



Billerica Public Library

MATERIAL SELECTION POLICY

Objectives of the Library

The Billerica Public Library provides free service to all individuals in the community, both children and adults. Its objectives include the provision of expertly selected materials in various formats to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, pleasure, or research, and in the creative use of leisure time. The Library recognizes that it must assume leadership in the battle against ignorance, intolerance and indifference.

To achieve these ends, the Library provides educational service to adults, seeking thereby to direct the individual toward a continuous learning process. It also provides special service to children and young people and seeks to direct and stimulate these readers by offering them a carefully selected collection of books and other materials, as well as, skilled individual guidance.

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to Library collections. Budget considerations, community needs, and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format.

The selection of material in any new format may result in the Library's decision to retire specific items or material formats from its collections in order to accommodate responsibly trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

The Library provides service to all, within the context of library objectives, regardless of race, creed, color, age, occupation, or financial position.

Basic to the Library's materials selection and gift policy is the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom To Read, and Freedom to View Statements adopted by the American Library Association.

Responsibility for Material Selection

Ultimate responsibility for material selection lies with the Board of Trustees. The Board delegates to the Library Director the authority for the selection of materials and the development of the collection.

Criteria for Selection

"Material" is defined in the broadest possible context. The key criteria is useful content not form. The objective of material selection is to provide those print and non-print materials that meet the standards of good literature and to collect other library materials that will inform, entertain and contribute to an appreciation of good literature, as well as, those materials which meet the needs and interests of the library user.

Library materials are selected by the Director and by the Library staff. Competent and authoritative reviewing media and basic lists of standard works are consulted as an aid in selection. Serious consideration is given to recommendations by library users for materials to be added to the collection. The Director will review individual decisions regarding specific materials upon written request. (see attached form) However, the Library resists at all times the efforts of any individuals, organizations or pressure groups to dictate purchase or removal of so-called objectionable books or other materials from the shelves.

Within the standards of purpose and quality, the Library's collection will be built to meet the needs and interests of the community. Every print and non-print selection is subjected to the following criteria as they are applicable:

1. Current interest and usefulness
2. Permanent value
3. Comprehensiveness in scope
4. Importance as a record of the times
5. Relevance to the existing collection
6. High standards of quality in content, format etc.
7. Authority and competence in presentation

Material Selection for Children

The same principles that guide the selection of materials as stated in the adult materials selection policy are applicable to the selection of materials for children. The Billerica Public Library cooperates with the school libraries so that the services of the two agencies may compliment each other. It recognizes that it is the function of the school library to furnish curriculum-related materials, whereas, the public library provides a more comprehensive collection.

The children's collection is carefully selected, by professionals trained in children's literature, for children of all ages and abilities, with emphasis on materials to stimulate imagination and

help in the development of a taste for good literature, as well as, stimulating a taste for reading, in general.

Materials for young people are selected to help teenagers to know and understand the world at large and to aid them in becoming mature and knowledgeable adults.

Use of Library Materials

The Library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selections will be made not on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to building a broad based collection and to serving the interest of library users.

Library materials will be not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.

The use of rare and scholarly items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.

Responsibility for the reading, viewing and listening of children rests with their parents and legal guardian. Library materials selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that items of a controversial nature may inadvertently come in to the possession of children.

Scope of the Collection

The Library takes cognizance of the collections of neighboring libraries and of regional and national resources and will not needlessly duplicate services and materials. Every effort is made to locate and borrow from other libraries, through Interlibrary Loan, those specialized materials that are beyond the scope of the Library's collection.

Textbooks are not ordinarily purchased by the Library except in those subject areas where material in another form is not conveniently available.

The Library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history, and in the works of local authors. The same standards of selection are applicable.

Gifts

The Library welcomes gift books, materials and other items of a permanent nature with the understanding that it will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria and objectives by which purchased materials are judged. When the Library receives a cash gift or something along the lines of a memorial, the selection will be made by the Director in consultation with the donor.

The name of the donor or person memorialized may be entered or attached to the item as is fitting.

Maintaining the Collection

The same criteria will be used in "weeding" materials from the collection as is used in the acquisition of materials. The goal of weeding the collection is to maintain an up to date, relevant and attractive collection.

Revision of the Policy

This statement of policy will be revised as times and circumstances require.

*Revised and adopted by vote of the Board of Library Trustees
April, 2009*