

The Norfolk Library

Collection Development and Maintenance Policy

Introduction

The Norfolk Library (the “Library”) is a free, non-sectarian public library, whose mission is to enable learning and literacy, promote culture through the arts, and encourage the sharing of ideas. The Library, funded primarily by a private endowment, is a non-profit corporation under the laws of Connecticut and qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under the Federal Internal Revenue Code. It is governed by a Board of Trustees selected from within the community.

Purpose and Scope

The Collection Development and Maintenance Policy of the Library provides direction for the growth and development of a useful collection of materials for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. The policy applies to both the digital and print materials in the Library’s collection. It also addresses collection maintenance, and replacement and weeding of materials.

The Library strives to select, acquire, curate, and provide free and easy access to materials, in all formats, that anticipate and meet the varied needs and interests of all residents. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

Library materials should 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 that is essential to an informed citizenry.

Specific acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular, or controversial in nature. The Library’s acquisition of such items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression. The Library neither approves nor disapproves of the views expressed in materials included in the collection.

The Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom adopted by the American Library Association as expressed in its [Freedom to Read](#) and [Freedom to View](#) statements and in its [Library Bill of Rights](#) (adopted June 18, 1948; amended February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980; by the ALA Council) which states:

- Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

No library material or display shall be removed, or programs be cancelled, because of origin, background, or viewpoints expressed in such material, display, or program or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display, or program.

Key Definitions

The Library's collection consists of books and other materials in a variety of formats (print, DVDs, audiobooks, electronic media, equipment, Museum Passes, Library of Things). Items in the collection are owned or licensed and maintained by the Library and made available to the public at no cost.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Library Board delegates the oversight and management of the collection, within the guidelines of this policy, to the Library Director and staff that are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials. Responsibility for the selection, maintenance, replacement, and weeding of materials rests with the designated professional staff under the overall direction of the Library Director. The librarians Consortium-level collections may be governed by an additional set of collection criteria.

Procedures

1. Selection Criteria

A. In order to build and maintain its high-quality collection based on professionally-accepted standards of material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age-appropriate or grade-level material, and continued demand of material, the Library applies the following general criteria when considering materials for acquisition:

1. Public demand, interest, or need
2. Accuracy and effectiveness of material
3. Anticipated potential for long-term public interest
4. Favorable assessments by reputable critics, reviewers, or organizations in professionally-recognized publications
5. Prominence and credibility of author and publisher
6. Relation to existing collection and other material on the subject
7. Timeliness and importance of material as a document of the times;
current or historical significance of the author or subject
8. Value as resource material
9. Availability and affordability
10. Compatibility of format for Library use
11. Suitability of subject or style for intended audience
12. Local origination or particular relevance to Norfolk and the region
13. Public's ability to procure item from alternative sources
14. Availability of electronic bibliographic records

B. Selection of materials is based on the professional knowledge and judgment 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 residents are always welcome and are given serious consideration. Staff will determine which will be acted upon. Library materials, displays, and programs 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 of a public library 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.

C. Textbooks will generally not be considered for the collection unless they are the best or only available source of information in their subject area and serve the general public and adult learning community. The Library does not purchase multiple copies of textbooks for use by students, a responsibility of the Board of Education.

D. Self-published books by local or Connecticut authors will be considered for the Library collection if they meet the Library's standards of quality and are determined to be of suitable interest to the public.

E. Digital Collections/Databases. Wherever possible, the Library makes electronic materials available in the Library and remotely. Electronic materials include databases, e-Books, e-Audiobooks, and downloadable and streaming media. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. The Library will make every effort to provide assistance and ensure that the public learns how to use its electronic databases.

F. 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 addresses:

1. Copyright and licensing
2. Redaction of personally identifiable information
3. Any restrictions on use or circulation
4. Maintenance and evolution of accepted formats

G. The children's collection (print books, audiobooks, DVDs, magazines) offers developmentally-appropriate materials that meet the informational and recreational needs of children ages birth through twelve. Some materials in the children's collection may not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children. Only a child's parent or legal guardian can decide what is suitable for that child to read. Some materials available in the broader digital collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children. It is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to ensure appropriate access to broader digital collections.

