

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY FOR THE HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY

Revisions Adopted by the Library Board May 1, 1990 and May 6, 2008, May 3, 2022

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Highland Township Public Library's Materials Selection Policy is to set broad guidelines in order to select, organize, preserve, administer, and promote the use of a wide range of media; to guide librarians in the selection of materials, and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. These functions are undertaken to further the objectives of the Highland Township Public Library.

B. OBJECTIVES OF SELECTION

In order to connect community members with people, resources and knowledge to enrich, inspire, and empower them as set forth in the Mission Statement for the Highland Township Public Library, designated library personnel will select materials and information presenting the widest of views and expressions on current and historic issues including those which are unpopular with the majority, and will provide popular recreational materials based on demand and selection criteria designated elsewhere in this Selection Policy. Various points of view will be actively sought and represented in the library's collections. The library does not endorse the ideas contained in every item in its collections and does not recommend every item in its collections to every person in the community.

The Library provides a dynamic collection of materials about a variety of subjects for users of all ages and levels of experiences. Materials are provided in a variety of formats, including books, audiobooks, magazines, and newspapers, in both physical and electronic format, DVDs, CDs, tablets, STEM or Literacy Kits, board games, streaming media and other electronic resources. Languages other than English may be included in the collection.

The collection strives to be general in nature, and does not contain specialized materials for the exclusive use of one particular group. The collection does not include materials purchased specifically for in-depth instruction or college curriculum use.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SELECTION

The elected Library Board shall delegate to the Library Director the final authority and responsibility for selection of all print and nonprint materials. Other library staff at the level of paraprofessional and higher may help with the responsibilities for actual selection and will discharge this obligation consistent with the Board's adopted selection criteria and procedures.

D. SELECTION CRITERIA

Materials selection is guided by a general design to maintain a satisfactory split between nonfiction and fiction resources representing a wide variety of general subjects and genres. The collection will be informational, cultural, recreational, and instructional in nature.

In general, library materials will be chosen to serve the greatest number of users. Materials for general k-12 educational support, self-help books, general information on specific topics, cultural topics, and recreational reading will comprise the preponderance of our collections. Extremely technical and/or specialized works will not be chosen since this is a public library and therefore choice of materials for the general public rather than for a specialized group is one of the library's selection criteria.

The basis of selection will be artistic or literary excellence, appropriateness to the level of user, authenticity or accuracy, publisher or author reputation, public interest, cost, circumstances of use, and technical criteria such as clarity of sound in audio materials.

New materials will be chosen on the basis of reviewing journals and are considered for collection inclusion based on favorable reviews from authoritative sources. Examples of such selection tools include Library Journal, School Library Journal, Booklist, Publishers Weekly, Kirkus, Horn Book, the New York Times Book Review, and AudioFile. Popular media such as Rolling Stone, Game Informer Magazine, and Dice Tower Review may be particularly useful for selection of contemporary nonprint formats.

Identification of at least one positive review is recommended before purchase.

Recognition by prizes, awards, etc., given by critical organizations or institutes or associations of peers such as the Newbery, Caldecott, Edgar and Hugo Awards, the New York Film Critics Circle, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), U.S. (e.g. Sundance) and international (e.g. Cannes) film festivals as well as the Audie Awards will be considered as meeting selection criteria, equivalent to a positive review.

The children's collection consists of educational titles and popular entertainment in print and non-print. These materials should be useful and relevant to their everyday needs, interests, and activities. Special emphasis will be placed on a child's developmental needs for stimulation of imagination and mental growth.

For selection of print and non-print material alike, consideration should be given to such matters as popular and timely demand for the item; relevance to community needs; the relationship of the material to the existing collection and to other materials available on the subject; the likely attention of critics, opinion makers, and the public to the item; its importance as a document of our times; the cost of the item as compared with comparable material on the same subject; and the cost-benefit ratio compared with an alternative expenditure.

If an author or artist, in seeking realistic representation of the human condition, includes material that is sexually candid or dialogue with vulgar diction, such inclusion will not be considered reason for rejection if the work otherwise meets standards for acquisition.

Because of the great diversity of materials, application of selection criteria may vary. Some items are judged primarily in terms of artistic merit or documentation in popular sources such as newspapers and magazines, while others are selected to satisfy the recreational and informational needs of the community.

