



SAU #19 – Advancing Student Learning

Serving the School Districts of Goffstown and New Boston

Brian Balke, Superintendent

Wendy Kohler, Assistant Superintendent

To: Mrs. Kohler

From: Brian Balke

Date: November 8, 2023

Re: MVMS Library public complaint – Young Adult (YA) collection

Cc: Mrs. Milligan, Mr. Lewis, GSB Correspondence

Wendy,

Please review best practices for a middle school library specifically focused on:

- Access to YA selections – location, identifying features, as well as catalog access
- Management and logistics of YA selections
- Parent/guardian permission regarding student access to YA selections
- Notification and communication with parents around YA collection – including 5th grade students from Goffstown and 7th grade students from New Boston
- As part of your inquiry, please include the following in your analysis:
 - Please request input from MVMS Administration, MVMS library staff, MVMS teachers
 - Please review applicable practices from other NH School Districts
 - Please provide library and material-use statistics for students including YA selections
 - Any special considerations given that we have 5th graders at MVMS
 - Brief review of research
 - Before and after school access to the MVMS Library
 - Policy and Handbook implications that may be relevant

Outcomes:

- Please plan to share your findings with SAU Admin, MVMS Admin, and the Curriculum and Education Committee as the next steps
- If any programmatic changes are recommended, please develop an implementation and communication plan

DRAFT

LIBRARY STATS

A YEAR IN REVIEW

read ~ discover ~ create

2022-2023



Book Circulation Highlights:

9,618

Books Checked Out

1,711

New items added to the collection!

Top 5 Genres

- Graphic Novels
- Manga
- Picture Books
- Fantasy
- Humor

Digital Stats:

781

eBooks & Digital Audiobooks Accessed

30,479

Databases Sessions (Combined District Total)

Library Usage:

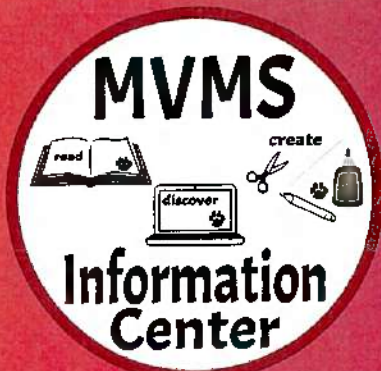
7,465	Students Using Before and After School Extended Hours
11,921	Students Came to the Info Center on Individual Student Passes
639	Classes Came to the Library for Instruction
36	Content Literacy Classes Used the Library
3,034	Staff and Small Groups

DRAFT

Highlighted Happenings:

- 2 Book Fairs
- Monthly Reading and/or Makerspace Challenges
- Special Events: Hour of Code, Poetry Month
- Co-Teaching: Research, Digital & Information Literacy
- Literacy Events: Summer Reading Program

DRAFT



LIBRARY STATS

February 2024



Book Circulation Highlights:

817

**Books
Checked Out**

59

**New items
added to the
collection!**

Top 5 Genres



Graphic Novels

Humor



Fantasy

Adventure



Horror



Co-Teaching Happenings:

5th Grade Social Studies classes came to work on the Exploration research projects. Some students used Canva to create ABC books and Trading Cards.



8th Grade ELA Classes came in to begin research on their major research projects. They used the databases to gather info on different viewpoints.



Library Usage:

17 Days in February

813

**Students Using Before and After
School Extended Hours**

1,170

Individual Student Passes

91

Classes Came to the Library

7

Content Literacy Classes

402

Staff and Small Groups

Digital Stats:

3

**eBooks &
Digital Audiobooks
Accessed**



**Databases
Sessions**

3

(Combined District Total)





YA LITERATURE IN NH 5-8 MIDDLE SCHOOLS

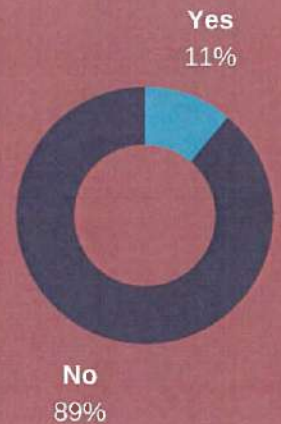
read ~ discover ~ create

In 2018, middle schools in New Hampshire with grades 5-8 participated in a survey about best practices in regard to young adult literature.

To the right is a summary of the results of the survey.

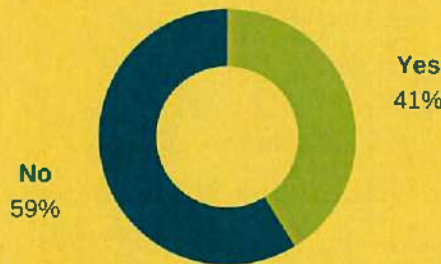
SHELVING

Does your library shelve Young Adult literature separate from Children's literature?



PROCESSING

Does your library use special labels or markings to denote a book is Young Adult literature?



CATALOGING

Does your library attach notes to the catalog records of certain books intended to alert the circulation desk staff that the book is YA or has mature content?