The following general criteria are applied when considering materials for acquisition:

1. The collection should represent a diversity of views and expressions.
2. Professional review sources deem materials appropriate and relevant.
3. Major factors that influence the selection of materials include content, literacy merit, artistic quality, originality, creativity, accuracy, objectivity, relevance to the needs of the community, local interest in subject or author, popular demand.

H. The Young Adult collection offers developmentally-appropriate materials that meet the informational and recreational needs of preteens and teenagers ages twelve to eighteen. The collection should be relevant and represent a diversity of views and expressions. Some materials in the Young Adult collection and in the broader digital collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all teenagers. Only each teen and their parent or legal guardian can make that decision.

2. 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 number of duplicate copies or similar materials in the collection, existence of adequate coverage of the subject field, and demand for the specific author, title, or subject. It is sometimes preferable to purchase current materials rather than replace older ones. The staff serves as arbiter in such instances.

3. Weeding

To keep the collection fresh and relevant, it is regularly evaluated. Weeding is the term used by libraries to describe the removal of materials from their collections. Weeding is performed as a regular, ongoing process by qualified staff and the Library Director in the interest of keeping all collections current and useful. Weeded materials in good condition may be sold, donated, or disposed of however the Library deems appropriate. Generally, standard titles of permanent value and materials of local significance are spared weeding even if they may meet the criteria for so doing. Withdrawal from the collection is based on the following criteria:

1. Items are worn, stained, or damaged beyond repair. Items withdrawn for reasons of condition will be considered for replacement.
2. Items are out of date, contain inaccurate data, or are not historically significant.
3. New, more current, or more comprehensive resources are available.
4. Duplication
5. Low circulation

4. Gifts and Donations

The Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials for the collection and applies to them the same standards of selection that govern purchases. Gift materials are accepted with the understanding that those that meet the Library's selection criteria may be retained and those that do not may be redistributed to the Library Associates or other non-profit organizations.

5. Restricted Access

Access to older books on our Upper Level is restricted to staff only. Depending upon condition, these books are available by request to be checked out or for in-house use only.

6. Special Collections

The Historical Collection is housed in the Rare Book Room. The materials (print books, periodicals, photographs) do not circulate, although some of the books are available in digital format. The Library is committed to preserving its history and the history of the town as reflected in its Historical Collection. Unless it is related to the history of the Library, donations of historical materials are redirected to the Norfolk Historical Society.

The Frederick Sprague Barbour Collection consists of imprints and books on hunting and fishing. It is housed in the Rare Book Room. Because some of the books in both collections are in fragile condition and of irreplaceable value, supervised access to the Rare Book Room is by permission of the Library staff.

7. Controversial Materials

A. The Library recognizes not all users will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Some materials selected for the collection may seem controversial and even distasteful to some Library users. Selections will not be based upon anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the overall library patron community.

B. Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing habits of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. The Library maintains several age-appropriate collections for children and teens. Materials may be reassigned among these sub-collections based on the age appropriateness of the content. Selection of adult material will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. The removal, exclusion, or censoring of any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive is prohibited.

C. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft.

D. 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 be considered sufficient reason alone for the Library to withdraw it from the collection.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

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. The freedom to choose from a broad range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged. When evaluating Library materials, the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements from the American Library Association are used as guiding documents.

Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

The Norfolk Library Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of hearing from the public regarding material selection. The completion of the Request for Reconsideration Form does not guarantee either accession to the collection or removal from the collection but does ensure the attention of Library staff to user opinion, interests, and concerns. The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider materials, displays, or programs to residents of Norfolk. Please see our Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy and Request for Reconsideration Form for further information on this process.

Location

This policy is housed on the Norfolk Library website: <https://www.norfolklibrary.org/about>. A copy is maintained in the Library Director's Office.

This policy is in accordance with Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322, 323.

Approved by the Norfolk Library Board of Trustees 6/9/2001

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