **Business**
Cultural **Recreational** **Political** **Religious**

Purpose of Meeting _____

Contact Person for the Organization _____

Contact Phone Number _____

Contact Email _____

Date of Meeting _____ **Start Time** _____ **End Time** _____

Which Meeting Room is Requested? **Auditorium** ***Lab**

Key and Security Code Needed? **Yes** **No**

*** This application may be waived if using the computer lab for the physical space only and no library equipment will be used.**

By submitting this form the undersigned organization hereby agrees to adhere to all Library and Meeting Room Policies and Procedures.

Name of Applicant (Print) _____

Signature of Applicant _____

Date _____

This application must be completed annually to be kept on file at the Library.