

# Materials Selection Policy

## Introduction

The purpose in building a collection is to make available to all people who enter the library as comprehensive an assemblage of recorded knowledge as possible within the limits of funds available and the needs of the community. The library recognizes that the needs of the community are of primary importance in selection, and because the community is a conglomerate of individuals, each individual's needs will be considered in conjunction with the majority of the present and potential patronage. A diverse collection is important, but no more so than the individual's select needs within the whole of the community. An effort is made to include information representing all sides of controversial issues as such material becomes available. The criteria for the selection of controversial materials are the same as for any other materials. Controversial materials have no distinguishing labels and are shelved in the general collection. Responsibility for the reading choices of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection for the adult collection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently fall into the hands of children. An open shelf policy will be followed at all times.

### I. Statement of Purpose

This selection policy defines the standards and outlines the responsibility for materials selection for the Sherrard Public Library District. Within these guidelines, staff use their professional judgment to determine the materials which best meet the objectives of the Library and the needs of its patrons.

### II. Objectives in Materials Selections

The general objectives in materials selection are to carry out the Library's goals of providing the community with a variety of significant media to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs.

### III. Responsibility for Selection

Overall responsibility for collection development rests with the Library Director who operates within this framework of policies determined by the Board of Library Trustees. Typically, the Library Director delegates or shares this responsibility with designated members of the staff. However, all members of the staff and patrons may recommend titles for consideration, and recommendations for materials from citizens of the community should be encouraged.

Suggestions for materials to be purchased are always welcome from any Board member or library staff member, and patrons are encouraged to make suggestions.

All requests are given serious consideration, and the patron will be informed of the Library's decision. An attempt will be made to borrow through interlibrary loan any requested item which is out of print, or that the Library determines does not meet the criteria for purchase.

IV. Criteria for Selection

The general criteria considered in selecting materials include: 1) significance and permanent value to the existing collection, 2) qualifications of author or producer, 3) suitability of subject and style for intended audience, 4) quality of format, 5) currency or timeliness, if applicable, 6) demand by patrons, 7) price, 8) attention given to the item by reviewers and general news media, 9) availability of materials in other libraries, and 10) technical quality of non-book materials. In selection, consideration will be given to the work as a whole. No work shall be excluded because of specific passages or pieces taken out of context.

V. Selection Tools

Because it is impossible for librarians to examine all items being considered for purchase, they depend on reliable selection aids. The librarians regularly depend on the reviews found in standard sources. Other selection aids, such as "Notable Book" lists chosen by the American Library Association, National Book Awards lists, Pulitzer Prize lists, and published lists of bestsellers may also be used as required.

VI. Scope of Collection

Through careful selection, the Library strives to maintain a diverse collection of quality materials, including items of contemporary significance and permanent value, as well as a selection of materials concerning social issues and ephemeral items. Circulating materials are supplemented by a variety of reference materials for in-house use. Because the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading skills, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.

VII. Statement of Specific Policies in Selected Areas

Materials for Children and Youth

The Sherrard Public Library District subscribes to the following policy: "Free Access to Libraries for Minors," an Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (as adopted by the ALA Council, 1981). At the Sherrard Public Library District, children and young people have access to all parts of the Library; however, collections in Youth Services serve children and young people from first through eighth grades and collections in the Young Adult Section serve those of middle or high school age.

Materials appropriate for the interests and needs of the ages served are chosen for these collections.

Collections in Youth Services include beginning readers, junior non-fiction, junior fiction, young adult fiction, periodicals, and non-book materials. The young adult fiction collection is selected especially for the needs and interests of 7th and 8th graders. It contains some duplication of classic titles found in both the adult and junior fiction collections, but is also strongly stocked with those titles that deal with the contemporary scene as it concerns 12- to 14- year-olds. Young people in the 7th and 8th grades are expected to use non-fiction materials throughout the Library in preparing school assignments or for any other reason.

## VII. Statement of Specific Policies in Selected Areas

### Materials for Children and Youth

Books and materials in Youth Services include a wide range of non-book materials, and the traditional picture book collection.

### Materials for Adults

The materials in Adult Services are selected primarily to serve the needs of adults and high school students; consideration is also given to the non-fiction needs of the middle school students. The collection includes reference and circulating non-fiction books, fiction books, and non-book materials.

