

# Scituate Town Library Collection Development Policy

## I. Introduction

### A. The Library's Function

The function of the Scituate Town Library system is to make readily available library materials selected in response to both the diverse reading and educational needs of all community members; to offer youth an active library program designed to stress the value of reading and knowledge; and to deliver information which meets community needs. While nonresident use is not discouraged, the primary focus of the collections is to meet the needs of the people of Scituate. It is recognized that those needs are not static, and the library continually evaluates its collections to ensure that they are responding to the people they serve. This collection development policy is intended to support the library's mission statement.

*Mission Statement of the Scituate Town Library:*

The Scituate Town Library is committed to three principals:

- We strive to support the evolving cultural and educational needs of the people of Scituate by offering a broad range of professionally developed and easily accessible collections, innovative programs and services, and a repository of information on the heritage of our town.
- We acquire and maintain books and other materials in a variety of media while offering technological resources, all to support life-long learning, enrichment and enjoyment.
- We endeavor to provide and maintain this vital resource, now, and in the future, as a modern, safe, and welcoming community center for individuals of all ages and abilities.

### B. Purpose of the Policy

The collection development policy outlines general priorities for building and maintaining appropriate collections which implement library objectives.

This policy is intended to: (1) guide selectors in choosing material for the collection; (2) guide library administration and supervisory staff in expending available funds; (3) inform the public about principles upon which selections are made and (4) provide guidance in the management of library materials. The ability of the library system to develop collections is, of course, related to the availability of budget funds, staff, and space.

This policy will be reviewed every 5 (five) years or as needed.

### **C. Philosophical Foundations**

Fundamental to this Collection Development Policy is the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement (See Appendix A) adapted by the American Library Association.

### **D. Responsibilities**

Responsibility for materials selection, as for all library activities, rests with the Library Director, who operates within the policy framework determined by the Library Board of Trustees. The Library Director oversees the day-to-day selection by professionals in various departments based on their training and experience, as well as on the guidelines set forth here.

### **E. Types of Materials**

This policy applies to all types and formats of items deemed appropriate to aid the library in its mission. These may include a variety of print and non-print media. These decisions depend on many factors, including cost, storage, availability and applicability to users.

### **F. Library Cooperation**

Recognizing that it is not feasible for the library to be able to purchase and house all items published, the library will develop and maintain cooperative arrangements (e.g. regional library system, consortia) that will enhance its ability to obtain for individual users through interlibrary loan items not included in its collections because they can no longer be purchased, are too technical, or are otherwise inappropriate for the library.

To that end, the Scituate Town Library is a member of the Old Colony Library Network (OCLN) and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS).

## **II. Selection Principles**

### **A. General Selection Criteria**

When making decisions, selectors will consider the following criteria (in no particular order):

1. current relevance or interest
2. requests from the public

3. author's significance or reputation
4. importance as an historical record, timeliness or permanence
5. relevance to existing collections; scarcity or abundance of other material or balance of different points of view
6. cultural significance and critical acclaim
7. cost in relation to the individual title and to the overall collection
8. physical quality of format for intended use
9. availability elsewhere through interlibrary loan or other cooperative arrangements
10. diversity of viewpoint
11. literary merit
12. materials of local significance

In general, first priority for items selected will be those with the highest potential of meeting the needs of the largest number of people. Duplication of material will be determined by patron demand, importance of item, and budget.

The purchase of controversial items by the library does not constitute endorsement of the views expressed. No title is excluded on the basis of moral, racial, religious, or political prejudice.

## **B. Specific Considerations for Minors**

### **1. Children's Materials**

Materials for children are selected using the general criteria outlined above. The goal is to provide recreational and informational materials to broaden the children's areas of knowledge, imagination, and interest.

The scope of children's collections will cover preschool through the eighth grade. Materials selection will consider a wide range of genres, interests and reading abilities. Nonfiction subject areas should be covered with as great a depth and breadth as title availability allows. The materials are readily available for all who need them. The

library will purchase multiple copies of the summer reading list titles in print and other available formats provided the school district furnishes the list prior to June 1st.

The library recognizes that in its selection for children and young adults, the decision about suitable material cannot be based on age alone. While some books are too mature for some children, they may be ideal for other children of the same age. Only parents or legal guardians can decide what information children can utilize at a specific stage of development. Neither the library nor anyone else has the right to make these decisions for other people's children.

## 2. Young Adult Materials

Selected materials are intended to assist the teenaged individual in achieving a successful transition from childhood to adulthood by providing the resources that will encourage intellectual, emotional and social development. Emphasizing contemporary trends in young adult fiction, the collection should also include current information which appeals to the diverse interests of this age group, while considering the varying reading and developmental levels. To fulfill these needs, the collection will inevitably include materials on controversial and sensitive topics. Because of the wide range of maturity and reading levels among individual teens, the suitability of any particular item must be determined on an individual basis by the parent or guardian of the teen. Since the resources of the adult collections are readily available and offer a more complete reference capability, the young adult is encouraged to utilize the holdings of the entire library.

Young adult collections will focus on sixth through twelfth grade levels, but they will not be exclusive. The library will purchase multiple copies of the summer reading list titles in print and other available formats provided the school district furnishes the list prior to June 1st.

### **C. Specific Criteria for Selection of Special Formats**

#### 1. E-books

The library acquires e-books of fiction and non-fiction titles. Criteria for selecting titles are the same as for print materials. Factors that influence selection can include patron demand, the availability of the title, and the availability of funds.

