

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

The Mission Statement

1. Purpose

The purpose of The Smithtown Library materials selection policy is to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

The Library sets as its major goal in materials selection to secure for all residents of the community the informational, educational, cultural and recreational materials suited to the needs of the populace.

2. Definitions

The word 'materials' used for the specific forms of media, has the widest possible meaning. It may include (but is not limited to) books (hardbound and paperbound), pamphlets, maps, magazines and journals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, sound and video recordings, and electronic resources.

3. Responsibility for Materials Selection

The ultimate responsibility for selection rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of the policies approved by the Board of Trustees. The Director may authorize other staff to apply this policy in building the Library collection.

4. Criteria of Selection

These basic principles are applied as guidelines for selection. Every item should meet such of the following criteria as are applied to its inclusion in the collection:

1. The degree and accomplishment of purpose;
2. Authority and competency of the author, composer, filmmaker, etc.
3. Comprehensiveness in breadth and scope;
4. Sincerity and fundamental objectivity;
5. Clarity and accuracy of presentation;
6. Appropriateness to the interests and skills of the interested users;
7. Relation to the existing collection;
8. Relative importance in comparison with other materials on the subject;
9. Importance as a record of the times for present and future use;
10. Technical quality of the material.

5. Use of Library Material

The Library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may have the potential to be objectionable to some library users. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the works in relation to building the collection and to serving the interests of the community.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no item will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.

The use of rare and scarce items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm.

Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

6. Guidelines for Selection

1. The Library adheres to the principles contained in the American Library Association Bill of Rights and the American Library Association statement on "Freedom to Read." A copy of the American Library Association Bill of Rights is appended to this policy.
2. The Library recognizes the purpose and resources of other libraries and shall not needlessly duplicate functions and materials. Through mutually agreed upon cooperative ventures, the resources of these libraries may be made available to the community.
3. The Library acknowledges the purposes of educational programs for students of all ages provided by the educational institutions in the area. Textbooks and curriculum-related materials for these programs are provided only where the materials also serve the general public or where they provide information not otherwise readily available.
4. Legal and medical works will be acquired to the extent they are useful to the informed layman. The public library collection is not intended to be a specialized, professional collection.
5. The Library acknowledges a particular interest in local history. Therefore, it seeks to acquire related materials.
6. Because the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading abilities, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.
7. In selecting materials for the collection, the Library will consider the special, commercial, industrial, cultural, and civic enterprise of the community.

7. Gifts

The Library accepts gifts of materials, but reserves the right to evaluate and dispose of them as it deems appropriate. No other considerations may be imposed relating to any gift either before or after its acceptance by the Library. Upon request, the Library will provide an acknowledgment of a donation but the Library does not provide evaluations of gifts for tax deductions or other purposes.

8. Local Author Collection

The Library supports and seeks to cultivate the literary expression of our community by way of the establishment of the “Local Author Collection”. Authors who reside in, work in, or who originate from the Town of Smithtown may donate one physical copy per title of their published work (up to three titles per calendar year) to be considered for inclusion in the collection. Materials included in the “Local Author Collection” will be considered under the same selection and retention guidelines as are applicable to the Library’s current print collections.

9. Reconsideration of Material

Procedures have been developed for the reconsideration of materials to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Once an item has been accepted for purchase, based on the Materials Selection Policy of the Library Board of Trustees and the criteria for selection, it will not be automatically removed upon request.

10. Reconsideration of Library Materials Procedure

The choice of library materials by patrons is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for himself, he may not exercise censorship to restrict access to materials by others.

Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some requests for reconsideration, the following procedures have been developed to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner.

- a. The patron with the request for reconsideration should be referred immediately to the Library Director or to the person in charge in absence of the Library Director. The person in charge should explain to the patron that selections are made in accordance with the Materials Selections Policy of the Board of Trustees of The Smithtown Library, a copy of which should be given to the patron if requested. Should a patron wish to pursue the matter:
 - 1. The patron making the request for reconsideration must complete a Request for Reevaluation of Library Material form. [Appended to this policy.]

2. The Request for Reevaluation will be referred to a committee consisting of the Library Director and two professionals on the
3. Library staff of the director's choosing, who would have knowledge of the disputed item.
4. The committee will reconsider the item in question using the Materials Selection Policy and reviews from recognized sources.
5. The Library Director will then communicate to the patron regarding the committee's determination.

If so desired, the patron may appeal in writing to The Smithtown Library Board of Trustees after the Director level.

11. Maintaining the Collection

Materials which no longer serve a need will be removed from the collection. Decisions for removal will be based on circulation, physical condition, usefulness, age, and accuracy.