There is a book in my child’s school library that I think is inappropriate. What can I do?

Library collections present information that represents a variety of viewpoints on many topics. If you are concerned with your child reading a book that does not meet your family’s values, you should first have a conversation with your child about your expectations. If you are still concerned, your next step is to schedule a meeting with your child’s building principal and school librarian to discuss your concerns. These educators can work with you and your child to guide your child’s reading choices to materials that align with your values.

I met with my principal and librarian about the book I think is inappropriate, but I am not satisfied with their response. What else can I do?

In Oklahoma, every public school district is required to have a library collection policy and a reconsideration policy. These policies are approved by the locally elected school board and spell out the procedures for requesting a book be removed from the library. Ask your child’s principal for a copy of the policy.

Can I have the book removed immediately?

Choosing to remove library material from a collection is a serious decision and cannot be done quickly. Every policy is different, but typically the first step for anyone requesting reconsideration of library material is for that person to read the material completely and then fill out a form that explains what the concerns are. Once that form is completed, a school reconsideration committee is formed. Every member of that committee has to find a copy of the material and then read it before meeting to reach a decision. Some policies also have processes in place to appeal decisions to a district-level committee and/or to the school board.

Why do libraries have books I don’t agree with?

School libraries provide literature and access to information for all types of learners and their families and are dedicated to reflecting all those experiences and values in the collection. Every family is unique and carries its own set of values and beliefs. Libraries work to provide a wide range of literature that are both mirrors, reflecting a reader’s own experiences, and windows into other experiences. Oklahoma school librarians receive specialized training in their master’s degree program to match the right book for the right reader. If you have concerns about your child’s reading material, visit with your school librarian about your child so they are better able to find the best books for your child.