

# Somers Public Library

## Collection Development Policy (formerly Materials Selection Policy)



October 17, 2023

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to guide the library staff in the selection of library materials, and to inform the Library Board, and the general public of the principles upon which selections are made. This policy is guided by the Library's Mission Statement:

***The Somers Public Library encourages reading and lifetime learning and serves the needs of the entire community by providing free access to a diversity of ideas and information through a variety of library materials, services and experiences.***

The library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom adopted by the American Library Association as expressed in its [Library Bill of Rights](#), [Freedom to Read](#), and [Freedom to View](#) statements, and in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

## **Responsibility for Selection**

While the selection of materials may be delegated to other members of the library staff, the ultimate responsibility for selection rests with the Director, who operates within the framework determined by the Library Board.

## **Scope of Collection**

The library offers materials and services which are intended to meet the diverse educational, recreational, and cultural needs and preferences of its users.

Materials will be selected in a variety of formats including, but not limited to:

- Print – such as hardcovers, paperbacks, large print, magazines, and newspapers
- Non-print – such as audio and video formats, puzzles, games, and kits
- Digital Resources – such as online databases, e-books, downloadable audio books, videos, comics, and magazines

Materials will be selected for the following audiences:

- Children – (ages birth to 11)
  - To develop skills in reading, communication, imagination, and creativity.
  - To introduce the best literature available for the child's level of comprehension and enjoyment
- Teens – (ages 12 to 18)
  - To meet personal, educational, and recreational needs
  - To aid in coping with adolescent issues
- Adults – (ages 18 and up)
  - To meet personal, educational, and recreational needs

## **Procedures for Selection**

A variety of tools are used to aid in the awareness and selection of materials, including professional review journals, publishers' catalogs, purchase plan alerts, and patron and staff recommendations. Involved in the process are the experience and knowledge of those staff members making selection decisions, their familiarity with the community, other library resources, the existing collection, and the library's materials budget. Care is made to make acquisition decisions as objectively as possible. Evaluation of a work includes the entire work, not just individual parts. A work's overall contribution to the collection is a critical determinant for acceptance or rejection. No single criterion can be applied to all materials, and various criteria carry different weights in different circumstances.

### *Criteria:*

- Public demand, interest or need
- Reputation and/or significance of author
- Skill, competence and purpose of author
- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Relation to existing collection and other material on the subject
- Authority, accuracy, and timeliness of material
- Price and availability of funds
- Attention of critics, reviewers and public
- Local popular interest

## **Accessibility**

All library materials are available for use by all patrons. Materials will be freely and easily accessible to the public. Materials will be organized and maintained according to subject, format, type, user level, or other category to achieve their most effective utilization by the public and library staff. Books and other materials are initially placed in areas of the collection based on the publisher and author's intended audience and review source recommendations. Occasionally materials are subsequently reevaluated for placement updates based on their respective age-appropriateness. The library cannot purchase every item of value or all materials which may be requested by patrons, but will extend its resources through cooperation with other libraries and networks within the State of Connecticut.

## **Collection Maintenance**

Library collections, not being static, require an active review process. Ongoing reevaluations of materials is necessary in order to maintain a current, accurate and inviting collection. Candidates for withdrawal include but are not limited to: outdated materials, items no longer

of interest or in demand, no longer needed duplicate copies, and worn or damaged items. Some materials may be replaced by an alternative format as technology advances and demand increases. Worn or damaged items that are still in demand may be either mended or replaced depending on the degree of wear and damage. Withdrawn materials may be discarded or recycled if the condition warrants it, or offered for sale to the public either at the library or at book sales conducted by the Friends of the Somers Library, with all proceeds benefitting the library.

### **Controversial Materials**

The library recognizes that some materials are controversial, and at any given time may offend some patrons. The library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom, which allows for every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. Accordingly, the library provides equal service to all library users. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval but upon the basis of anticipated usage, merits of the item, and its relationship to the collection and interests of our readers. No materials will be removed from open shelves or kept in a restricted area because of their controversial nature or because their subject matter, viewpoint or treatment may be distasteful to certain individuals or groups.

The library recognizes that some materials may not be considered appropriate for minors. The library maintains several age-appropriate collections for children and teens. Materials may be reassigned among these collections based on the age-appropriateness of the content. Selection of adult materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents. Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing habits of children rests with their own parents or legal guardians.

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.

### **Request for Reconsideration**

A Somers Public Library cardholder, who wishes that a specific item of the library's collection be considered for removal or relocation within the library, is asked to complete and submit a Material Reconsideration form (see appended). The Library Director will review the request, and make a decision regarding the retention, removal, or relocation of the material based upon the guidelines outlined in this policy. This decision will be shared with the patron. If the patron is not satisfied with the reply, the Library Director will bring the request to the attention of the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees to add to the agenda of an upcoming Board of Trustees' meeting. The Library Board will review the request, and the Library Director's response, and make a decision. The decision of the Library Board of Trustees will be final and communicated to the person making the request.

### **Gifts (see also Gifts Policy)**

Gifts in the form of library collection materials may be accepted if they meet the library's principles for selection as outlined in this policy. They are considered with the explicit understanding that factors such as duplication, lack of community interest, or processing costs may prevent their addition to the collection. The library reserves the right to determine such issues as classification, arrangement, and shelving. The library also reserves the right to evaluate and dispose of gifted materials in accordance with the collection maintenance portion of this policy. Monies donated for the purchase of materials are gratefully accepted. Suggestions by the donor concerning subject areas or specific titles will be respected insofar as they coincide with this policy for selection.

This policy will be periodically evaluated and revised as times and circumstances require.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees 2/7/94  
Amended 12/3/07; 1/4/16; 10/17/23

## Materials Reconsideration Inquiry

Request initiated by (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Title to be reviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Artist/Editor \_\_\_\_\_

Type of material (book, periodical, music CD, DVD, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Item found in which collection? Adult \_\_\_\_\_ Teen \_\_\_\_\_ or Children's \_\_\_\_\_

*What brought this title to your attention?*

*What is your objection to this work? Please be specific; cite pages, sections, etc.*

*Have you read/seen/listened to this material in its entirety?*

*What would you like the library to do about this work?*

*Other comments:*

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