LIANZA TOOLKIT - FREEDOM TO READ

Quick guide for **school library staff** for dealing with complaints or challenges on library material and events.
For more information go to https://lianza.org.nz/resources/freedom-to-read-toolkit/

AREA	YOUR ROLE	EXAMPLES AND CASE STUDIES
Policy	Make sure you have policies on: ▪ collection development ▪ challenges to books ▪ displays ▪ acceptable behaviour. Policies need to be created with knowledge of your community in terms of diversity, and your school's values and goals that support inclusivity, diversity and freedom of information. If your school is one of 'special character' this also needs to be considered in your policies and is likely to be developed alongside your senior leadership team and board of trustees to reflect the schools special character. Apply your knowledge of the New Zealand curriculum to collecting policies. These policies need to be approved by the Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership team and added to the School Docs or other publicly available policy register.	Te Puna Mātauranga National Library New Zealand (NLNZ), Services to Schools Collection plan: ► https://natlib.govt.nz/about-us/strategy-and-policy/collections-policy/schoolscollection Building an inclusive collection: ► https://natlib.govt.nz/schools/school-libraries/collections-and-resources/building-an-inclusive-collection Statement used in challenge process: *We believe that students should have access to a wide range of fiction and nonfiction materials that reflect their diverse cultures and identities and allows them to access information while growing critical thinking skills.* Example: *"At my school, all policies must be approved by senior leadership and the principal, then put before the Board for approval. All decisions we make according to the current approved policy are available on the school website. For example, we have a complaints policy and procedure where someone may contact the school and then be referred to the most suitable person to deal with it. Then a formal complaint must be made in writing to the principal, who investigates and makes a decision. The Board are informed of serious complaints. If the person isn't satisfied with the result, it can be appealed for review by the Board. Following existing policy and having the principal and Board involved in approving new policy ensures everyone knows the school's position."*
Processes	Make sure your library has documented processes for handling complaints regarding your school collection. Ensure these processes are approved and supported by the Board of Trustees and senior leadership team. Be clear of the roles of each party in each step of the process. Keep a register of challenges and responses. Have clear processes for handling restricted materials.	Background information from NLNZ Services to Schools on complaints. ► https://natlib.govt.nz/schools/school-libraries/collections-and-resources/selecting-resources-for-your-collection/complaints-about-library-items An example of a complaint form: Example: *"We require notes from home if students wish to read a book that is restricted above their year level. On one occasion this led to a parent querying the presence of Twilight in our library. I informed the parent that they could formally challenge the book if they wished to, but they did not.* *Our general policy is that books with swearing or romantic relationships, beyond innocent crushes, are restricted to Year 9 and up, as our library includes Year 7 and 8. Books with major topics like abuse, discrimination or grief may be restricted to Year 11 and up, depending on how it is dealt with, and the intended audience. We avoid books that depict gratuitous sex or violence."*

continued on back.

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Internal support	Work on developing and maintaining professional relationships with teaching staff, other support staff, senior leadership and the Board of Trustees. This will enhance and support your understanding of your school community. Be aware of how decisions are made in your school. Stay informed about your Board of Trustees and what their goals are. Ask yourself whether your senior leadership team or your Board of Trustees are likely to want to influence collection decisions. Have policies and statements ready for your senior leadership team and Board of Trustees to approve and support. Make it easy for them to understand your professional commitments and back you up. Discuss these issues with your teacher and support staff colleagues.	*"At my religious school, I haven't had a challenged book in my three years here, though I have ensured that the principal is on board with LGTBT+ material, Hell Pizza promotions and anything else that might raise flags so I have an ally already."*
Stay informed	Stay up to date with your knowledge of the curriculum and any revisions. Know the SLANZA, LIANZA and IFLA statements that can back you up. Know about topical issues that may generate challenges. Be aware of challengers, their objectives, campaigns and tactics.	► NZ curriculum: https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz *Note the revised Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum.* ► LIANZA statement: LIANZA Statement on Freedom of Information ► IFLA Statement on Censorship: IFLA Statement on Censorship ► American Library Association: ALA Statement on Book Censorship Rainbow community content, trans identity, critical race theory, revisionist Māori history, anti-vax content. Family First NZ - Strong Families, Strong Nation (Against sex education and queer-friendly content in school and public libraries).
Support and allies	Talk to SLANZA and or NLNZ Services to Schools You can also talk to LIANZA, or your local public library.	► SLANZA: https://www.slanza.org.nz ► NLNZ: https://natlib.govt.nz/schools ► LIANZA: https://lianza.org.nz