

Policy #6

Collection Development & Maintenance

Purpose

This policy guides library staff in the selection and withdrawal of library materials, and also serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of materials selection. The Library strives to select, acquire, curate, and provide free and easy access to materials, in all formats, that meet the varied needs and interests of the community. This policy provides guidance within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials that anticipate and meet the needs of the community. It also addresses collection maintenance including the replacement and withdrawal of library materials.

Scope of Collection

The Library makes every effort to provide library materials for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. Library materials include, but are not limited to, books, audiobooks, serials, DVDs, video games, board games, and electronic materials. Library materials are curated to represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole. The library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read Statement, and the Free Access to Libraries for Minors Statement have been endorsed by the Booth & Dimock Memorial Library Association Board of Trustees and are integral to this policy. They can be found on pages 8-14 of the Policy Manual. It is the right of the individual not to read, view, or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of any Library user or users to deny access to Library materials to others. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Controversial Materials

A balanced collection attempts to represent all people and all subjects as far as availability of materials, space, and budget allow. The Library's collection may contain materials that some find objectionable, and may omit from the collection materials that some feel are important. The Library's goal is always that everyone is able to find something here, not that everything will be for everyone. Selection and placement in the collections is based upon criteria stated in this policy. The race, religion, nationality, gender, sexuality, or political views of an author, creator, subject, or character; offensive language; depictions or description of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content of an item; or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group in the community does not cause an item to automatically be included or excluded from the Library's collection.

Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for the selection of Library materials rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of the policies approved by the Board of Trustees. Duties in this regard are shared with professionally trained librarians on staff who are responsible to the library Director to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials. Since the Director must be available to answer to the Library Board and the general public for actual selections made, the Director has the authority to reject or select any item.

Selection Criteria

To build a collection of merit, library staff will evaluate materials based on one or more of the following criteria. Materials need not meet all to be acceptable:

- Current and potential relevance to the community
- Popular appeal/demand
- Authority, significance, competence, and purpose of the author, creator, publisher, or distributor
- Currency, clarity, and accuracy of information
- Awards and honors
- Consensus of reviews published by respected review sources
- Relevance to existing library holdings
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Availability of materials through inter-library loan
- Suitability of the physical form
- Accessibility and ease of use
- Budget and cost

Selection of materials is based on the professional knowledge and judgement of Library staff whose expertise includes familiarity with all types of materials, knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection, and awareness of the needs and interests of the community. Suggestions from patrons are always welcome and given consideration against the guidelines of this policy. Library materials shall only be excluded for legitimate professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and maintenance policy, or the display and program policies.

Any librarian or staff member who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

Primary Review Sources

In making a selection, Librarians primarily consult, but are not limited to, the following widely respected review sources:

- Library Journal
- School Library Journal

- Booklist
- Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)
- Kirkus
- Publisher's Weekly
- The New York Times Book Review
- NPR Book Review

Digital Collections & Databases

Born digital items are those materials created in a digital format. They are distinct from analog items that are subsequently digitized, such as paper manuscripts or photographs. In order to accept born digital items, the Library considers:

- Copyright and licensing
- Redaction of personally identifiable information
- Any restrictions on use or circulation
- Maintenance and evolution of accepted formats

Library Shelving Locations

Adult Collections: Ages 18+

Teen Collections: Grade 6 through Grade 12, or Age 12 through Age 17

Children's Collections: Birth through Grade 5 or Age 11, with a special subject collection for parents, caregivers, and teachers.

The following are factors used to determine where an item best fits within the Library's collections:

- Physical form
- Format
- Genre
- Reading level
- Publisher intended audience recommendations
- Professional reviewer age/grade recommendations
- MPAA, ESRB, or another authority's rating
- Popular appeal/demand by a collection's intended audience

Age defined collections do not equate to a rating system or an age restriction. Any borrower of any age is welcome to select any item from any collection. Age defined collections are curated to include materials for everyone within its intended audience. This means that everyone within an audience can find something for them in their intended collection; however, this does not mean that everything in a collection will be for everyone within its audience. For example, while both are best fitting for the Children's Room, a book intended for fourth graders may not be the right selection for a toddler, and vice versa. Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing habits of children rest with their parents or legal guardians. Library staff will never deny any patron with a valid library card access from checking-out any material.

Collection Maintenance

Maintenance of the collection includes discarding, replacing, rebinding, and repair. If an item is lost or damaged, it may not necessarily be replaced depending upon the existence of adequate

coverage of the subject field or demand for the specific author, title, or subject. The library continually withdraws items from the collection, basing its decisions on a number of factors, including publishing date, frequency of circulation, community interest, condition, shelf space, and availability of newer or more valid materials. Library staff will utilize professional tools and resources, including CREW (Continual Review Evaluation and Weeding) and MUSTIE (Misleading, Ugly, Superseded, Trivial, Irrelevant, Elsewhere), to assist in collection maintenance. A regular schedule of evaluating sections of the collection will be followed to keep the collection in good physical condition, up to date, and relevant. The removal, exclusion, or censoring of any material on the sole basis that an individual finds such material offensive is prohibited.

Gifts & Donations

The Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials for the collection and applies the same standards of selection that governs purchases and other acquisitions. The Library accepts donations of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only when needed and consistent with this policy. In all instances, gifts and donations become the property of the Booth & Dimock Memorial Library. The Library has final authority on use of all gifts and donations. See the Library's Gifts and Donations policy on page 149 of the Policy Manual for more information.

Material Reconsideration

The Booth & Dimock Memorial Library Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of hearing from the public regarding material selection. Residents and taxpayers of the Town of Coventry may submit a Request for Reconsideration form for any library material, display, or program. Complete information can be found in the Material Review and Reconsideration Policy on page 125 of the Policy Manual.

Revised September 2025
Reviewed June 2022
Reviewed May 2003
Reviewed 1993
October 1991



Materials Selections Procedures

Recommendations for the Library's collection may come from library patrons but the majority of the items added to the collection will be selected by the Librarians or staff.

To suggest a collection item the patron will:

- a) present the title, author, ISBN or other identifying information for the item to the Library staff.

Upon receiving an item request from a patron the Library staff member will:

- a) write down information about the item; the information must contain title, author and ISBN to be ordered.
- b) pass on to the Librarian the item information of the patron request.

The Librarian will:

- a) consult the reviews if the prudence of the request is in question.
- b) order the item from the local wholesale source.
- c) contact the patron when the item arrives.
- d) advise the patron if the item is not available.

All Librarians on staff responsible for collection development will:

- a) respond to a request for the reconsideration of library material by following Policy and Procedure #7, "Material Reconsideration Request."
- b) base library selections on the principle of the Freedom to Read and Library Bill Rights as adopted by the American Library Association.

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Collection Maintenance Procedures

For their respective departments, the Adult Librarian, YA Librarian, and Children's Librarian will:

- a) will set a regular schedule for evaluating the collection.
- b) will use professional tools to establish specific criteria for particular sections of the collection.
- c) will remove materials from the collection based on condition, lack of use, currency, and accuracy.
- d) will set a specific life span for serials, based on currency and availability of information in other forms.
- e) will use his/her discretion in disposing of the items removed from the collection; giving consideration to the schools, other local organizations, or the book sale before discarding.

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