

The American School in London

Library Materials Reconsideration Procedure

The selection process for curating the ASL libraries is robust and aligned with national library association standards, both in the US and the UK. Our professionally accredited and experienced library staff engage in collaborative discussions with other academic and library professionals in addition to gathering research and using multiple sources to choose additions to the collection. Moreover, our librarians make careful and knowledgeable decisions about how to best recommend books to students of all ages.

We ask all ASL community members with questions about library resources to speak directly with our librarians who are always happy to hear suggestions or concerns. Families also have the right to express their concerns or complaints about print or digital materials, and the procedure for doing so is outlined in this document.

We support the right of families to determine the appropriateness of library materials for their own children, and we also support the notion that each parent/guardian should accord the same right to other families.

Informal complaints

- ASL community members with a complaint about library print or digital resources should state their concerns to a school librarian. The librarian will listen to the concerns, answer any questions and attempt to resolve the issue informally.
- As part of the discussion, the librarian will explain the library's selection process. No library resources will be removed as a result of the informal complaint.
- Normally, complaints are resolved at this stage. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the librarian will explain the formal procedure to the community member as described below.
- All complaints about library materials made to an ASL employee should be redirected to a librarian, whether received in writing, over the telephone or in personal conversation.

Formal complaints

The following steps will be used when an ASL community member feels that further action beyond the informal complaints process is necessary to address concerns about a library resource.

Prior to the process

- A complainant dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be offered a packet of materials that includes the ASL library's selection process, a copy of this procedure and a form for a request for reconsideration of library resources.
- The formal complaint begins with the submission of a completed and signed Reconsideration of Library Resources Form to the head librarian.
- The Reconsideration of Library Resources Form will include confirmation that the complainant has read the entire resource that is the subject of the complaint and the reason(s) for the reconsideration.
- If there is concern about multiple individual texts or resources, a separate form must be completed for each text or resource.

Initiation of the process

- Upon receipt of the completed Reconsideration of Library Resources Form, the ASL librarian will notify and provide a copy of the reconsideration form to the following individuals:
 - school librarians
 - director of teaching and learning
 - director of technology
 - divisional principals
 - head of school
 - No library resources will be removed from circulation as a result of the submission of a formal complaint.
- The Reconsideration Committee, chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, will be appointed by the head of school or a nominee appointed by the head of school, normally within two school days of receipt of the form, and will consist of:
 - a teacher
 - a school librarian
 - a school counselor
 - a principal or assistant principal.
 - The head librarian will secure and distribute copies of the resource that is the subject of the complaint for the committee to review.
- The head librarian will provide the Reconsideration Committee with a packet of materials, which includes the ASL library's selection process, the completed and signed Reconsideration of Library Resources Form, reviews of the resource being reconsidered and a list of awards or honors given to the resource (Supplementary Information for Reconsideration of Materials).
- The Reconsideration Committee chair will convene a meeting, normally within 10 school days or as quickly as reasonably possible, once the School receives the completed and signed Reconsideration of Library Resources Form and resources have been distributed to the committee.

During the review process

- The Reconsideration Committee will follow the procedures listed below:
 - At the initial meeting, the Reconsideration Committee will review the guiding principles:

- Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. The freedom to read is essential to Fundamental British Values.
 - Read all materials referred to you including the full text of the material in question and read available reviews.
 - Review the Selection of Library Materials policy and other supporting school documents.
 - The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting the Supplementary Information for Reconsideration of Materials document provided by librarians.
 - 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 materials as a whole.
 - The committee's recommendation is to be an objective evaluation of the material within the scope of a library's selection policy.
 - During the initial or subsequent meetings, the Reconsideration Committee will make its recommendation determined by a simple majority of one of the following outcomes:
 - Retain the resource as is
 - Provide grade-level guidance for the resource
 - Remove the resource from the collection
 - All committee members, including the chair, will have a vote.
 - A member of the Reconsideration Committee will document the final recommendation.
 - The Reconsideration Committee chair will present the written report and recommendation to the head of school and the head librarian.
 - The head of school, in consultation with the head librarian, will make the final decision about the resource.
 - The head librarian will report the decision in writing to the complainant as soon as reasonably possible.
- The final recommendation of the Reconsideration Committee regarding the challenged resource will be archived in the Mellon Library in the files of the head librarian.
 - The Reconsideration Committee will not ordinarily consider materials that have already been considered under the formal review process. However, there may be instances where the substance of a complainant's challenge is such that a re-review would be appropriate in the circumstances. Whether a re-consideration is appropriate or not is a matter for the head of school to decide (in consultation with the head librarian).
 - As a rule, only one formal complaint will be considered at any given time. Formal complaints will be considered in the order in which they are submitted.