

**RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Persons not in agreement with the school on its selection of books or other instructional material and who wish a particular book or material to be reviewed must submit to the principal a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials." The request forms are available at the school office.

The principal, upon receipt of a "Request for Reconsideration" will acknowledge receipt to the complainant and list anticipated steps to be taken. The principal will then notify the Book Review Committee and schedule meetings necessary to review the complaint and to write a report.

The final report will be forwarded to the complainant and the Superintendent of Schools. If the complainant is dissatisfied, the next step is to submit the request to the Superintendent of Schools for action. If the complainant does not accept the superintendent's decision, the complainant may request a review by the School Board, whose decision will be final.

During the investigation the instructional material will remain in use unless a Selection Committee votes to remove or restrict the material until a final decision is made.

Article 5 of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS states that, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." All limitations on minor's access to library materials and services violate that Article. The "right to use a library" includes use of, and access to, all library materials and services. Thus, practices which allow adults to use some services and materials which are denied to minors abridge the use of libraries based on age.

Material selection decisions are often made and restrictions are often initiated under the assumption that certain materials may be "harmful" to minors, or in an effort to avoid controversy with parents. Libraries or library boards who would restrict the access of minors to materials and services because of actual or suspected parental objections should bear in mind that they do not serve in loco parentis. Varied levels of intellectual development among young people and differing family background and child-rearing philosophies are significant factors not accommodated by a uniform policy based upon age.

In today's world, children are exposed to adult life much earlier than in the past. They read materials and view a variety of media on the adult level at home and elsewhere. Current emphasis upon early childhood education has also increased opportunities for young people to learn and to have access to materials, and has decreased the validity of using chronological age as an index to the use of libraries. The period of time during which children are interested in reading materials specifically designed for them grows steadily shorter, and librarians must recognize and adjust to this change if they wish to serve young people effectively. Librarians have a responsibility to ensure that young people have access to a wide range of informational and recreational materials and services that reflects sufficient diversity to meet the young person's needs.

The American Library Association opposes libraries restricting access to library materials and services for minors and holds that it is the parents--and only parents--who may restrict their children--and only their children--from access to library materials and services. Parents who would rather their children did not have access to certain materials should so advise their children. The library and its staff are responsible for providing equal access to library materials and services for all library users.

The word "age" was incorporated into Article 5 of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS because young people are entitled to the same access to libraries and to the materials in libraries as are adults. Materials selection should not be diluted on that account.

**INSTRUCTIONAL/LIBRARY EVALUATING COMMITTEE**

Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to learn and to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.

Study thoroughly all materials referred to you and read available reviews. The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and local holdings in other schools.

Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the material as a whole.

Your report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, will be presented by the principal to the complainant at the conclusion of our discussion of the questioned material.

**Sample letter to complainant:**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

We appreciate your concern over the use of \_\_\_\_\_ in our school district. The district has developed procedures for selecting materials, but realizes that not everyone will agree with every selection made.

To help you understand the selection process, we are sending copies of the district's:

1. Instructional goals and objectives;
2. Materials selection policy statement;
3. Procedure for handling objections;

If you are still concerned after you review this material, please complete the Request for Reconsideration of Material form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request. If I have not heard from you within two weeks, we will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint.

Sincerely,

Principal

**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**  
(Reverse side may be used for additional remarks)

Type of material (i.e., book, film, periodical)

Author

Title

Request initiated by

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Address

City and Zip Code

Do you represent: \_\_\_ Yourself \_\_\_ Organization (If organization, name of such)

1. To what aspect of this material do you object? (Be specific; cite pages or portions.)
2. Is your objection to this material based on your personal exposure to it; upon reports you have heard, both?
3. What do you feel might be the result of using this material?
4. What is the educational value of this material?
5. For what age grp. do you think this material is intended?
6. Did you read or view entire material? \_\_\_ What parts?
7. What action would you recommend be taken regarding the use of this material in the school?
8. In its place, what material of equal educational quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?
9. Additional comments:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_