[Click here to view the whole results.](#)

YA LITERATURE IN 5-8 SCHOOLS



2018
(Not facilitated by
Goffstown)

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Amherst Middle School
Barrington Middle School
Belmont Middle School
Bow Memorial School
Boynton Middle School
Dover Middle School
Gilford Middle School
Great Brook School
Hampstead Middle School

Iber Holmes Gove Middle School
Indian River School
Inter-Lakes Middle Tier
Lebanon Middle School
Mountain View Middle School
Oyster River Middle School
Seabrook Middle School
South Meadow School
Vilas Elementary School
Walpole Elementary School

RESULTS

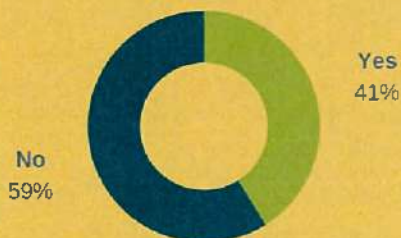
SHELVING

Does your library shelve
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separate from Children's
literature?



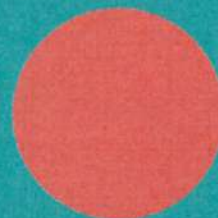
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SELECTED FEEEDBACK

ON SHELVING...

"We don't separate, but we do label YA books- those reviewed by professional journals or our own professionals as grades 7 and up."

"I will not separate YA from my other fiction titles because it would immediately make them "taboo", and therefore attract attention for all the wrong reasons."

"I do most of the check outs, and my position is that anyone can take out anything that interests them, but I do warn students about PG material, even older kids, and suggest a discussion with parents for younger kids."

"I genrified fiction quite a few years ago and I created a section called Girls 7/8 and one called Boys 7/8. There are also Girls 5/6 and Boys 5/6 sections. When I introduce 5th graders to the collection I mention that the 7/8 sections might have content they are not yet ready for BUT I do not refuse to let younger kids borrow from these sections."

"I also teach weekly classes to Grade 5 and 6 students and go over our philosophy about YA books in detail, at the start of each school year. I tell students that they each need to have a conversation with their parents, so that they know how their parents feel about them checking out YA books. I actually say, "I should never receive a call from your parents telling me that they are upset about a YA library title that you brought home. That means that you didn't do your job of talking it over with them."

ON LABELING...

"The librarian who worked in my school before me wrote inside of YA books, "7th & 8th grade only," or "8th grade only." I do not follow this practice, nor [do] I use YA labels."

"I've wanted to remove these/ stop this practice but have hesitated due to the 5th graders."

"I label some books 8th grade only. I do this sparingly and based on professional reviews."

"I have printed the novelList record for a book that may be categorized as for grades 8 and above that might be more mature for students in Grade 5. The printout will let readers know about the content. The printout is taped inside the cover of the book. I tell my students that our library collection has books for grades 5 - 8 and that it is their choice to read a book. I tell them that they can return anything they feel they don't want to read because of content."

"The Girls 7/8 and Boys 7/8 are each marked to indicate the "genre". However, YA books in the fantasy, dystopian, or sci fi sections are not additionally labeled to indicate YA."

SELECTED FEEDBACK

ON CATALOGING...

"We feel the label is enough, but in the handbook it is stated that the collection includes mature material due to the range of ages/grade in the building and the parents have the opportunity to have us limit their child's choices. We have only had a few take us up on that in the 10 years we have done this."

"We don't attach notes, but it is listed in the interest level data field that it is a Young Adult book."

"If in doubt, we quickly check AR Bookfinder notes or Novelist."

"We have several titles that I feel are not appropriate for MS and do not allow MS students to check out. These are titles that focus on school violence or suicide."

"Each title will appear as a "Young Adult" book on the Reading/Interest Level line of the book, in the online Destiny MARC record. Each adult checking out books to students is expected to have a conversation with the student about any YA book."

"I use a self-checkout system where students check out their own materials so that wouldn't really be appropriate."

FINAL THOUGHTS

"Know your patrons, community & climate and trust your gut. Some of your students are going to need books which are a written with gritty realism. Our world and demographics are changing and we need to make access to previously prohibited content accessible to our students, of course in an age-appropriate and respectful way. Case in point: *The Hate You Give*.

"We read to know we are not alone." C.S. Lewis"

"Every year I second guess myself on what I do. I try to be honest with parents at the onset that our collection serves grades 5-8 and students within those grades are at different levels of maturity. There are 5th graders who may be okay reading *13 Reasons Why* and 8th graders who wouldn't. (I have both presently). I also try to reassure parents that children are generally very good at self-selecting books that are appropriate for them. If a parent raises a concern I encourage them to speak directly to their child about their concerns and set limits at home."

"I think you need to be really familiar with your collection and decide what it is you want students of all grades in your school to have access to. On the other hand, if you're K-12, or K-8, you might need to have [a] section that is young adult, and limit to older students unless they have permission. I think a great deal of current literature aimed at Middle and High is very graphic and deals with more adult situations nowadays, than when I was in school...readers do self-select material that is suitable to them, if they have free choice."

YA LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL



PARTICIPATING NH SCHOOLS

Barrington Middle School
Colebrook Academy & Elementary School
Deerfield Community School
Dover Middle School
Elm Street Middle School, Nashua
Epping Middle High School
Gilbert H Hood Middle School
Hampstead Middle School
Hampton Academy
Haverhill Cooperative Middle School
James Masticola Upper Elementary
Keene Middle School
Lebanon Middle School
Lincoln Akerman
Lin-wood Public School
McKelvie Intermediate School
Merrimack Middle School
Merrimack Valley Middle School

Mountain View Middle School
Newfields Elementary School
Newmarket Jr/Sr High School
Oyster River Middle School
Pelham Memorial
Pennichuck Middle School
Pittsfield Middle High School
Plymouth Elementary School
Ross A Lurgio Middle School
Rundlett Middle School
Somersworth Middle School
Sunapee
Weare Middle School
West Running Brook Middle School
Westmoreland School
Woodbury Middle School
2 Anonymous Schools

