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Springport Free Library Acquisitions Policy

Mission Statement: To provide an opportunity for learning, recreation and personal growth for all the people who use the library. To apply traditional expertise and changing technology towards equal access to quality library services, materials and facilities.

Freedom to Read: The Freedom to Read Statement asserts, "The freedom to read is essential to our democracy." In a democratic society, individuals must be sufficiently knowledgeable to make informed decisions. Libraries provide their users with necessary information through a wide selection of materials from varying points of view. It is essential that library resources remain free to use for all, regardless of age. The Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations lay out rationales for these principles of intellectual freedom. Incorporating the tenets of intellectual freedom foundational documents (such as the First Amendment, the Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read Statement).

Selection Policy Objectives: The library's materials collection is developed and managed to meet the majority of the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the library's service area. The Collection Development Department builds and maintains a patron-oriented collection by anticipating and responding to needs and expectations.

Collection decisions are made in conjunction with the strategic initiatives, especially the following:

- Positioning the library as the preferred partner for lifelong learning
- Embracing diversity
- Developing library services that incorporate both physical and virtual collections
- Committing to excellence in service to improve effectiveness and remove barriers

Responsibility for Selection: Staff contributes to the development of patron-oriented collections by:

- Engaging in open, continuous two-way communication with library patrons and recognizing that individuals have different ways of expressing their needs based on age, language, economic status, culture, or other characteristics
- Interacting with patrons with understanding, respect, and responsiveness
- Handling all requests equitably
- Working in partnership with one another to understand and respond to community needs

- Understanding and responding to rapidly changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes
- Recognizing that materials of varying complexities and formats are necessary to satisfy diverse needs of library users
- Balancing individual needs and broader community needs in determining the best allocation of collection budget for acquiring or providing access to materials and information
- Seeking continuous improvement through ongoing measurement
- Reviewing the collection on a regular basis to identify areas of community interest that may need to be strengthened

Selection Criteria: Public libraries are diverse and represent a broad demographic. With a patron base that can include infants to the elderly, selection criteria should consider the various interests and needs of the patrons the library serves. Criteria for selection of materials should also depend on the goals and mission of that particular library/system. In general, public libraries provide collections containing a wide variety of material formats, including print, audio-visual, and electronic. In selecting materials and developing collections for adults, as well as for children and teens, library staff includes materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity not only of the region it serves but also the larger global perspective. Library collections will provide a broad range of opinion on current issues.

Collections contain popular works, classic works that have withstood the test of time, and other materials of general interest. Works are not excluded or included in the collection based solely on subject matter or on political, religious, or ideological grounds. In building collections, library staff is guided by the principle of selection, rather than censorship. Furthermore, the selection of a given item for a library's collections should not be interpreted as an endorsement of a particular viewpoint.

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable.

General Criteria:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Cost
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Attention by critics and reviewers
- Potential user appeal

- Requests by library patrons

Content Criteria:

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Skill, competence, and purpose of the author
- Reputation and significance of the author
- Objectivity
- Consideration of the work as a whole
- Clarity
- Currency
- Technical quality
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Vitality and originality
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Sustained interest
- Relevance and use of the information
- Effective characterization
- Authenticity of history or social setting

Special Considerations for Electronic Information Sources:

- Ease of use of the product
- Availability of the information to multiple simultaneous users
- Equipment needed to provide access to the information
- Technical support and training
- Availability of the physical space needed to house and store the information or equipment
- Available in full text

Top Five Recommended Public Library Reviewing Sources:

- Booklist
- Goodreads

- New York Times Book Review
- Publishers Weekly

Acquisitions Procedures: The public library has a number of selectors on the staff, each responsible for a different level of collection development:

- The library director of the main library has the responsibility for the overall selection and maintenance of all materials and formats within the collection of the library. This responsibility is monitored by the library staff, and is delegated to these individuals as a result of their education, training, experience, and job classification.
- All materials and formats are selected or approved for the library's collection by staff members within that library, who are qualified to do so by reason of education, training, experience, knowledge of subject area, and job classification.

Special Collections: Maintain a local history collection based upon important figures or events related to our location or service area. The library often receives donations of local historical importance. These materials shall be cataloged and maintained for the benefit of the members of the library community.

Maintenance and Weeding: Weeding and collection maintenance are based on the availability of newer, updated resources or the circulation statistics and use of materials. Publication date, circulation history, and the physical condition of the resource are all factored into maintenance and weeding. The Springport Free Library may decide there are areas of the collection that are important to the community (e.g. genealogy collections and local history collections), and material may not be regularly weeded from these identified collections. While reports and automation have made weeding easier, evaluating collections should be executed with a trained librarian, as certain titles (classics, local interest, backlist for authors about to release a new title after a long hiatus) may be worth keeping on the shelves despite low usage statistics — especially if only one library in the consortium or interlibrary loan group owns and will loan a copy.

Policy Revision

No policy remains valid forever. Internal or external changes may impact a library policy and result in the need for policy revision. All library policies, including the selection policy, should be reviewed for necessary revisions on a regular schedule.

1) Removing Outdated Statements

Many selection policies reference intellectual freedom documents such as the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. Frequently a copy of the actual document is appended to the policy. The School Library Bill of Rights is referenced in many school district selection policies. Created by the American Association of School Libraries in 1955, the document was withdrawn by the association in

1976 and replaced by "Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" in 1986. When professional association policy statements are removed or revised, corresponding action should be reflected in a library's resources selection policy. The selection policy must reference the most up-to-date association policy statements. For example, the Association of College & Research Libraries adopted the most current version of "Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries" in 1999.

