

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

The Scarsdale Public Library seeks to provide the community with information that satisfies educational, entertainment and recreational pursuits through the purchase and organization of books, periodicals, newspapers, audio and video recordings, and other forms of electronic media.

In support of these goals, the Library Board of Trustees emphasizes the importance of materials which have contemporary significance or permanent value. Materials are chosen, within budgetary limits, to inform, inspire and entertain; to excite new interests and to satisfy free inquiry.

The Library Board of Trustees delegates the authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials to the Library Director and, under supervision, to the professional librarian staff who are qualified by reason of education, training and experience.

To build a collection of enduring merit, materials must be measured by objective guidelines. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are subject to the standards listed below. An item need not meet all of the criteria for acceptance. Some materials may be judged primarily on artistic merit, while others are considered because of scholarship, historic value or ability to satisfy the needs of the community.

GENERAL CRITERIA

- Relevance, present and potential, to community needs. The Library makes a conscious effort to obtain materials pertaining to local matters – civic, cultural, artistic, educational, recreational and historic.
- Topicality, or the importance of material as a document or recording of the times. Relation to the existing collection and other materials on the subject. An effort is made to include significant works to illuminate the different and important sides of issues.
- Reputation and significance of the author. No item will be excluded because of the race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, political or doctrinal beliefs or personal history of an author.

- Insight into human and social conditions.
- Attention given by critics, reviewers and the public.
- Suitability of physical form of the material for library use.
- Price as a reasonable value for anticipated use.
- Accuracy of scientific or historical fact.
- Popular demand.

The Library recognizes that certain materials are controversial and that any item may offend some library users. Selections are not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the works in relation to the goals of building and enhancing a collection that serves the diverse interests of the community.

Continual evaluation of library holdings is an essential part of collection development. To ensure a vital collection of continued value to the community, materials that are judged by the professional staff to have outlived their usefulness are withdrawn. Decisions for removal are based on diminished circulation, physical condition, usefulness and accuracy.

Library materials are not marked or identified to imply or show approval or disapproval of the contents. All materials are kept on open shelves except those that are: in poor physical condition and not replaceable, duplicate copies, extremely expensive or subject to mutilation.

The Library provides books and other materials suitable for children and young adults in collections that are clearly labeled and separate from the adult collection. Materials are selected for their merits and not necessarily excluded because of coarse language or frankness. The Library does not deny or limit access to any item because of its content or style.

Selection of materials for the Library's collections shall not be inhibited by the possibility that some material may inadvertently come into the possession of children. Responsibility for the reading, listening and viewing of Library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians.

Since the Library benefits from the resources of many other libraries throughout the Westchester Library System, it does not acquire highly specialized or technical materials which can be obtained through interlibrary loan or accessed electronically. Neither does it acquire special interest publications in fields such as law, engineering or medicine where such collections exist at other nearby institutions.

The collection also does not take the place of the elementary, middle school, high school or college libraries. It is the responsibility of the public schools to supply curriculum material. The Library works cooperatively with schools to supplement and enhance their collections.

Once an item has been accepted under the Materials Selection Policy, it will not be removed at the request of those who disagree with its inclusion, unless it can be shown that retention of the item would be in violation of this Policy. Copies of the Materials Selection Policy, the Reconsideration of Library Materials Policy and the Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form may be obtained at the reference desk.

The Library Board endorses the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement adopted by the American Library Association, copies of which are attached to this Policy.

Approved by the Scarsdale Public Library Board of Trustees October 2006

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