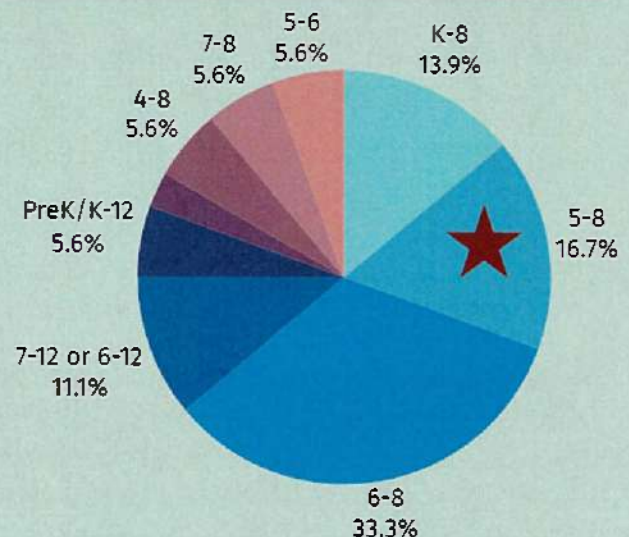
This survey was facilitated (February 2024) by Wendy Kohler, Assistant Superintendent and Amy O'Riley, Library Media Specialist, Goffstown, NH SAU 19. Survey results were compiled by Amy O'Riley, amy.oriley@sau19.org



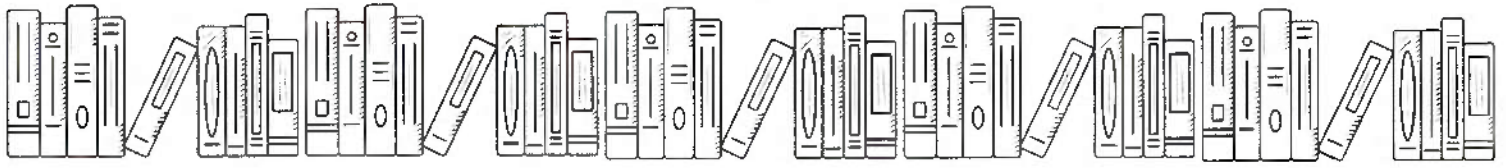
WHAT GRADE LEVEL DOES YOUR SCHOOL HAVE?

MVMS RESPONSE:

5-8



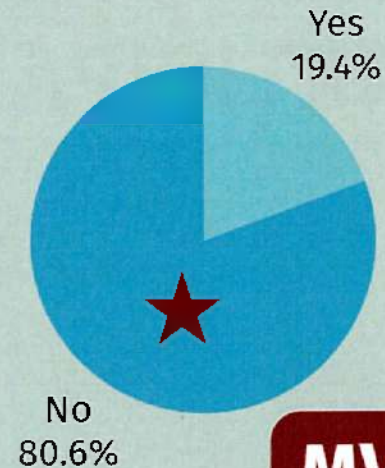
SURVEY RESULTS



SHELVING PRACTICES

**DOES YOUR LIBRARY
SHELVE YOUNG ADULT
LITERATURE SEPARATE
FROM OTHER LITERATURE
(CHILDREN'S, MIDDLE
GRADE, ETC.)?**

*Notes: The schools that answered
"Yes" contain various makeup
including grades in the K-4 range.*



**MVMS
RESPONSE:
NO**

SELECTED FEEDBACK

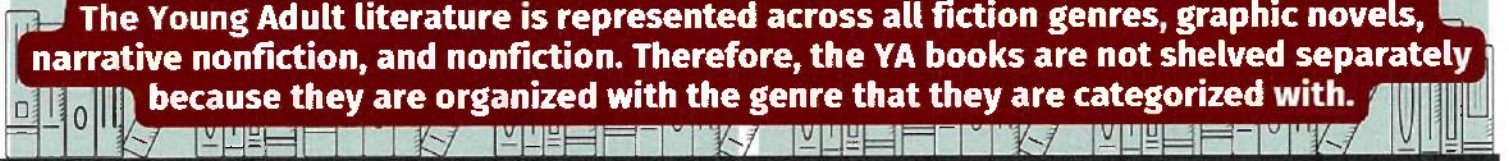
"Shelving is by grade bands Pre-K-2 recommended, 3-8 recommended, 9-12 recommended"

"Beginning Chapter Books are currently shelved separately from "middle grade novels." We may change that to integrate those together in the future."

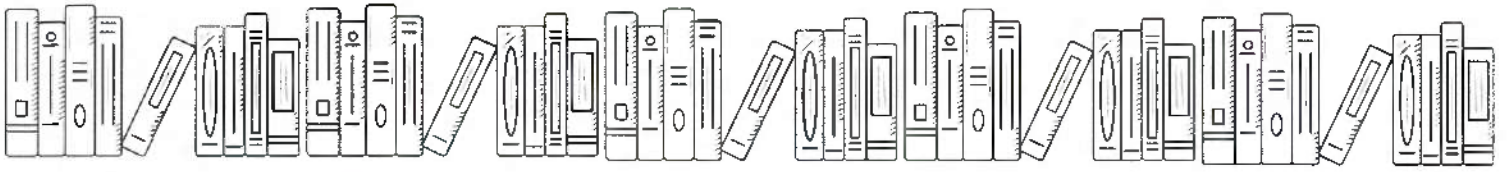
"We have our fiction organized by genre and any YA titles are mixed in, but are labeled with a YA sticker, and we always explain what could be found in a book labeled YA at the beginning of each year."