#### 2. Professional, Technical and Textbook Materials

The library does not attempt to be an academic, special or school library. Highly technical, professional, or textbook materials are not excluded per se. These types of items are selected and kept if there is a general public demand for them, or if they coincidentally provide coverage in a needed subject area. The library services students as individual members of the community and by cooperating with community schools, but in no way does it presume to replace the school library.

### 3. Self-published Materials

In most cases the library does not purchase self-published material because it is not reviewed in established review sources, and because the library is unable to order through a jobber.

### 4. Americans with Disabilities

The library provides or facilitates the selection of materials in special formats that meet the needs of the vision-impaired, the hearing impaired and others whose disabilities impede their ability to make use of other library resources.

### 5. Multimedia

The library purchases CDs, DVDs, audiobooks and video games based on its general selection criteria, reviews, and patron demand. As with all library materials, parents or guardians are ultimately responsible for their child's selection of materials. The library does not attempt to act in loco parentis and does not place any restrictions on what card-holding patrons are able to check out.

### 6. Databases and Digital Collections

The library purchases databases and interactive multimedia tools, including downloadable and streaming content, from a variety of vendors. While general selection criteria guides the library in purchasing these collections, in many cases the library is purchasing access to an array of pre-selected material. Some electronic resources are shared with other Massachusetts libraries and selected based on criteria determined by the Massachusetts Library System.

### 7. Local Government Documents

The library collects Scituate government documents. The Town Archives however is the official repository for Scituate government documents. The library selects those Massachusetts and United States government documents which are most in demand by Scituate library patrons.

### **III.COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

#### **A. General**

Collection maintenance and evaluation is a continuous activity to keep the collection fresh and relevant. Materials are withdrawn regularly to ensure that all materials meet the general principals of collection development. Materials may be removed from the collection after evaluation because of unnecessary duplication, poor condition, obsolete content, or disuse. Space limitations may also be considered. Collections must be purged to make room for new acquisitions and to maintain the integrity of the resources overall.

These guidelines are set forth as an aid to understand the thought process involved in collection management and to establish some ground rules for library staff involved in these activities. Just because an item meets one or several of the criteria listed below does not necessarily mean that it will be withdrawn. That determination will depend on the many factors outlined in this policy. Staff members engaged in collection management must exercise judgment over all individual items and follow these guidelines only to identify certain possibilities for discarding. Whenever there is any doubt about an item, it should be referred to a supervisor.

The same care, thought and judgment must be exercised in managing library materials as in the selection of them. The following guidelines were adapted from Jeanette Larsen's revised edition of *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* (Austin, TX: Texas State Library & Archives Commission, 2008). Withdrawal of an item may be based on one or several of these considerations, but may also take into account the selection guidelines above.

#### **B. Evaluation Guidelines**

1. Removal of superfluous or duplicate volumes. Consider removing (in no particular order):

- a. unnecessary duplicate titles
- b. duplicates except for date or place
- c. inexpensive reprints
- d. older editions
- e. highly specialized items when the library holds more extensive or more

up-to-date material on the same subject

f. superfluous books on subject of little interest to the local community

2. Evaluation based on poor condition. Consider removing:

a. when information is dated

b. when material is poorly written

c. when information is incorrect

d. when improved editions exist

e. earlier titles in repetitious fiction series

3. Evaluation based on language. Consider removing foreign language materials when the language is not called for in the library.

4. Specific classes of books that particularly lend themselves to regular evaluation. Consider removing:

a. history material with inaccurate interpretations

b. ordinary school dictionaries

c. almanacs and yearbooks that have been superseded

5. Specific classes of books that have a specific age for evaluation. Consider removing:

a. medicine, inventions and business 2 (two) years

c. travel books 2 (two) years

d. economics and science books after 5 (five) years

e. encyclopedias keep current

f. almanacs, yearbooks and manuals – keep current

g. dictionaries when superseded

h. biographical sources when superseded

i. directories keep current

j. social science and topical material after 5 (five) years

k. fiction best-sellers of ephemeral value after 10 (ten) years

### **C. Process**

Books and materials removed from the collection will be 1.) donated to the Friends of the Scituate Town Library or 2). recycled/discarded/transferred to a book reseller working in conjunction with the library.

### **D. Gifts**

The library gratefully accepts gifts of books, videos, periodicals, sound recordings and other materials for public use. It is the library's policy that:

1. the appraisal of a gift for tax purposes is the responsibility of the donor.
2. the library, in accepting the gift, obtains free and complete legal title to the gift.
3. the library reserves the right to determine housing and location of material.
4. items received as gifts are subject to the same deselection criteria as items purchased with library funds.
5. the library will determine whether or not the material should be added to the collection. If it is decided that the materials should not become part of the collection (e.g., duplicate copy, poor condition, outside collection area of the library), the library reserves the right to dispose of the material in the most advantageous manner possible, including transfer to the Friends of the Scituate Town Library for sale or to book reseller or a similar outlet.

Gifts may be accepted on bases other than the above at the discretion of the Library Director.

Monetary gifts are welcomed and may be designated as memorials or honoraria. Donors of funds may suggest subject area or titles, but the library reserves the right of the final decision. (See Appendix B.)

The library does not appraise material donations for tax purposes. The library will on the request of the donor provide a written receipt indicating the number of items and a general description of the material.

The library neither solicits nor accepts gift subscriptions to individual magazines or newspapers.

#### **IV. Request for reconsideration of library materials**

Any person who has concern about material in the library's collection may fill out the Patron Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form (See Appendix C) and return it to the Library Director, who will respond in a timely manner.