



Pocket guide book challenge or reconsideration requests April 2022

It's inevitable that patrons will occasionally encounter library resources they believe to be offensive or inappropriate. They may complain and request that such resources be removed.

This pocket guide is a template that you can use to insert your library's policy and other things to know:

KNOW YOUR POLICY: Every library has a procedure in place for patrons to request a reconsideration of materials. Make sure you know where your library's policy is - online, service desk, or the director's office? Many libraries have their policies located both within the physical building or accessible through their website. The reconsideration policy may be part of the collection development policy or instructional materials policy.

HOW IS MATERIALS SELECTION DONE? You should be prepared to answer if a patron asks how your library selects its materials. While it will vary by library, it is always the case that trained and experienced library professionals use reviews to select the materials best suited to the needs and desires of the local community. Most libraries also use patron requests and potentially knowledge of the school curriculum in selection.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE A CHALLENGE FROM A PATRON? One of our responsibilities is to listen in a respectful and fair manner. Refer to your library's policy for how to process challenges. Typically, you will ask the patron to complete a form that goes to the library board or a committee of the board.

KNOW YOUR DEADLINE: Reconsideration is a timed-process. While policies may differ by library, most will have a timeline attached to the reconsideration procedure. It's important to get the request to the person who needs to see it right away. Otherwise, it will lessen the amount of time the reviewer has to read the book and make a recommendation on placement.

FORMAL WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION: If the library receives a completed reconsideration form, the person or group designated in library policy to handle challenges should follow these guidelines from receipt to decision. Library trustees are local community members appointed by city and county officials who fund the library, so they are the best body to represent community needs and values. Trustees work alongside library professionals to carefully consider any complaint or request to remove/relocate items.