"I have a section for Young Adult Literature. It is intended for 5th-8th grades. It was the policy in place before I started. I usually have it flagged as materials that are generally for 7th and 8th, such as those nominated for the Isinglass Award."

The Young Adult literature is represented across all fiction genres, graphic novels, narrative nonfiction, and nonfiction. Therefore, the YA books are not shelved separately because they are organized with the genre that they are categorized with.



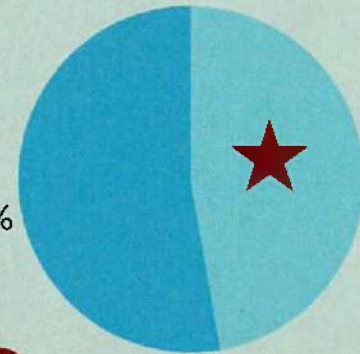
SURVEY RESULTS



LABELING PRACTICES

**DOES YOUR LIBRARY
USE SPECIAL LABELS OR
MARKINGS TO DENOTE A
BOOK IS YOUNG ADULT
LITERATURE?**

No
52.8%



Yes
47.2%

**MVMS
RESPONSE:
YES**



SELECTED FEEDBACK

"DDS classification with additional genre labels. I have thought about labelling as middle v. high school, but as a student I was never fond of how I saw books categorized by grade level. Just let me read what calls to me!"

"We do label subjects in fiction-- scary, horse, dog, and novels in verse get labels. But we do not label for "content warnings""

"All YA books are labeled with a YA sticker."

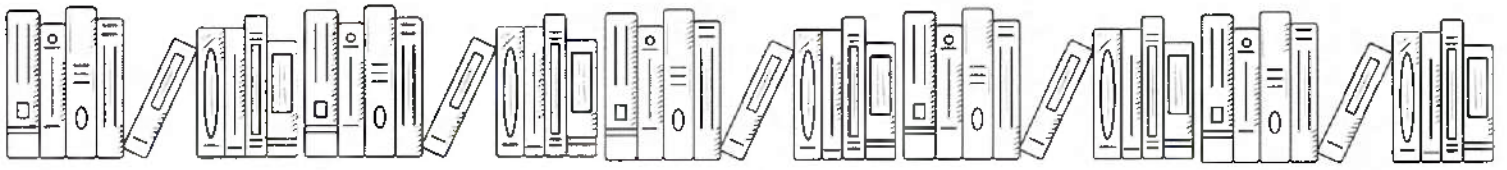
"Our call numbers say YA on them. We have a few (very few) books that are classified as grades 7 & up or grades 8 and up. These classifications are determined based on reviews from School Library Journal, Kirkus, Booklist, etc..."

"Labeling books can be negative in a few ways. For instance, If you label titles with a rainbow for LGBTQIA+, then you are 'outing' students who are reading such titles. These students may want to read about this topic for several reasons, but they may not want other students to see and label and know some of the content within their book. And, labeling books YA can draw students to titles that they may not otherwise gravitate to. The analogy is to having a movie that is rated "R". Some students may be attracted to a book solely due to a "YA" labels."

We place a YA label on the spine of the book. We also write YA on the due date sticker in the back of the book.



SURVEY RESULTS



CATALOGING PRACTICES

DOES YOUR LIBRARY ATTACH NOTES TO THE CATALOG RECORDS OF CERTAIN BOOKS INTENDED TO ALERT THE CIRCULATION DESK STAFF THAT THE BOOK IS YA OR CONTAINS MATURE CONTENT?



**MVMS
RESPONSE:
NO**



SELECTED FEEDBACK

"Sometimes I'll make additional notes in Destiny (LMS), on a case-by-case basis."

"The record includes interest level recommendations suggested by Follett, but I do not add any additional notes."

"In Destiny, we assign these books/materials to a specific Sub-Category titled simply YA."

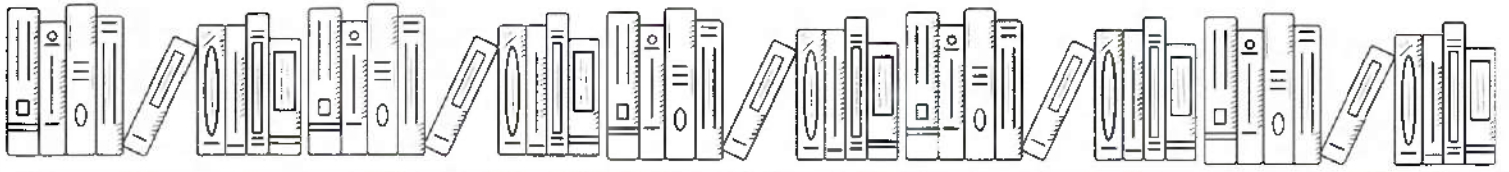
"We do not have any procedures for this."

"Cataloging is done centrally as we have a central catalog in our district. Books may be requested by and sent to any school in the district, although titles with mature content are usually discouraged from lower levels."

"I answered 'no' to adding notes about certain books having mature content, but I did this once before to help my library assistant. If this helps an adult to caution a student, it may be an alright practice? Instead of doing this, I've come to the conclusion that all families have their own family culture. What is offensive to one family is perfectly fine with another. I cannot read all of the books that I buy, nor do I know all of the subjects that families may have an issue with. When I check out a title that I am unfamiliar with, I tell the student to stop reading and return the title should anything be against their family's beliefs. I also tell them that we have many books and that we are happy to source books based on their interests (as best as we can). We build important relationships in a relaxed as possible manner. We want all students and staff to be supported every time they are in the library or have an information need."