The Library encourages purchase suggestions from the public and will give these suggestions serious consideration. Although such recommendations will be considered, materials not meeting the Library's selection criteria may or may not be purchased, at the discretion of the librarian.

1. Nonprint Materials Guidelines

Collections in non-print format will meet general selection criteria as outlined above and will strive to provide a broad spectrum of titles of current interest and classical value. Selection is based on artistic and technical quality, high production values, popularity, and favorable reviews in professional journals and general publications when available.

The following outlines criteria specific to various nonprint collections.

a. DVD

In addition to having been favorably reviewed in a recognized, authoritative review source and/or having been recognized by prizes, awards, etc., the following criteria may also indicate an acceptable level of quality and be cause for acquisition:

- i. Materials reissued from filmed material or reproduced 20 years or more after the original production shall be assumed on the basis of longevity of appeal to meet standards for acquisition.
- ii. Materials that have appeared on public television networks.

iii. Special attention may be given to works that have been adapted from books or that are considered classic because of their format or genre such as silent films, foreign language films and feature documentaries.

iv. Oscar nominees for Best Feature Film by the AMPAS shall be given special consideration for selection.

v. Consideration will be given to availability of replacements of pieces (disks or tapes) in multipart sets.

vi. Materials that will not be included in the Library's visual collection include work that achieves its appeal strictly by sensational, erotic, exploitative means.

This collection consists of both feature films and non-fiction materials.

Feature films will be purchased to satisfy the public's need for recreational materials and to serve differing tastes and interests. Given budgetary limitations it is impossible for this library to fully meet public demand for high-interest feature films. Classics, long-term, popular features and musicals, award winners, as well as other broad-based genres will be included-

The movie collection will include films with an MPAA rating of G, PG, PG 13, or R. NC-17 and X rated films will not be included in the Library's collection. Lack of a rating will not necessarily be cause for exclusion. Professional librarians will choose movies for the library.

Serialized shows issued on DVD must meet general selection criteria for consideration. Public demand, availability elsewhere, cost, number of episodes and length of series will factor in the selection decision.

Non-fiction materials include educational and instructional titles. Nonfiction works are purchased when the visual or non-print format provides an effective or appropriate way of presenting information, or when material is only available in this format. All general subjects in the Dewey classification system may be acquired with particular emphasis upon cooking, travel, exercise, parenting, how-to (including crafts, hobbies and home repair), history (including current events), made for television documentaries, art, performance arts and sports videos. However, not all subject matters may be equally represented, as some subjects are more frequently represented in visual formats (e.g. exercise) while others are not (e.g. poetry.)

b. Music CD: The compact disc collection is for all age groups and attempts to represent the most significant and broadly-known musical literature in each of the following genres: classical, jazz/blues, pop/rock, country, easy listening, soundtrack (including movies and musicals), folk, holiday, rap, spoken word, religious (including gospel), miscellaneous (including local history and sound effects), children's and world music. Selection is based on artistic and technical merits, inclusion in standard discographies, favorable reviews, popularity, and recommendations by community experts.

c. Other nonprint formats may have additional selection considerations as follows:

Electronic Resources and Streaming Media: Ease of use, timeliness and accuracy, uniqueness and quality of information, target audience, depth of coverage, licensing restrictions and remote access, technical support, hardware/software requirements, subscription management issues and return on investment.

Video games: Ease of use and installation, availability of technical support, popularity of platform, hardware/software requirements and proper licensing for circulation.

Realia: Durability of materials, ability to clean and disinfect, pieces large enough to avoid injury, and relationship to other material in a kit.

2. Format Changes

Over time, decisions may be made to favor one format over another or to phase out a particular format. Factors in this decision include availability of players for a particular format, cost of the format, market penetration, and availability of title in one format or another. Space and budgetary constraints may contribute to the decision to eliminate one format in favor of another or to shift concentration from one format to another. Examples of these shifts in format include LPs, cassettes, and CDs, videocassettes and DVDs, audiobooks on tape versus CD or downloadable, and children's media kits with tapes.

E. CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

Although the Library does not seek to offend the sensibilities of any of its patrons, occasionally in its efforts to provide materials on all sides of controversial and multifaceted issues for the public's information and enlightenment, a title is added to the collections which does offend some of its patrons. In such cases the Library, having used its selection criteria and therefore having chosen the best possible materials for representing another side of an issue, upholds the U.S. Constitution, the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association (Appendix A), and the Library Bill of Rights (Appendix B) in asserting that such titles have a justifiable place in its collections. The very mission of a public library is to offer knowledge to every citizen of the community since all citizens' taxes are used to support the institution. No one person or group has the right to dictate what another will read or think. The Library does not endorse every idea contained in the materials it makes available, but recognizes that, through continuous weighing and selection of conflicting opinions, free individuals obtain the strength needed for intelligent, constructive decisions and actions. For one group or individual to employ their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as standards for determining what materials are circulated conflicts with the public interest and opposes the fostering of true education because it imposes on others the structure and content of that one group's or individual's opinions. The library must preserve and enhance the peoples' right to a broader range of ideas than those held by any librarian or publisher or church or government.

Only the individual can define what library resources are consistent with her/his own values. Individuals can apply those values to the use of library materials for themselves. Parents and legal guardians have the responsibility for monitoring their children's use of library resources.

The Highland Township Public Library subscribes in principle to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and made an integral part of this policy.

F. GIFTS

Gifts of books and other Library materials are welcome with the understanding that they become the property of the Library and that the Library reserves the privilege of determining if and in what manner donated items should be used. These items will be evaluated against the same criteria for inclusion in the collection as purchased materials. Donors may not place any special conditions upon the loan or handling of the items. Materials selectors will make the final decision on use and disposition of all donations and will determine the conditions of display, storage and access to the materials.

One exception to the policy of inclusion of gifts based on selection criteria is the Freebie Paperback Collection which consists almost entirely of donations and is a way of making available a large number of popular paperbacks which the Library would not have purchased.

Items that are not accepted for inclusion in library collections may be given to the Friends of the Library for their book sales, or may be discarded at the discretion of materials selectors.

G. COLLECTION MAINTENANCE: EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The collection is continually evaluated in terms of circulation or use, performance, currency, content inclusion, scope and depth of coverage, and popularity. Continuous weeding and responsible replacement of damaged or lost titles helps maintain a collection that reflects changing community needs and library goals.

The Highland Township Public Library upholds the American Library Association's policy on evaluation of library collections as stated below:

The continuous review of library materials is necessary as a means of maintaining an active library collection of current interest to users. In the process, materials may be added and physically deteriorated or obsolete materials may be replaced or removed in accordance with the collection maintenance policy of a given library and the needs of the community it serves. Continuous evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of libraries and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or disapproved of by segments of the community. Such abuse of the evaluation function violates the principles of intellectual freedom and is in opposition to the preamble and articles 1 and 2 of the Library Bill of Rights.

1. Multiple Copies

Multiple copies may be provided based on demonstrated and anticipated user interest, availability of funds, and availability of similar items already in the collection. In general, only one copy per title of nonprint formats will be purchased.

2. Replacement of Materials

Materials will not automatically be replaced because of loss or damage. Replacement decisions will be based upon (1) demand for title, (2) number of copies already held, (3) existing coverage of a subject/genre in the collection, and (4) availability of newer or better materials on the subject.

3. Weeding

In order to maintain active, up-to-date, useful collections, selectors, as assigned, will periodically examine all materials in terms of relevance to user needs and selection criteria. Last copy, out-of-print titles may be retained if of local historical interest or significance, or if the information they contain is of use to the community and cannot be acquired elsewhere. Other factors to be considered include lack of use, physical condition, format and condition of nonprint media, accuracy or datedness of information, and availability of alternatives or replacement pieces.

H. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGED MATERIALS

1. An individual or individuals wishing to express an objection to a specific item in the library's collections shall register that objection in writing on a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form.
2. When such a complaint is received about library material, the material in question shall be reviewed objectively and in its full context by two or more members of the library staff and re-evaluated by these staff members in terms of the total materials selection policy.
3. Presentation of the complaint and the staff re-evaluation of the material will be heard at the next regularly scheduled Library Board of Trustees meeting. If the complainant(s) is/are present at the meeting, s/he or they may present their views but shall not vote on the disposition of the material under consideration.
4. The Library Board of Trustees alone shall make the final decision on the disposition of the complaint. Its decision will then be implemented by the Library Director. Material under re-evaluation will not be withdrawn until a final decision has been reached.