2) Politics and the Timing of Policy Revision

No revision should be undertaken while a formal challenge to a library resource is occurring. It is important to follow the current governing board-approved policy and process to maintain good faith with the community, complainants, and supporters. Revisions should occur after the final decision on the questioned material has been made. When a challenge has been resolved, those involved should reflect on the reconsideration experience and use new knowledge to revamp the current policy.

3) Consideration of New Material Formats for Inclusion

The process for including new material formats (e.g. online databases, e-books, streaming media, games, apps) should be ongoing. Factors to consider in this decision include current demand, trends or growth in demand, and strengths and weaknesses of the format. Accessibility to patrons with special needs should also be considered when purchasing materials. Evaluating new material formats based on these criteria prepares the library to meet patron demands.

Public Library Procedures for Handling Informal Complaints

The process begins with a librarian discussing the complaint with the patron who brings it to the service desk. During that interaction, the librarian will explain that the library has materials for everyone and everything goes through a selection process or is purchased because of patron requests. The librarian should offer to assist the patron to find alternate materials that would better meet the needs and interests of the patron and/or their family members. If the patron chooses to go forward with the challenge, the complainant should be provided with a request for formal reconsideration form.

Reconsideration Procedures: The library fully endorses the principles documented in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association. Materials available in the library present a diversity of viewpoints, enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy. The library also selects a wide variety of library materials that satisfy the diverse interests of our community. The library upholds the right of the individual to secure these resources, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to some. The library's varied collection is available to all; however, it is not expected that all of the collection will appeal to everyone.

Patrons who wish to request the withdrawal or reclassification of materials currently owned by the library are encouraged to discuss their concerns with a library supervisor or its director. If the patron is not satisfied with the response to their request, the manager will provide the patron with information

and a form to request formal reconsideration of the library resource. Withdrawn books are donated to library book sales. The proceeds from such sales are used for the benefit of the library.

Public Library Procedures for Handling Formal Complaints

The following steps will be used when an individual feels that further action is necessary to address concerns about a library resource. For the duration of this process, the material in question will remain in circulation in the library collection.

1. A concerned patron who is dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be offered a packet of materials that includes the library's mission statement, selection policy, reconsideration form, and the Library Bill of Rights.
2. Patrons are required to complete and submit a reconsideration form to the library director.
3. The director, with appropriate professional staff, will review the reconsideration form and the material in question, to consider whether its selection follows the criteria stated in the collection policy.
4. Within 15 business days, the director will decide and send a letter to the concerned person who requested the reconsideration, stating the reasons for the decision.
5. If the individual is not satisfied with the decision, a written appeal may be submitted within 10 business days to the Board of Trustees.
6. If the board plans to address the appeal at their board meeting, the individual will be notified of when and where the meeting will be held.
7. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of public comments.
8. The decision of the board is final.

Sample Letter to Person Requesting Reconsideration

Dear _____:

We appreciate your concern over the use of _____ in the library. Selecting materials that serve the needs of our community is a vital part of operating a library. The Board of Trustees takes this responsibility very seriously and has established a materials selection policy for selecting resources as well as a detailed reconsideration procedure for requesting reconsideration of particular items. I have enclosed both for your review. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss them further.

If you are still concerned after you review the material public library policies, please complete the Request for Reconsideration of Material form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt

attention to your request. The steps that will be taken are outlined in the Reconsideration procedure. At any point during this process, please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Library Director

Date

Reconsideration Committees

Guidelines

Under the best professional standards, reconsideration policies ask those charged with reviewing a challenged book or other resource to set aside their personal beliefs and evaluate the work in light of the objective standards outlined in the library's materials selection policy. Listed below are some best practices for Reconsideration Committee members:

Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than in defense of individual materials. Based in the First Amendment, the freedom to read is essential to our democracy.

Read or view all materials referred to you including the full text of the material in question, available reviews, and notices of awards, if applicable.

Review the library mission statement, materials selection and reconsideration policies, and professional guides such as the Intellectual Freedom Manual.

The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and your institution's selection policies.

Challenged materials should not be removed from the collection while under reconsideration.

Passages or parts of the work in question should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the materials as a whole.

In order to prevent a tie vote, the library director (public and academic libraries) or principal (school libraries) should recruit an odd number of members for the committee.

While it may be prudent to state what area/role a committee member represents in the makeup of the committee (i.e., teacher, librarian, community member, administration, parent, etc.), the personal identification of each member should remain anonymous to protect the objectivity of the deliberation.

The reconsideration committee meeting may be closed depending on state law and local practice. While public comments may be useful, these comments should be directed to the principal, director or governing body.

The committee's recommendation is to be an objective evaluation of the material within the scope of a library's selection policy.

The committee's report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, should be presented to the governing body or administrator, as directed in the reconsideration process, with a recommendation to retain the material in its original location, to relocate the material, or to remove the material. The report may differ depending on the type of resource that is being challenged, such as library material, display, curriculum, reading list etc.

Establish a procedure for communicating the committee's recommendation to the governing body or administrator and to the person who made the formal reconsideration request. The committee communicates its decision to the director, who then communicates the decision to the person who make the challenge as well as to the institution's governing board.

Reconsideration Committee Report

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

Has every member of the committee read the material entirely? If not, why?

Resources consulted: (include policies, articles, reviews etc.)

Reconsideration committee recommends:

Justification and comments: (include majority and minority positions)

Signatures of Reconsideration Committee Members:

Date:

Note: This report is forwarded to:

[Home](#) | [Introduction](#)