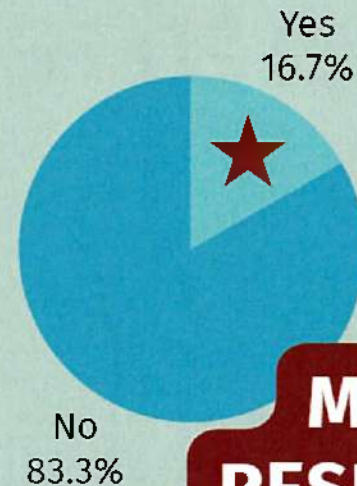
If a book is YA, it is labeled automatically in the Interest Level section of the MARC record. This is viewable in Destiny, our library catalog for all to see. We do not add additional noted to the records. If there is a special request from a parent, we will add a note to the patron's record.

SURVEY RESULTS



PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION PRACTICES

WHERE YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE IS WRITTEN PRIMARILY FOR READERS AGED 12-18, DO PARENTS OF STUDENTS NOT IN THE AGE RANGE COMPLETE A PERMISSION SLIP (OPT-IN) FOR THEIR STUDENT TO HAVE ACCESS TO CHECK OUT A YA BOOK OUT OF THE LIBRARY?



**MVMS
RESPONSE:
YES**



SELECTED FEEDBACK

"The 7/8 ELA teacher sends out permission. She gives me lists of names."

"It is done in English Class as they have materials even higher grade than the library, but the permission slip encompasses all school free choice reading books."

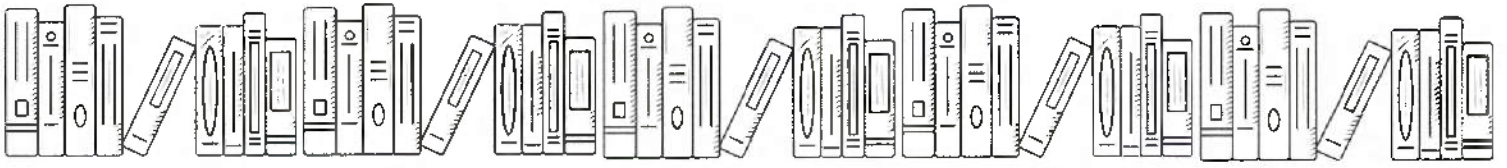
"Any kid can have a parent write a note. This happens often with our 4th graders who want to read Five Nights at Freddy's which is found in our YA section as recommendations have it aged 12 and up."

"YA is 5th and up. There is a special label for 7-8 only."

"We have an 'opt-in' permission slip for 5th and 6th grade students to be able to check out a YA book. Our 7th and 8th grade students do not need a permission slip."

We have an "opt-in" permission slip for 5th and 6th grade students to be able to check out a YA book. Our 7th and 8th grade students do not need a permission slip. Parents are able to make special requests and we will add that as a note on the patron account.

SURVEY RESULTS



PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION PRACTICES SELECTED FEEDBACK CONTINUED

"Any student can check out any book in the library. If a student requests a book through interlibrary loan that is rated for older, I will ask the student for permission to email the parent to get permission."

"If I get a parent complaint, then that student knows they are supposed to restrict themselves to the sections their parent has told them to choose from. We are a small school; I know which students' parents have asked their child have restrictions on certain content."

"We do not send home permission slips at all, but if a parent wishes to restrict their student from checking out certain books, they are able to do that by communicating with the librarian."

*"I encourage parents/guardians to engage in conversation about their student's reading interests so that they are aware. If a parent wishes the student to return a book they object to, they may do so no questions asked. I also send them a link to the catalog so they can browse and select books with their student, if they desire to do so. I base this on Article V of the Library Bill of Rights as discussed here:
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors>."*

"I/we practice a No Exceptions routine (not an established policy, on which the school Board would have to vote and approve). When students insist on using/reading YA materials, I/we search the local public library collection and recommend they access the book from this open resource. I offer to meet them there after school to support this next phase of Library use."

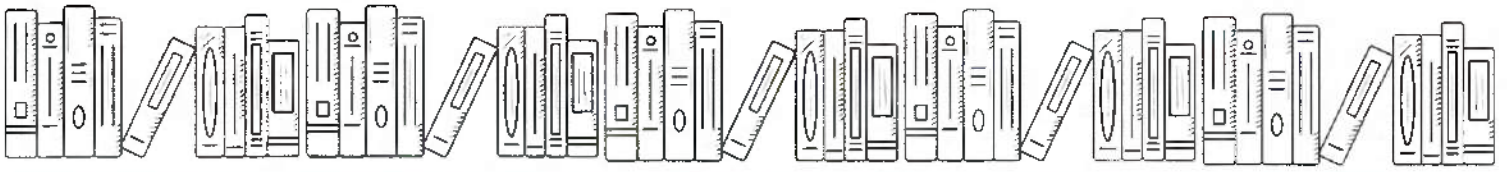
"We do not require parent permission for any items in our collection."

"Many teachers are considering this practice. It is very tricky. "Choice" in reading is critical. Teachers and parents have the best of intentions. Permission slips created out of fear can be more harmful than helpful for students."

"Parents are able to make special requests and we will add that as a note on the patron account."



