



Livingston County Library

450 Locust Street

Chillicothe, MO 64601

Phone: 660-646-0547

Website: www.livingstoncountylibrary.org



Commonly Asked Questions About Request for Review of Library Materials

- **“I heard that the library has pornographic books in the children’s/teen section of the Lillian DesMarías Youth Library. Is that true?”** No. While the library has received complaints about materials containing ideas and forms of expression that some parents may prefer that their children do not borrow or read, these titles do not contain obscene or pornographic content as defined by Missouri state statutes.
- **“Why does the library have LGBTQ+ books?”** It’s important for readers to be able to see themselves in books. It helps validate their existence and their experiences, and reinforces their self-worth. Not only can these stories portray a path in life that LGBTQ+ readers may not have thought possible, but they can also educate and inform readers who do not identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.
- **“If materials are on a library shelf, doesn’t that mean the library approves of those materials?”** The presence of any particular materials in the library’s collection does not imply endorsement of the ideas expressed in those materials. The library is simply doing its job as a neutral provider of information from all points of view. We trust individuals to make their own decisions about what they read. If the library “endorses” anything, it is your right to have access to a broad selection of materials. If you don’t find materials to your liking, ask a staff member to help you!
- **“Children/teens are too young to read books that address sexually explicit topics.”** We recognize that there will be disagreements over certain content. However, banning these materials will remove access for all members of the community, and individuals do not have the right to make decisions for other readers or for other parents about what is appropriate for their children. Reading materials available in the library are available to patrons for personal selection; they are not required books.
- **“The library has a responsibility to protect children/teens from sexually explicit content.”** The primary responsibility for rearing children rests with parents. If parents want to keep certain ideas or forms of expression away from their children, they must assume responsibility for shielding those children. Governmental institutions cannot be expected to usurp or interfere with parental obligations and responsibilities when it comes to deciding what a child may read or view. If a child borrows something from the library that the child’s parent believes is inappropriate, the parents are encouraged to return the item and make use of the expertise of library staff to locate materials they prefer.
- **“What are Parental Options that are available?”**

- Parents/Legal Guardians of minor children can opt to receive email notifications of their child’s loaned material from the Livingston County Library and the Lillian DesMarías Youth Library if so requested of library staff. A parent/legal guardian must provide an email address to library staff in person for verification purposes at the Main Library or Lillian DesMarías Youth Library.
- Parents/Legal Guardians of minor children can opt to choose which library collection their child has available to them for loaned materials. Parents/Legal Guardians can choose the collection(s) they do NOT wish their child to utilize; specific titles cannot be included, only collections. Parents/Legal Guardians must provide their choices to library staff for their minor child in person for verification purposes at the Main Library or Lillian DesMarías Youth Library.
- **“Can the library move materials from the children’s/teen section to the adult section or a “secured” location?”** Moving the books into the adult collection or to a “secured” location would make them invisible and inaccessible to most children and their parents. Everyone using the library, including young children, has a constitutional right to access all books in the library. In *Sund v. City of Wichita Falls, TX*, the court ruled that moving materials on the basis of disapproval of content is unconstitutional under the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution.
- **“What is intellectual freedom, and why is it important?”** Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Intellectual freedom is the basis for our democratic system. We expect our people to be self-governors; but to do so responsibly, our citizenry must be well-informed. Libraries provide ideas and information, in a variety of formats, to allow people to inform themselves.
- **“What’s the process for submitting Requests for Review of Library Materials.”** The Livingston County Library welcomes public comments on resources selected or not selected for inclusion in library collections. Any library cardholder in good standing may formally request the reconsideration of library resources by completing in full and signing a “Request for Review of Library Materials” form. The Library Director in consultation with the selectors and/or library staff will examine the resource in question, check reviews, and determine whether it conforms to the priorities and criteria of the library selection and collection development policy. This process takes time and the patron is requested to allow Library staff four to six weeks to respond. The Library Director shall determine if it should remain in the collection. If the complainant does not agree with the decision of the Director, a formal complaint may be filed with and reviewed by the Board, whose decision is final.
- **“Who could I contact for further information?”** Feel free to call or email the Library Director, Sue Lightfoot-Horine, to discuss this further. She can be reached at (660) 646-0547 and by email director@livingstoncountylibrary.org.