

Stratford Library Association Collection Development Policy

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I. Stratford Library Association Mission Statement

The mission of the Stratford Library is to empower and enrich our diverse community by providing access to innovative services, information and ideas.

II. Purpose of the Collection Development Policy

This Collection Development Policy is intended to provide guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials. It outlines the philosophies which create and shape the Library's unique collection, the practices that maintain it over time and the guidelines used by library professionals to ensure that the collection is responsive to community needs. The Library makes every reasonable effort to provide the community with a collection that reflects a wide range of views, expressions, opinions and interests. Acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular or controversial in nature. The Library's acquisition of items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression.

In addition to its physical collections, the Library makes electronic information available in the Library and remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases and materials, 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 reasonable effort to provide assistance and ensure that the public has access to electronic information.

The Library strives to fulfill this Collection Development Policy by selecting and maintaining a quality collection which meets the needs and interests of the Stratford community.

This is accomplished by:

- A thorough and ongoing review of all parts of the collection for relevance, demand, timeliness, and physical condition
- Curation of a culturally diverse collection
- Evaluation of new and existing formats
- Effective publicity of available collections through the use of traditional and online outlets
- Periodic surveys to determine patron satisfaction with the collection
- Efficient use of space to accommodate changing collections

III. Criteria for Selection

The Stratford Library seeks to facilitate learning, recreational and research pursuits by furnishing materials of requisite and appropriate quality. In exercising its discretion to further this mission, the Stratford Library selects material based on the following criteria:

- Present and potential significance, relevance and appeal to diverse community needs and interests.
- Positive reviews in accredited journals and sources, as set forth in Section V, below.
- Merit, awards and critical acclaim
- Cost and availability of funds.
- Public demand, interest or need.
- Contemporary significance, popular interest or permanent/historical value.
- Diversity of viewpoints within a subject area and/or the Library as a whole
- Inclusion of works produced by individuals representing their own cultural and social groups.
- Suitability of format for library use.
- Consideration of subject, quality, content, style and reading level for the intended audience
- The extent that the topic is already represented in the Library's collection/materials
- Reputation, critical acclaim, authority, qualifications and/or significance of author, artist, publisher, or producer*
- Accessibility through interlibrary loan or online resources
- Historical importance or impact as a document of the times for the Stratford community.
- Consideration of the works by a local author, illustrator or performer.
- Availability of appropriate physical space to house the item.

- Those relevant factors set forth in Section IX below.
- Independently published, self-published, and vanity publishing materials are eligible for inclusion in the Library's collection, subject to these Selection Guidelines and criteria/factors.

IV. **Responsibility for Selection:**

The Stratford Library selects material in accordance with guidelines stated by the American Library Association in the *Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read* statement, along the criteria set forth in Section III, above. Authority and responsibility for selection of items is delegated by the Stratford Library Board of Trustees to the Library Director and the Director's designated staff, in their sole discretion. Department Heads and the librarians under their supervision are responsible for selecting and maintaining materials of all types and in all formats within their respective collections. This includes books, audio/visual materials, periodicals, software and online resources.

V. **Selection Tools:**

The selection tools used by librarians include:

- Professional library journals
- Trade journals
- National magazines & newspapers
- Reputable local publications
- Reputable broadcast and online sources
- Subject bibliographies
- Publishers' events, trade shows and promotional materials

As we welcome suggestions from our patrons (subject to the Library's discretion under Section IV, above), a *Request for Purchase* procedure is in place to enable Library users to suggest that a particular item be purchased by the Library. All requests are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. It is the Library's intent that requests for purchase be used to help in the development of a collection which serves the diverse interests and needs of the community. Requests may be made in person or online at <http://stratfordlibrary.org/borrowing/request-for-purchase/>

VI. **Gifts and Donations**

The Stratford Library welcomes the opportunity to review with potential donors the possibility of contributing materials to the collection. Gifts are added to the Library collection only as such gifts are useful and conform to the Library's needs, goals, programs, and the foregoing Collection Development Policy,

including but not limited to the Guidelines set forth in Section III, above. The Library reserves the right to refuse items, designate items for sale, or give them away.

With few exceptions, the Library does not accept the following types of gift materials:

- Textbooks
- Popular Magazines & Journals
- Material in poor condition
- Material that has been stored in damp conditions
- Superseded formats (i.e., VHS tapes, cassettes, floppy disks, etc.)
- Material that is in violation of copyright law
- Independently published, self-published, and vanity publishing materials are eligible for inclusion in the Library's collection, subject to the Selection Guidelines and factors as outlined in Section III.

VII. 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 solely on the merits of the work in relation to developing a collection which serves the needs and interests of the community.

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. However, responsibility for the selection, reading, listening and viewing habits of children rests with their parents or legal guardians.

Selection of material for adults will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. Library materials will not be marked by Library staff to indicate controversial 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.