SURVEY RESULTS



LOCATION/ ORGANIZATION/ DISPLAY PRACTICES

IF YOU HAVE A
SEPARATED YA SECTION
OF YOUR LIBRARY, IS IT
LOCATED CLOSE TO
YOUR CIRCULATION
DESK FOR
SUPERVISION?



**MVMS
RESPONSE:
NO**



SELECTED FEEDBACK

"Because of the weird spacing and shelf availability, location and organization is basic DDS. However, I have displays that feature rotating recommendations (6-12) as well as a rotating "last chance" display devoted to fiction titles with low circulation stats (i.e., has not been checked out in the last decade) before I weed them."

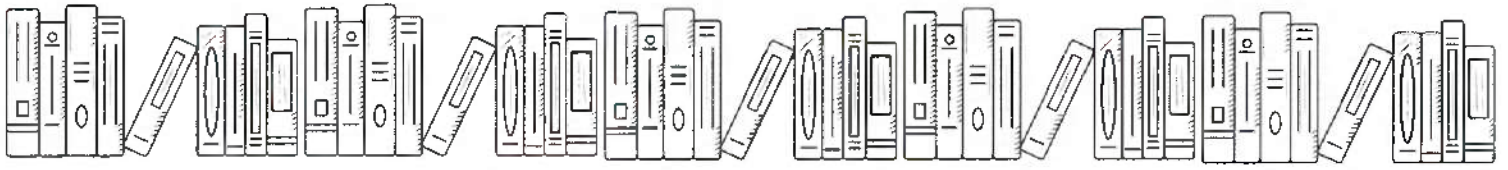
"The YA section is actually farthest from the circulation desk in an attempt to discourage younger students from browsing there."

"We are K-5 and do not have much YA literature. All middle grade novels are shelved together in fiction."

"We aim to have very inclusive displays so that reluctant readers and avid readers are both considered."

Our library is organized by literary category: Fiction, Picture Books, Professional, Biography/Narrative Nonfiction, Graphic Novels, Reference, and Nonfiction. Our fiction section is organized by genre: Adventure, Classics, Fantasy, Historical Fiction, Horror, Humor, Mystery, Realistic Fiction, Romance, Sports. Parents are able to make special requests and we will add that as a note on the patron account.

SURVEY RESULTS



ARE THERE ANY OTHER EXISTING PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE THAT OCCUR WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT?

GENERAL SELECTED FEEDBACK

"Students are told every year what the recommended sections for their age group are. If a student decides to select material from other than their recommended section, I might have a discussion with them about it containing mature content and do they still want that book or not. This isn't a policy, just something I might do depending on the student and the book."

"No policies, but our practice is to explain why a book is labeled YA if we are doing a book talk on it."

"Nothing is purchased for the 15-18 category. Young adult is typically for the 13-14 year olds."

"I look at sources and if most agree it is 9 & up, I don't buy."

"The YA section is for 6th through 8th grade."

"I carefully consider reviews by reputable sources such as School Library Journal and try not to purchase books that are not rated for ages in my building. If I do purchase a book rated higher, it is usually nonfiction on a topic that is not likely to have any age-inappropriate content."

"We are very clear during 5th grade library orientation about the range of books kids will find in our library and we encourage students to talk about what they are reading with their parents."

"I will only purchase books that have been reviewed by at least 3 professional sources and won't consider books where multiple sources state that the book is best for grades 9+ or ages 14+."

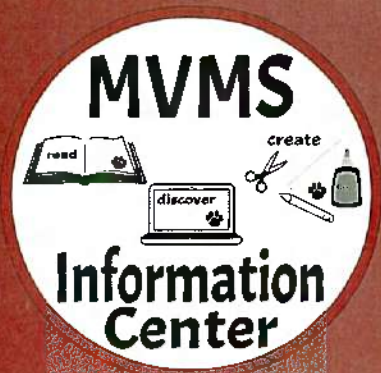
"When a student not in 8th grade checks out a YA book, we alert them that the content and book was written with 8th grade - high school readers in mind, there might be some language or... just to keep that in mind."

"If a sixth grader goes to borrow a YA book, we may briefly give them a heads up that it contains mature content. But that's really the extent of it."

"All Young Adult books that have been added into our collection have been professionally reviewed and recommended for students in grades 7th and/or 8th."

All Young Adult books that have been added into our collection have been professionally reviewed and recommended for students in grades 7th and/or 8th.





YA BOOK CHARACTERISTICS

read ~ discover ~ create

The category "Young Adult" in literature refers to the interest/audience level of the primary readers. It is an age-based categorization.

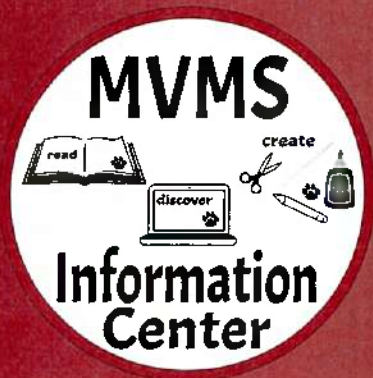
The Characteristics of YA literature include:

- Written for audiences aged 12-18
- May be written for any genre.
- Teenage Protagonist
- Focuses on the protagonist's experiences and self-reflection as they navigate new worlds.
- Profanity and violence are allowed.
- Romance is allowed, but **NOT** eroticism.
- Often told in 1st person from protagonist's view

Major Differences Between MG and YA Lit

- Middle grade literature typically does not have profanity, violence, or sexual contact beyond kissing. This content may be found in young adult literature, but only used for the context of the plot.
- Young adult literature is traditionally longer in length.
- Middle grade literature is usually told in 3rd person that focuses on the characters relationships with family and friends. Young adult literature is told in 1st person that focuses on interacting with the world beyond family and friends.

