

SOUTH HUNTINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY
(adopted 12/18/72, revised 6/16/14, reviewed 10/21/20, revised 7/19/21)

I. General Statement:

The Library will attempt to provide material on a wide range of subjects, and to offer these in various media insofar as its budget, physical facilities and staff permits. Every attempt will be made to provide materials on the most important issues of the day, with coverage in depth where it is deemed especially necessary.

The Library will make every attempt to provide literature, which represents a wide variety of interest and types of thought and opinion and reflects the diversity of the community and world at large. It will always endeavor to offer thoughtful materials on as many sides of controversial issues as possible. Censorship, which is the selection or non-selection of materials based upon personal taste rather than professional judgment, is not appropriate to this institution.

Selection procedures for adult, young adult and juvenile materials will involve the search for the best that is available, relying on published reviews and the considered judgment of the professional staff.

In selecting materials, the contribution they make to the education of the reader, their aesthetic or inspirational value and their usability will be considered. In addition, the library will attempt to make a comparison between new materials under consideration and those already published. Many works important to our culture contain isolated elements to which some individuals may object. The Library's selection will be guided by the value or impact of the work as a whole, transcending the specific words, phrases or incidents of which it is made.

The Library will provide books and other materials for young adults and children, which are suitable for these age groups. Whenever possible, these collections will be clearly labeled; but the Library will not follow a selection policy which prevents young adults or children from reading adult literature.

The Library will not follow a selection policy, which in any way discourages adults from reading mature literature because of the possibility that such works may fall into the hands of children.

II. Treatment of Specific Areas:

A. CENSORSHIP:

The Library Board is in agreement with ALA's Freedom to View and Freedom to Read statement which says in part: "We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read

and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be “protected” against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.” (ALA’s Freedom to Read Statement, as amended June 30, 2004.)

The Library Board recognizes censorship as a purely individual matter. The Library Board declares that, while individuals are free to reject materials of which they do not approve, they cannot exercise this right of censorship in a manner restrictive to the freedom to read of others.

Censorship of materials urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion, or by organizations that would establish coercive concepts in these areas, must be opposed by the Library in maintenance of its responsibility to provide public information and to provide a variety of diverse points of view.

The Board of Trustees realizes that there is the possibility that certain material(s) in the Library may be regarded by some as unpleasant or offensive, or in political opposition to local beliefs. The Library must have in its collection materials of varied points of view, even those views that may be regarded by some as controversial, if it is to fulfill its obligation of providing a balanced and thoughtful collection for the benefit of the public it serves.

In no case shall any material be included or excluded from the collection merely because of the race, nationality, sexual preference, or because of the political or religious views of the author. Books and other reading material of sound factual authority shall not be proscribed or removed from the Library shelves because of political, moral or doctrinal disapproval.

Collection materials shall not be judged for exclusion by taking single passages out of context and basing condemnation of that book on such “lifted” passages.

The Library Board wishes to emphasize that the presence of certain material in the Library does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the Library Board or its staff.

B. RESTRICTIVE LABELING AND SEGREGATED LOCATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS:

1. The Library does not indicate, through the use of labels or other devices, a particular philosophy outlined in a book or held by an author, since to do so might tend to establish a judgment in a reader’s mind before they have had an opportunity to examine the materials personally.

2. All library materials will be kept on open shelves, except materials which are (1) in poor physical condition, (2) are not replaceable, or are difficult to replace, (3) are

extremely rare, (4) are subject to mutilation and/or destruction and/or theft, (5) are extremely expensive, or (6) are extremely fragile.

3. The Library does not in any way segregate materials because they are “too adult”.

C. RELIGION AND POLITICS:

The Library attempts to maintain a balanced and impartial recognition of all religious and political viewpoints as found in Library materials. The Library’s selection of literature in these areas should be broad and tolerant, without partisanship or propaganda.

Religious materials of a devotional or instructional nature are considered a province of individual religious institutions, unless a given title is in such widespread demand that it becomes necessary to purchase same for the Library’s general collection.

D. TEXTBOOKS:

It is the responsibility of school systems to supply the textbooks required to school courses. It is the responsibility of the Public Library to furnish supplementary materials for both formal and informal education. As a general rule, textbooks are purchased for the Library’s general collection only if they are the best or sole titles available in a given subject area.

E. NON-PRINT MATERIALS:

In addition to books, the Library will select and provide audio-visual material, e-books, audio books, newspapers, periodicals, e-periodicals, computerized reference materials, on-line databases and other non-print materials to provide increased access to information for our community. These materials will be selected according to the same standards applied to printed material, and with additional attention paid to technical quality.

F. THE FACTOR OF PUBLIC DEMAND:

The Library Board recognizes the factor of public demand as a legitimate basis for the selection of such materials for inclusion in this Library’s materials-collection.

G. GIFTS:

1. Materials offered to the Library as gifts may be accepted or rejected by the Library’s Director. Acceptance shall be on the basis that the Library is free to keep or dispose of such materials, as it may seem fit.

2. When determining whether a gift item is to be added to the collection, the same standards are applied with respect to it as are used in the normal selection of an item for purchase.

3. In the case of memorial gifts, the Library Director or other professional Library staff member should offer to assist the donor in selecting materials suitable as a gift and a memorial. The Library Board reserves the right to review any proposed gift or memorial, which the Library Director deems to be unsuitable for the collection, or to the buildings and grounds of the Library.

H. DUPLICATES:

In most cases, duplication of materials in demand should be on the basis of one (1) purchased, for every three (3) to five (5) requests (depending on the material type), this insofar as funds will permit.

I. EXCLUSIONS:

If a given piece of material is not chosen for the Library's collections, it has been excluded because (1) it does not meet the Library's standards for selection in a given area, (2) the Library already has adequate coverage on the subject, (3) budget limitations, (4) the material in question is too scientific, technical or specialized for the general readership of the community.

J. INTER-LIBRARY LOANS:

Library staff will make every reasonable effort to borrow materials from other libraries in Suffolk and Nassau Counties, the State or Nation if the Library's holdings do not meet the specific requirements of a patron.

K. PROVISIONS FOR REFERRAL AND REVIEW:

Since the Library does purchase a large quantity of book and non-book materials, and since the criteria for selecting these materials is of a highly subjective nature, it is possible to make an occasional mistake in the application of principles of material selection. Patrons who object to a particular title in the Library collection will be requested to complete the "Patron Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form" which can be obtained at the Adult or Youth services Reference Desks. The Library Director will review this request and submit a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, who will notify the patron of its action.

L. LOCAL AUTHORS

Materials written or produced by local authors must meet the general selection standards for inclusion in the Library collection. No materials will automatically be added to the collection.

M. SELF-PUBLISHED MATERIALS

In most cases, the library will not purchase self-published materials that are not reviewed in established review journals. Exceptions may be made for self-published materials of local interest.

N. DIVERSITY

We value a range of coverage in perspectives, authorship, audience, and subject matter. We recognize that the diverse community the library serves needs inclusive collections which are a foundation for learning and a basis for the creation of new knowledge.

We affirm that considering the needs of under-resourced groups is integral to collection development and management. We recognize the linguistic and cultural diversity of the communities we serve. As we purchase more e-resources, we strive to provide technological solutions that make possible inclusive community-wide services to ensure equitable access for all.

We commit to regularly assessing the adequacy of existing collections to ensure they are reflective of the diversity of the library's constituent populations. We review demographic trends in our community to inform our work.

We commit to a continued review and revision of an equity centered collection strategy which responds to the emergent context of new policies and practices established by the library profession.