

**WESTCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Westchester Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations as guiding principles for the selection of materials, the maintenance of the library's collection, challenges to selections and for related decisions about the accessibility of library materials and services. The library hereby adopts these documents and the other related documents that follow this policy as addendum to its policies on library service and the library's collection.

**INTRODUCTION**

It is the goal of the library to own or have ready access to a sufficient number of informational resources with sufficient scope, depth, relevance, and accuracy in a variety of useful formats for the purpose of providing information; education and instruction; cultural experience and growth; and meaningful recreation to the library's public.

The words "library materials," as they occur in this policy, have the widest possible meaning. Every form of the permanent record is to be included whether printed or audio; bound or unbound; photographed or otherwise reproduced on tapes, discs and pictures in the form of photographs, paintings, drawings, etc.

"Selection" refers to the decision that must be made either to add a given title to the collection or withdraw one already in the collection.

The library recognizes that many books, magazines and newspapers are controversial and that any given item may offend someone. Selections will not be made on the basis of any assumed approval or disapproval, but solely on the merit of the work as it relates to the library's purpose and as it serves the needs and interests of the community as a whole.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and nothing will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from mutilation or theft.

The responsibility for the reading of minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library material will not be limited by the possibility that it may come into the possession of minors.

This policy will be continuously reviewed by the library staff and the Board to ensure that it continues to meet the needs and desires of the library and its community.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to guide the library staff in the selection of materials of current significance and lasting permanent value for inclusion in the library collection. It is also the purpose of this policy to guide the library staff in selecting materials for withdrawal from the collection.

## **MATERIAL SELECTION**

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION**

The responsibility for the selection of library material is vested in the Director and under his direction such members of the staff who are qualified by reason of professional education and training.

The Director will not establish a material selection committee with the ability to veto individual purchases. Such committees are frequently utilized to limit the scope of collection development and to ensure that "questionable titles" are excluded from purchase. Selection committees may be formed, however, to discuss collection principles and to ensure that the collection is being broadly developed and coordinated.

### **BUDGET ALLOCATIONS**

The Director will establish, subject to the approval of the Library Board, the annual allocation of funds for purchasing library materials. Allocations will include, but not be limited to funds for the purchase of standing orders, periodicals, non-print media, direct orders for the adult collection and direct orders for the juvenile collection.

Once allocations have been made, individuals assigned to the selection of materials for a given area are responsible for pacing their ordering of materials to ensure that there is a steady flow of new materials throughout the entire year and that the allocation for a particular area is never exceeded.

Staff members selecting items for purchase are responsible for completing the appropriate orders and passing them on to the Technical Services staff for processing. It is the responsibility of the Technical Services staff to keep the Director informed of the account balances.

### **PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION**

Material selection staff will be guided by two basic principles when selecting books for the library collection. The selection staff will attempt to collect materials that the patrons of the library district either desire or need.

1. Selection based upon desire: The expressed or otherwise obvious desires of library patrons as evidenced by the circulation of materials and individual requests for information should be examined by the library selection staff and used for the development of the

collection in popular subject areas and for the selection of popular titles. The expedient purchasing and processing of popular works is vital to the materials' utility.

2. Selection based upon need: The library selection staff should examine the scope and depth of the library's collection to ensure that core subject areas and classical works are topically current and well represented. Although a medium-sized public library such as the Westchester Public Library should not attempt to collect materials at a comprehensive or research level for any subject area other than local issues, a broad range of materials should both serve and await the needs of the library's patrons.

Library selection staff should not emphasize selection of materials based upon one principle over another, but should strive to strike a balance between purchasing both desired and needed materials.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Materials are to be selected in accordance with one or more of the following criteria:

1. Popular demand.
2. Contemporary significance or permanent value.
3. Scope and authority of the subject matter.
4. Reputation and/or authority of the author, editor or illustrator.
5. Literary merit.
6. Relationship to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject.
7. Price and availability.
8. Format and arrangement.
9. Scarcity of information in the subject area.
10. Availability of material in the area.
11. Attention of critics, reviewers and the media.

### **SCOPE OF COLLECTION**

The development of a public library's collection should be as broad as the range of human experience and thought without classifying any ideas as "objectionable" or "taboo."