Sources



2023-
2024

YOUNG ADULT PERMISSION

read ~ discover ~ create

MVMS Info Center offers an "opt-in" permission slip for 5th and 6th graders to check out Young Adult titles in the library collection.

The permission slip is available upon request.

As of December 2023

Current 5th Graders

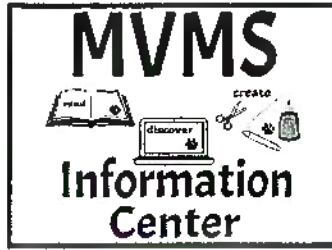
58 Students

32% of Grade Level

Current 6th Graders

78 Students

45% of Grade Level



Mountain View Middle School Information Center
41 Lauren Lane
Goffstown, NH 03045
(603) 497-8288 ext. 5624

Amy G. O'Riley, M.Ed. ~ Library Media Specialist amy.oriley@sau19.org
Kerstie Hazelbaker ~ Library Program Assistant
Lola Korn ~ Library Program Assistant

Young Adult (YA) Permission for Current 5th and 6th Grade Students

Please understand that books in the "Young Adult" category (YA) are usually written for readers aged 12-18. Young Adult and other library materials are selected in accordance with Policy IJL. Young Adult books that are selected to be added to the MVMS Library Collection will be identified with a spine sticker label that is red and white and has the initials YA. Students in 5th or 6th grade will need a signed permission slip in order to check out a Young Adult Book.

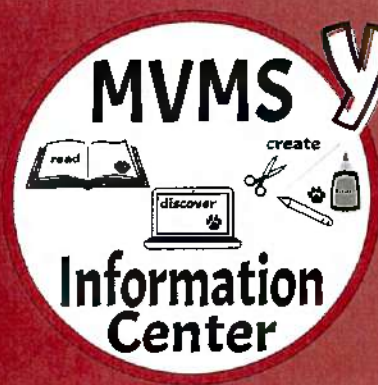
By signing this permission slip, I am allowing my 5th/6th grade student the choice of being able to check out a YA book.

I give permission for _____ on Team _____ to have the choice to borrow Young Adult (YA) books from the MVMS Information Center.

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

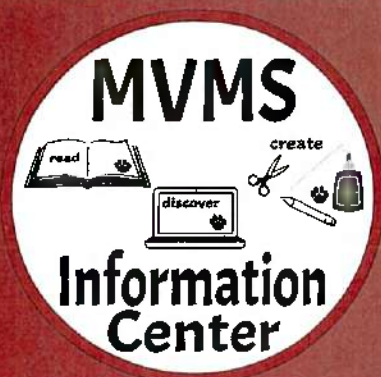


YA BOOK SELECTION CRITERIA

read ~ discover ~ create

The Young Adult Titles that have been selected to be added to the MVMS Information Center Collection follow the following guidelines:

- Adherence to Goffstown School Board Policy IJL
- Professionally Recommended for students in 7th and/or 8th grades aged 12-14 (Ex. School Library Journal, Kirkus, Booklist, Horn Book, Publisher's Weekly)
- Meets the needs of enriching the school curriculum and supporting the teachers' needs.
- Meets the needs of the interest of the students.
- Develops the collection in order to provide a wide range of materials with diversity of appeal and different points of view



YA LITERATURE ORGANIZATION

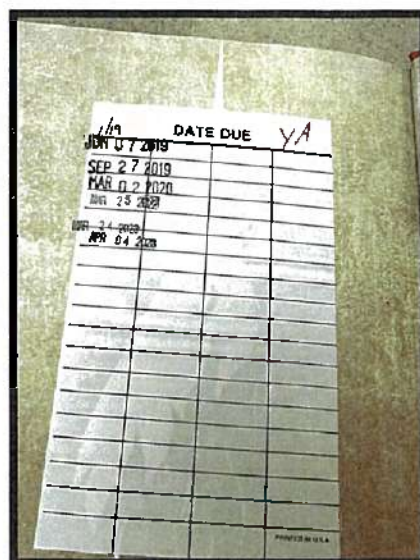
read ~ discover ~ create

The Young Adult Titles that have been selected to be added to the MVMS Information Center Collection are organized in the following ways:

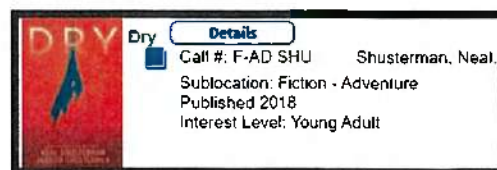
- YA Spine Label adhered to the spine of the book.
- YA written note on the due date sticker inside the book.
- YA Interest Level in the book details in Destiny Discover, the online library catalog.