#### A. Fiction

The fiction collection provides books for a wide range of interests of the general reading public, including classics, titles representing periods and styles of writing, current titles of a lasting nature, and those titles meeting popular demand for recreational reading.

#### B. Blind and Physically Handicapped

Any juvenile or adult who cannot read or handle conventional printed matter because of a physical disability is eligible for services of the Homebound Delivery Service, specially selected library resources such as large print or audio cassettes, support services of Interlibrary Loan through the Library System, Talking Books, or special materials supported by the Library of Congress.

#### C. Foreign Language Materials

Materials in foreign languages are considered as community needs change. Individual needs for foreign languages not purchased by the library may be served by requests through interlibrary loan.

## Non-Book Materials

The criteria for and the methods of selection of non-book materials are listed in Section IV.

Non-book items purchased by the library for in-house use or for circulation may include pamphlets, study prints, art prints, computer software, microfilm, compact discs and cassettes, recordings of books on cassette, cassette/filmstrip and cassette/book kits, games, toys, puzzles, and puppets.

The acquisition of a variety of non-book materials is under constant evaluation and is subject to change. Cost of items, budget, use, and availability of new items are the determining factors in selection.

## VIII. Complaints

Strong objection to any library materials must be made in writing according to "Procedures for Handling Complaints about Library Materials" provided at the end of this section. Examination and reconsideration of materials, if necessary, will be handled as outlined in these procedures. A copy of these procedures as well as forms for registering complaints may be obtained at the circulation desk, or in the Administration office.

The Sherrard Public Library District subscribes to the provisions of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement as adopted by the American Library Association. These documents are considered a part of this policy. All individuals have the right to choose which library materials they will use. However, no one has the right to restrict the freedom of others to read whatever they wish. No book or other material in question is automatically removed from the collection because of an objection to it.

## IX. Collection Maintenance

### A. Duplicate Copies

The number of copies purchased varies with the expected use of any item. As extensive use for individual titles is demonstrated, duplication to meet the demand is implemented.

### B. Weeding

In order to maintain the best possible collection of materials, a continual weeding process takes place. Items are discarded if they are outdated, if they no longer circulate, if there are more duplicate copies than needed, or if they are in poor physical condition.

A complete weeding of the entire collection is accomplished every five years. Items discarded are plainly marked and may be donated to the Friends of the Library for sale.

X. Revision of Selection Policy

Because the needs of the community change, this materials selection policy is revised as needed and/or is reviewed at least every five years.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS ABOUT LIBRARY MATERIALS

1. If patrons wish to file a complaint about library materials, Form I, Complaint About Library Materials, should be completed. This form stays on file with the Library Director. The Library Director will examine the material, as well as critical reviews of the material. Repeated complaints about specific works or materials in general will generate a reconsideration of a specific work and/or selection policies.
2. If patrons wish to have materials reconsidered (as opposed to filing a complaint without definite action), they may fill out Form II, Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials.
3. When Form II is completely filled out and returned to the library, the Library Director will review the complaint and the material to determine whether the item should remain or be removed from the collection.
4. The Library Director will write a letter to the patron who initiated the complaint, outlining the above procedures and announcing the disposition of the material in question. The letter may also include a statement inviting the patron to the library to discuss the matter with the Library Director.
5. After an interview with the Library Director, a patron desiring further action can make a request in writing for a hearing before the Board of Library Trustees, who has final authority.

FORM I

COMPLAINT ABOUT LIBRARY MATERIAL

Material: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint Represents: \_\_\_\_\_ Individual      \_\_\_\_\_ Organization

Reason for Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Took Form II: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Date Form II Returned: \_\_\_\_\_

FORM II

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher  
or  
Distributor: \_\_\_\_\_

Request Initiated  
by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Request represents: \_\_\_\_\_ Individual  
\_\_\_\_\_ Organization, list name \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other, list name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you read or viewed the entire work? \_\_\_\_\_  
If not, what parts? \_\_\_\_\_
2. To what in the material do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages or sections)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What good or valuable features do you find in the material? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you believe is the theme of this work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel might be the result of reading or viewing this material? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you read any reviews of this material? \_\_\_\_\_

FORM II

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS - PAGE 2

If yes, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think this material would be more appropriate for a different age group? Please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you like the library to do about this material? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you recommend other material that would convey as valuable a picture and/or perspective of the subject treated? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_