## **SELECTION LEVELS**

The following terms are used to define the selection levels of the library's collection:

1. Comprehensive or exhaustive: Collection of all print and non-print materials related to a specialized subject area.
2. Research: Collection of major reference works, primary sources, secondary sources and specialized monographs supporting college and university school education.
3. Study: Collection of major reference works, periodicals and core titles which introduce or supplement high school collections in major subject areas.
4. Popular: Collection of the major works or titles of authors or subjects of popular interest.
5. Basic: Highly selective collection of works which introduce and define the author or subject.
6. Skeletal or minimal: Collection of the most general treatments of the subject.

The library selection staff will periodically review the library's collection and determine the most appropriate level for the selection of materials in a particular subject area or concerning a particular author. Generally, the public library will not attempt to support comprehensive or research level collections except in the area of local history. Most selection will be for the purpose of supporting study, popular, basic or skeletal levels of collection development within the limitations of the library's budget.

## **SELECTION AIDS**

Since it is impossible and unreasonable for the selection staff to read and review personally the large number of library materials being introduced each year, the selection staff must rely upon the assistance of professional selection aids. The following are generally recognized professional guides to the selection of library material and may be used to facilitate the selection process:

1. Professional library journals such as Booklist, Library Journal, School Library Journal and Publisher's Weekly.
2. Magazines of general interest such as Time, Newsweek, American Heritage and Smithsonian.
3. Journals in specific fields of interest such as Scientific American, Byte, American History Illustrated and Business Week.
4. Bibliographies recommending materials in specific fields for retrospective purchases such as Public Library Catalog and Children's Catalog.

5. Publisher's catalogs and flyers.

## **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

1. Local History: The library acknowledges a particular interest in the local history of the area and in the works of local authors and artists. Everything reasonably obtainable will be acquired and preserved.

2. Legal and Medical: The library purchases general legal and medical materials intended for the citizen or general reader. Although the library currently acquires editions of the state and federal code, it will not collect materials intended specifically for the legal or medical professionals in these fields.

3. Religion: The library will attempt to acquire major works representing all doctrinal beliefs without prejudice.

4. Textbooks: Textbooks will be acquired for the collection when they are the best, or only source of information on a subject deemed of interest to library users. The library will not attempt to acquire texts to provide basic curriculum support for the public or private schools in the area, but will acquire supplemental study materials for students.

5. Genealogy: Due to the extensive collection efforts of the Porter County Public Library, the library will not attempt to acquire a collection of genealogical resources.

## **PATRON REQUESTS**

Library patrons are invited to submit requests for the purchase of new items at the Reference desk. The library's selection staff will periodically review requests made by patrons for new materials and purchase the items deemed appropriate for inclusion in the collection. A patron request for the purchase of an item will not automatically cause the item to be ordered. Patron requests must meet the same criteria as other selections.

## **MATERIALS OVER \$100**

Requests for purchases of a single volume or a set costing over \$100.00 should be discussed with the Director by the staff member making the selection before ordering.

## **DISCUSSION BOOKS**

Multiple volumes of selected titles may be purchased for use by library sponsored book discussion groups. Discussion books will be limited to mass market paperbacks and will remain the property of the library.

## **GIFTS, DONATIONS, AND MEMORIALS**

The library welcomes gifts and donations of materials and money for improving the library's material collection with the understanding that donated material and money becomes the

sole property of the library which makes the final decision on the disposition of the gift and donation.

The decision to include a gift in the library's collection shall be made by the library's selection staff who will be guided by the same principles and criteria applied to the selection of an item for purchase.

Monetary donations and memorial contributions will be expended in an appropriate subject area if requested by the donor. Memorial plates will be included in memorial volumes if desired by the donor.

The library will furnish appropriate acknowledgment for donations upon request, either in the form of a receipt for cash or a letter for materials. The library will not attempt to appraise or establish a value for the worth of donated material.

(See also the policy on Gifts and Donations.)

## **COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

The library's selection staff will be responsible for periodically reviewing the library's collection for the purposes of weeding, rebinding or repairing materials. Materials no longer useful to the library's collection will be discarded as having no value.

The following general criteria will be used to select items for discard:

1. Dated material with little or no permanent value.
2. Rarely used material with little or no permanent value.
3. Misleading or factually inaccurate material.
4. Materials worn beyond reasonable mending or repair.
5. Material superseded by a new edition or a better title.
6. Trivial material of little or no permanent value.

Material of lasting value will be repaired or rebound if necessary.

## **RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS**

Patrons who wish to lodge a complaint about a library item or request the withdrawal of a title from the library will be asked to place their complaint or request in writing and submit it to the Director.

When a written complaint is filed, the Director will review the complaint and respond to the patron.

If the patron is not satisfied with the Director's response, the decision of the Director may be appealed to the Library Board.