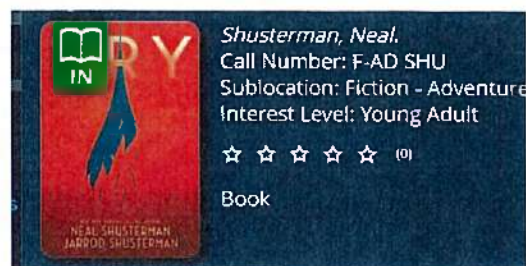
YA Spine Label



Note on Due Date Sticker



Destiny - Library View



Destiny - Student View



2023-
2024

YA LIT IN THE MVMS COLLECTION

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**Total Titles in
YA Collection**

1,954

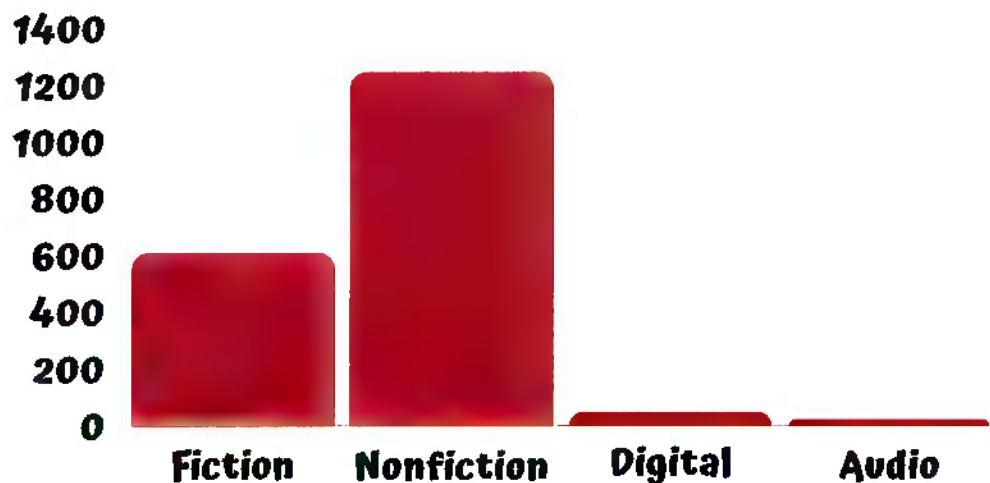
**Average Age of
YA Collection**

2011

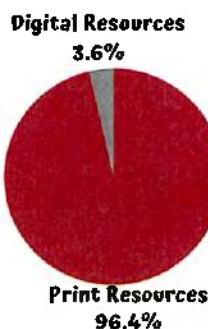
**Percentage of
YA Collection**

16.8%

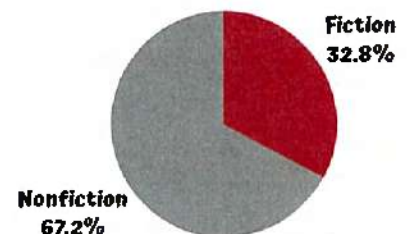
YA Collection By Circulation Type

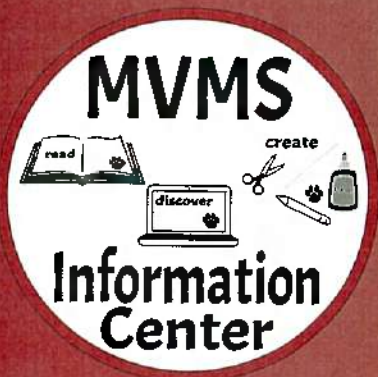


Physical vs. Digital Resources



Literary vs. Informational Texts





2022-
2023

YOUNG ADULT CIRCULATION

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Total YA Circulations 22-23

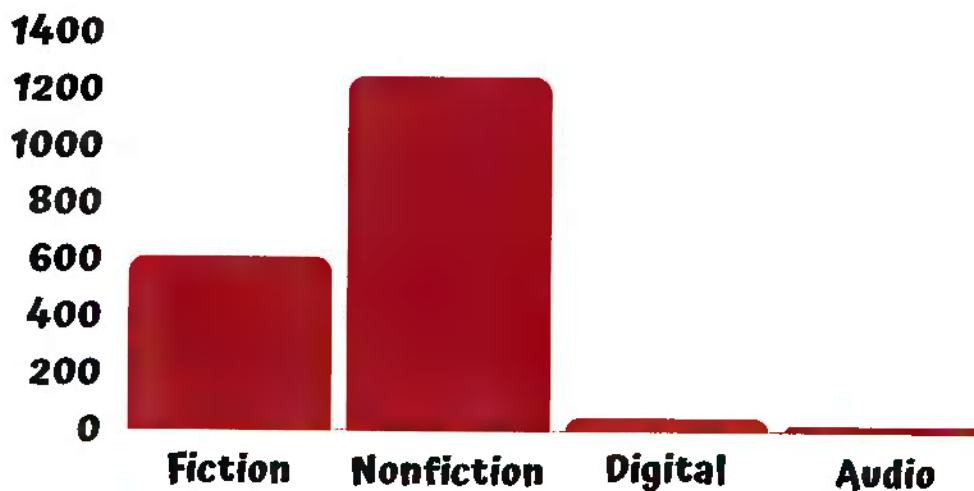
1,944

**Percentage of
Total Circulations 22-23**

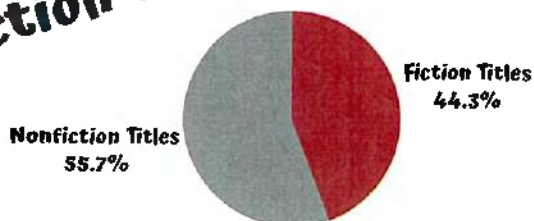
20%

1 Circulation = 1 Time a Book Was Checked Out or Renewed

22-23 YA Collection By Circulation Type



22-23 Fiction vs. Nonfiction Titles



22-23 Fiction vs. Nonfiction Circulations