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.

VIII. Reconsideration of Materials:

The Stratford Library subscribes to the *Library Bill of Rights*. To that end, if a Stratford (Connecticut) Library resident objects to a Library item, their objection must be formalized using our *Request for Reconsideration of Materials* Form and

process. The form and process for requesting reconsideration of materials is included in Appendix C of this policy document. See *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Procedure*

Only requests from current Stratford (Connecticut) residents will be considered (Organization and Teacher Cardholder requests will not be considered). Any resource which is subject to reconsideration by the Stratford Library Board will not be eligible for further reconsideration for a period of 60 months.

IX. Collection Maintenance:

Active and continuous maintenance is essential to providing a current and useful collection. Deselection or removal of items from the Stratford Library collection is based on the following criteria:

- Poor physical condition
- Contains outdated or inaccurate/incomplete information
- Low or no use/circulation
- No recent circulation
- Multiple copies no longer needed
- Strength of comparative holdings within a subject area, including information that is no longer the consensus of the field
- Earlier or outdated editions or format; availability of updated/newer/more comprehensive editions
- Stable electronic equivalent

While the Library attempts to maintain a collection of standard and important works, it does not automatically replace all withdrawn items. Replacement will be determined by the appropriate Department Head, designated staff members, or the Library Director who will take the following factors into consideration:

- Historical value of the item
- Availability of a replacement copy
- Patron need or demand to replace the item
- The availability of another item which might better serve the same purpose
- Availability of updated or revised materials
- Availability of the item (or comparable item) from another lending source

X. Appendices:

In the interest of protecting the individual's right to have access to materials, and implementing this Policy, the Library in its discretion may utilize and rely upon the following documents/resources:

a. American Library Association Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. 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.
- II. 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.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019; Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

b. The American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.
7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

**c. Stratford Library Association
Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Procedure**

The Stratford Library Board of Trustees has adopted a *Collection Development Policy* to provide guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials. It outlines the philosophies which create and shape the Library's unique collection, the practices that maintain it over time and the guidelines used by library professionals to ensure that the collection is responsive to community needs. The Library makes every reasonable effort to provide the community with a collection that reflects a wide range of views, expressions, opinions and interests. Acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular or controversial in nature. The Library's acquisition of items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression.

The Library recognizes the right of patrons to question materials in the Library collection. If a patron objects to the presence of any material in the Library's collection material, they will be referred to the Department Supervisor responsible for that area of the collection who will discuss the matter with the patron. If not satisfied, the patron may utilize the *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* process. Only requests from current Stratford (Connecticut) residents will be considered (Organization and Teacher Cardholder requests will not be considered).

The process for requesting reconsideration of library materials is as follows:

1. A patron who is requesting reconsideration of an item in the Library collection will meet with the Department Supervisor responsible for that area of the collection who will provide the patron with the Library's *Collection Development Policy*. The patron will be asked to read the policy prior to submitting a *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form.
2. The patron will then be given a *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form to complete, detailing their objections to the material. This form can be obtained from any service desk in the Library. A completed *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form is then to be submitted to the Library Director, Stratford Library, 2203 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06615
3. The Library Director, or their designee, with a committee of at least three Stratford Library staff members who hold MLS/MLIS Degrees, will review the submitted *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form and the item in question to consider whether its selection follows the criteria stated in the *Stratford Library Collection Development Policy*. Each member of the committee is required to read/view/listen to the item in its entirety in order to evaluate and discuss the title.

4. Within 60 business days of receipt of the Request, the Library Director, or their designee, will make a decision and will send a letter or email, stating the reasons for the decision, to the patron who requested the reconsideration.
5. If the patron is not satisfied with the decision, a written appeal may be submitted to the Library Board of Trustees within fifteen (15) business days of the issuance of the Library Director's decision.
6. If the Board of Trustees 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 at this meeting (and the length of the portion of the meeting dedicated to the appeal); the Board will not restrict the viewpoints presented but will require that all speakers offering testimony/comment on the appeal observe appropriate decorum at the meeting and restrict their comments to the appeal.
8. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final and will not be subject to any further appeal or Request for Reconsideration for 60 months.

Stratford Library Association**Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Only requests from current Stratford (Connecticut) residents will be considered (Organization & Teacher Cardholder requests will not be considered).

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone: _____ Library Card#: 24003 _____

Email: _____

Do you represent yourself? Y or N

Do you represent an Organization? Y or N

Provide the name of the Organization: _____

1. Title of Material: _____

Author/Producer: _____

2. Format: Book _____ Other: _____ (please specify) _____

3. In which department did you find this resource? (check one)

Adult _____ Teen _____ Children's _____

For the following questions, answer in the space provided or on additional pages as needed. Please be specific.

4. What brought this resource to your attention?

5. Have you examined the entire resource? Y or N.

If the answer is "no", what portions have you examined? Please be specific.

