

The Brookfield Library

Policy 500: Collection Development

Section 1: Purpose: The Brookfield Library Board of Trustees endorses the American Library Association's position on intellectual freedom as stated in the ALA Bill of Rights: it is "the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction."

The Brookfield Library makes every effort to provide the community with a collection that reflects a wide range of views, expressions, opinions and interests. Specific acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular or controversial in nature. The library's acquisition of such items does not constitute endorsement of their content, but rather allows for their free expression.

This policy provides direction for the growth and development of collections in a variety of formats that meet the varied needs of our community. The Library's collection includes books and materials in a variety of formats (including print, electronic media, downloadable audio books, digital items) owned, shared by other libraries or licensed and maintained by the Library and made available to the public at no cost.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities: The Library Board of Trustees delegates the oversight and management of this policy to the Library Director and staff. Materials will be provided, including in displays, which appeal to library users of various backgrounds, ages and interests, and will be equally available. Responsibility for the selection, maintenance, replacement, and weeding of materials rests with the designated professional staff under the overall direction of the Director.

Responsibility for the reading, listening and/or viewing habits of children rests with their parents or legal guardians.

Section 3: Procedures and Guiding Principles: In selecting materials for purchase, we rely on the professional knowledge and judgment of our library staff, whose expertise includes familiarity of the existing collection and awareness of the needs and interests of our community. We rely on reviews in professionally-recognized periodicals as a primary source for guidance in materials selection. We also welcome and consider suggestions from patrons.

Special emphasis is placed on providing current, high-demand, high interest materials; stocking timeless classics of fiction and non-fiction materials; providing materials that support students at all academic levels; and stimulating the appreciation of learning for patrons of all ages. We are guided by the following general criteria when considering materials for acquisition or availability:

1. Public demand, interest or need
2. Relation to existing collection and other material on the subject
3. Comments from professional reviews
4. Currency and/or accuracy of material
5. Availability and affordability
6. Compatibility of format for library use
7. Suitability of subject or style for intended audience
8. Local origination or particular relevance to Brookfield and the region
9. Public's ability to procure item from alternative sources

In all cases, the quality of resources will be judged as a whole, and not by detached excerpts.

We are also part of a consortium of other libraries in Connecticut, meaning we share materials on a regular basis. This policy recognizes that shared collections may be governed by additional or different criteria.

Section 4: Electronic Material: Some of the library's digital content is provided via third-party vendors. These vendors, not the library staff, use their own criteria to determine the specific titles and resources available through these services. The Library also participates in a shared collection of electronic books and other materials.

Section 5: Collection Maintenance: Maintenance of our collection includes discarding, replacing, and repairing. If an item is lost or damaged, it may not necessarily be replaced, depending upon circulation statistics such as the existence of adequate coverage of the subject field and the demand for the specific author or subject. It is sometimes preferable to purchase current materials rather than replace older ones. The staff serves as arbiter in such instances.

Section 6: Weeding: Weeding is a term used by libraries to describe the removal of materials from their collections for a variety of reasons including that they may contain outdated or inaccurate information, we have multiple copies or the item is no longer of interest to the public. Weeded material in good condition may be sold, donated, or disposed of as the Library Director or designee deems appropriate. Generally, standard titles of permanent value and materials of local significance are spared weeding.

Section 7: Donations: The Library gratefully accepts gifts of books, periodicals and other library materials in good condition, presented by individuals and organizations that will enhance the library's collection and will apply the same standards as used in section 3. Some materials may not enhance the library's collection or may require far more space than is available, and for those donated items, the library may sell, donate, or otherwise dispose of them. The Library Director or designee will make such decisions.

Section 8: Balance and Neutrality: A variety and balance of opinions will be sought whenever feasible so that patrons can examine issues freely and make their own decisions. The inclusion of an item in the Library's collection in no way implies endorsement of its author, contents or views, nor does the exclusion imply disapproval. Decisions are made solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection that is designed to serve the interests of the public. The library staff will not mark or identify materials to show approval or disapproval.

Section 9: Request for Reconsideration: The Library welcomes expressions of opinion concerning materials in its collection. Any Brookfield resident or Brookfield taxpayer, who wishes that we reconsider an item in our collection, is asked to complete and submit the **Policy 500 Form: Request for Reconsideration of Library Material** (attached to this policy) to the Library Director who, along with appropriate staff, will review the request, using the criteria described in this policy, and make a determination regarding the retention or removal of the material in question. A letter explaining the decision will be sent to the party submitting the **Request for Reconsideration of Library Material** form.

An appeal may be made to the Library Board of Trustees, who will review whether proper procedures were followed as outlined in Policy 500 in the selection of material and will send a letter explaining their findings to the party submitting the appeal.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees: November 18, 1996
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