

Collection Development, Materials Selection, and Media Policies

Materials Selection Policy

The purpose of this statement on materials selection is to establish policies to guide staff and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made to develop the collection of the Library.

A policy cannot replace the judgment of librarians or directors but stating goals and indicating boundaries will assist them in choosing from a vast array of materials available.

The Library sets as its major goal in collection development and materials selection: to secure for all residents of the Library's service area the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational materials in a variety of media, both published and unpublished, that fit their needs.

Definitions

The word "materials" used for the specific forms of media, has the widest possible meaning: it may include books (hardback and paperbound), government documents, pamphlets, maps, magazines and journals, comic books, newspapers, CDs, DVDs and electronic resources.

"Selection" refers to the decision that must be made either to add a given item to the collection or to retain one already in the collection. It does not refer to guidance in assisting a Library user.

Responsibility for Materials Selection and Collection Development

The final responsibility for selection and development of the collection lies with the Board of Trustees. However, the Board delegates to the Director authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selection. The Director may select a group of community members to meet regularly to assist in selecting books for purchase and seek input from patrons and other sources. The decision is, however, left to the Director.

Materials may be purchased outright or made available via subscription, lease etc.

Objectives

The Greenwich Free Library strives to build and develop a materials collection which is responsive to the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of Greenwich residents of all ages.

Selection Criteria

Criteria influencing selection include, but are not necessarily limited to, those listed below. As it is not possible for the Library staff to personally read and review the large number of books and other materials produced each year, the information gathered from critical reviews; reputation of the author, artist or distributor; and other positive publicity, generally serves as the basis for applying these criteria, which include:

- Community demand, whether expressed or anticipated. Demand may be for specific titles or for material and resources covering certain topics or in certain formats. Multiple copies may be purchased or leased in order to meet demand.
- Intrinsic value or quality of the work, relating to such considerations as factual accuracy and authoritativeness of content, comprehensiveness of treatment, style, clarity, effectiveness of expression and creativity.

- Scope, depth of coverage, or approach of a work. For example, highly technical materials and scholarly studies of limited value to the community at large will generally not be added to the collection.
- Importance of a work in adding balance to or filling gaps in the collection.
- Compatibility of the subject, treatment, or style of a work with its intended audience. This criterion pertains especially to materials and resources being considered for the Youth and Young Adult Services' collection.
- Authority, reputation, and standing of the author.
- Availability of the same or similar material at neighboring libraries or through interlibrary loan.
- Cost of the material or resource.
- Suitability of the physical form of the material for Library use, including the quality, durability, and general usefulness of the format.
- Ease and practicality of providing effective physical and bibliographic access to the material or resource.
- Local interest or local historical significance

Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of Library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

The Library recognizes that some materials address issue that some individuals may find controversial and that any given item may offend Library user. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of residents of the Library's service area.

Technology and Media

The Library will progressively and responsibly add new material formats as community demand, emerging technologies, industry trends, budgetary considerations, and compatibility with the Library environment allow. Any equipment or devices that the Library adds to its collection will also be subject to the criteria established in this policy. Digital content and other emerging format acquisitions may require additional considerations, such as:

- Community interest in the format; ability of residents to access the format with readily available technology.
- Cost of the material or resource.
- Availability of other versions/updates once electronic content is available.
- Supplementary costs—including hardware and software requirements.
- Possible duplication of content.
- Terms of licensing agreements.
- Preservation and long-term access issues.
- Provisions for providing access in-house and patron accessibility off-site.
- Performance questions, i.e. does this technology make information more easily or accurately available than its print counterpart?
- Training of staff and patrons in the use of new electronic resources.
- Ability to direct patrons to this resource through our online catalog.
- Ease of use.

Use of Library Materials

Use of Library materials may be restricted as to number and lending period in order to make them available to the greatest number of patrons.

Patrons may be prevented from borrowing materials if they owe excess fees for lost or damaged items.

The use of rare and scarce items, or those of great value may be controlled to preserve them from harm.

The conditions for use of items held by the IVH Gill Local History Archive will be determined by the policies of the Archive.

Gifts

The Library accepts gifts of materials and is grateful for such gifts, but it reserves the right to evaluate and to dispose of them in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials. Gifts which do not accord with the Library's objectives and policies will be refused, sold, or otherwise disposed of according to law. No conditions may be imposed relating to any gift either before or after its acceptance by the Library. The Library cannot appraise gifts for their value for tax or other purposes.

Maintaining the Collection

Libraries are expected to use good judgment to remove from the collections whatever no longer serves a need, and to refurbish, by rebinding or other means, materials which might suffer deterioration if not so cared for.

Weeding - the ongoing, systematic withdrawal of Library materials - is an integral part of collection evaluation and maintenance that helps assure the Library's usefulness and vitality. Library staff use many of the same criteria as are used in the selection process. Materials considered for deaccession may include items that are:

- superseded by a new edition or a better work on the same subject,
- of little or diminished interest to the community,
- worn or damaged,
- outdated or inaccurate,
- no longer within the scope of the collection,
- in a format which is no longer viable.

Gifts, memorials, and donated items may be withdrawn from the collection using the criteria above. In all instances, the Library reserves the right to dispose of withdrawn items as it sees fit.

Censorship Statement

The Library rejects any censorship of materials in the collection which meet the selection criteria. Any individual may reject materials for them self but may not restrict the freedom of others to use them.

Challenges to Materials in the Collection

Whenever Library material is challenged, it will be reexamined by the Library Director and, when necessary, referred by the Director to the Board of Trustees. If the material meets the criteria of the materials selection and collection development policy, it shall not be removed from the collection except by court order.

When materials are challenged Library staff will:

- Treat complaints with dignity and courtesy.
- Provide a form “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” (attached) to obtain a formal complaint.

The complaints, and/or objections will be forwarded to the Library Director, who will follow the following procedure:

- Present the reconsideration request to the Library Board of Trustees, along with a recommendation for action.
- The recommendation shall be made using the following criteria:
 1. Defense of the principles of freedom to read and the professional responsibility of the Library.
 2. Adherence to the Library’s materials selection policy, the principles of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement, and the opinions of the reviewing source(s) used in selection.

In the event that the person or group registering the objection is not satisfied, a direct meeting with the Board of Directors will be arranged. The Library Director will notify and inform the board of the details of the case before the meeting is scheduled.

Revision of Policy

This policy will be revised as times and circumstances require.

Approved February 19, 2020