



**TOWN OF KITTERY
RICE PUBLIC LIBRARY
FREEDOM TO READ POLICY**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. The Town of Kittery is devoted to reading and wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read. We trust our Kittery residents to recognize propaganda and misinformation and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution.

In accordance, the Town of Kittery and the Rice Public Library will:

1. Provide the widest diversity of materials

It is in the public interest for the Rice Public Library to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

2. Provide opportunities to read and consider a broad range of viewpoints and ideas.

The Rice Public Library serves the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. Patrons will have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian.

3. Not bar access to materials based on political or personal history

It is contrary to the public interest for the Rice Public Library to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

4. Not restrict the selections made by the patrons

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.

5. No materials shall be labeled as subversive

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.

6. Allow individuals the freedom to select what they wish to read

It is the responsibility of the Rice Public Library, 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.