

BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

PURPOSE

This *Collection Development and Maintenance Policy* serves to articulate the principles and criteria that guide the Burlington Public Library staff in selection and withdrawal of library materials and to inform the public about those standards.

No library can reasonably acquire all published materials, nor can it keep all purchased materials indefinitely. This policy shall guide library staff in the selection and withdrawal of library materials within the financial and physical space constraints of the library.

As part of this policy, the Burlington Public Library subscribes to and affirms the *Library Bill of Rights* and its interpretations, the *Intellectual Freedom Statement*, the *Freedom to Read Statement*, and the *Freedom to View Statement* adopted by the American Library Association.

Per Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322f, any librarian or staff member of a public library who, in good faith, implements these policies 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.

GOAL OF MATERIALS SELECTION

The Burlington Public Library's mission is to be the best small-town public library we can be through our exceptional service, relevant resources, as well as cultural, social and educational programming for the community.

In keeping with this mission statement, the library collection is developed to meet the needs, interests, and enlightenment of people of all ages who live in or pay taxes in the town of Burlington, Connecticut.

The Burlington Public Library is able to obtain materials from other libraries through the Library Connection consortium and the State of Connecticut borrowIT and interlibrary loan programs. This extends the scope of the library collection through these shared resources; however, the Burlington Public Library and its staff have no say in the collection development policies of other libraries.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Public libraries are places for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents. As such, the Burlington Public Library has a responsibility to provide materials presenting varied and diverse points of view in the collection as a whole. The ownership of specific materials does not constitute an endorsement by the library of the ideas or viewpoints expressed within those materials, nor does the failure to purchase an item imply the library's disapproval of these ideas.

CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

The library recognizes that some materials may not be considered appropriate by all patrons. Selections will not be made based upon anticipated approval or disapproval, but by the merits of the work and relation to the collection as outlined in this policy. It is the right of the individual not to read, view, or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable, but it is never the right of a library user to deny access to library materials to others.

Library materials will not be marked in such a way as to indicate approval or disapproval of viewpoint and/or content. Items are not separated from the general collection except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft. In all cases, the quality of resources will be judged on the content as a whole, not by detached excerpts.

The selection of materials for the community as a whole cannot be restricted by the possibility that specific items could come to the attention of minors. Many items not suitable for children are appropriate and can be in demand by older library users. Please see the "Choice of Library Materials by Minors" section of this policy.

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, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

The responsibility for selecting materials for purchase and withdrawal is delegated by the Board of Library Directors (the "Board") to the Library Director and staff who have been professionally trained in the principles and practices of materials selection; experience; subject area expertise; and knowledge of the current collection and community needs and interests.

SOURCES FOR SELECTION

Reviews in library and publishing industry journals are primary sources for materials selection. Reputable bibliographies, booklists by recognized authorities, and the advice

of competent individuals and/or entities in specific subject areas also are used. The Library also considers suggestions from library staff and the general public.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Library materials are diverse in topic, format, and other considerations. Each type of item must be considered in terms of its own merit and the audience for whom it is intended. No single set of selection criteria can be applied to all cases. Works of fiction are judged by different standards than nonfiction/informational works; in selecting fiction, it is the library's goal to provide items which meet the needs of users of varied backgrounds, interests, and reading abilities.

In general, the selection of books and other materials for all ages will take many factors into account, including but not limited to the following:

- Currency and accuracy
- Authority, expertise, or reputation of the author/artist
- Clarity, presentation, readability/sound quality/visual quality
- Suitability of the physical format for library use
- Relevance to the existing collection and historic circulation data
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Value based on literary or scholarly excellence and other inherent qualities considered without regard to popular demand
- Value as resource or reference material
- Anticipated public demand, interest, or need
- Critical reviews and publicity
- Budgetary considerations and physical limitations of the library building
- Availability from other sources in the area
- Special needs of library patrons for materials in accessible formats

It is the library's goal to build a balanced collection comprising materials of popular interest as well as materials of permanent worth. Anticipated popular demand is a significant basis for selection. Conversely, many great works of scholarship and literature are keystones of modern knowledge and culture but may not necessarily be high demand items. The library will select popular-demand items as well as materials of permanent value, regardless of whether or not they will be widely used.

Purchase requests from library users are welcome. These requests are considered using the same criteria as above. The library will make every effort to obtain items that do not meet our selection criteria via Interlibrary Loan.

The library maintains a small collection of books by local authors, defined as authors who live or have lived in the town of Burlington. Donated books by local authors, including self-published titles, will be considered for the library collection if they meet the library's standards of quality. Once in the collection, they are subject to the same withdrawal criteria as other items in the collection.

MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

As a rule, the Children's Room collection contains materials best suited to the abilities and interests of library users from birth through approximately Grade 6, while teen materials are those best suited to the abilities and interests of library users from approximately Grades 7 to 12. Library materials for children and teens will be selected by professional staff who specialize in youth library services with the same care and judgment, and following the same criteria, as materials for adults.

CHOICE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS BY MINORS

The library recognizes the role of the parents or legal guardians in supervising the borrowing choices made by their minor children.

The library staff and Board are charged with the responsibility of providing free and equal access to library materials and services to all people. Moreover, it is impossible for them to know or predict the opinions of parents and guardians regarding the specific borrowing selections made by minor children.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Burlington Public Library that parents and guardians, *not* the library staff or Board, are responsible for monitoring and approving borrowing of materials by their minor children. Only parents or guardians may restrict their own children from accessing or borrowing specific library materials. Parents or guardians who wish their children not to have access to certain materials should accompany or otherwise inform their children. The library staff and Board cannot and do not act *in loco parentis*.

GIFTS

The Burlington Public Library welcomes gifts of materials consistent with its *Collection Development and Maintenance Policy*. Unless otherwise specified in writing, all gifts are considered unconditional and unrestricted. The Library Director, in consultation with the Board, will decide whether all or part of the gift is to be integrated into the collection, discarded, exchanged or sold. Gifts to the library will be subject to the same criteria used for weeding the collection as all other materials.

WITHDRAWING MATERIALS

Maintaining a well-rounded, vital collection necessitates not only purchasing new items, but also weeding ones that no longer meet selection criteria. Materials are regularly assessed for their condition, currency, circulation, relevance, and accuracy following standard professional guidelines. Qualified, trained staff evaluate the collection on a

continuous and systematic basis in order to identify materials that should be withdrawn or replaced.

Materials withdrawn from the library collection may be offered to the Friends of the Library for their used book sales; offered to other community organizations; recycled; or disposed of, as appropriate.

The decision by an author, publisher, or other content creator to withdraw their work from the market and stop selling or publishing it will not alone be considered sufficient reason for the library to withdraw the work from its collection.

The library is prohibited by state statute from removing, excluding, or censoring any book or other material on the sole basis that an individual finds such material offensive.

DIGITAL CONTENT

Some of the Library's digital content is provided via third-party vendors. These vendors, not library staff, use their own criteria to determine the specific titles and resources available through these services. The Library also participates in a shared collection of electronic books and other materials. Materials selection for this shared resource is cooperative among the participating libraries and is governed by its own collection development policy.

REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Formal complaints about items included in the collection must be made in writing on the form provided by the library. The form must be filled out by a Burlington resident or taxpayer.

Please see the *Review and Reconsideration Policy* for further information on this process.

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