

Collection Development Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in the development and maintenance of a well-balanced collection of reputable and useful materials that will meet the needs of the community within the limits of space and funding. These needs include, but are not restricted to, informational needs, leisure interests, and resources that support educational needs.

The development of a library collection should allow us to uphold our mission statement: “to provide free and equal access to resources for the interest, enjoyment, and enlightenment of all citizens of our community.” A comprehensive range of interests, tastes, viewpoints, values, and levels of ability will be represented.

The policy shall apply to: print resources, audio and visual resources, digital resources, and any and all other items currently housed in the library collection such as equipment, technological devices, maps, puzzles, and games.

Intellectual Freedom

The library subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement, as adopted by the American Library Association. These are included in the appendices to the policies of the library. The freedom to read is protected by the First Amendment of the American Constitution, and library materials shall not be banned or censored.

Population Served

The Union Free Public Library serves all sectors of the Town of Union regardless of race, religion, age, social or economic status or political affiliation. Through participation in the State Connecticut Program, the Union Free Public Library also serves any resident of the state with a valid Connecticut library card.

Selection of Material

I. Responsibility and authority

The selection of materials for all areas of the Library will be the responsibility of the Library Director. Selection of materials will be made on the merits of that particular work, which will be evaluated individually and objectively for its content. Other review sources may be used for specialized items not covered in the usual review media. Suggestions from library staff, patrons, educators, and caregivers are welcome and will be taken into serious consideration.

II. Criteria

Selection criteria are applied with the goals of:

- providing accurate, effective, and objective materials

- embracing quality, creativity, diversity, and enrichment
- maintaining a collection which is current and relevant

Preference will generally be given to:

- works with critical or professional reviews
- works with high current or anticipated demand
- works vetted by reliable bibliographic sources or publications (other review sources may be used for items not covered in the usual review media)
- award-winning or award-nominated titles

Other criteria which will be taken into consideration include:

- Space and budget constraints, and the value of the resource in relation to those constraints
- physical construction of materials (ie size, quality of construction, typography of the item, etc)
- Popular user demand
- Patron requests
- Local interests
- Supplemental curriculum needs of students

III. Special considerations

A. Age appropriate selection and shelving

Special consideration shall be given to selecting age-appropriate materials for the Juvenile and Young Adult sections of the library. Where materials are shelved (Adult, Young Adult, or Juvenile) is at the discretion of the Library Director, and shelving location may be adjusted according to which audience is best suited for a work. Library staff can and should give guidance to library patrons of all ages; however, they may not censor library patrons of any age by preventing them from accessing library materials.

B. Local History selections

Items relevant to the local history of the town, including items compiled or published locally, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for merit before being added to the reference collection, but the criteria may differ from selection of more typical library items. Relevant items may include family histories, publications by the Union Historical Society or regional historical societies. Price, availability, condition, and accuracy shall all be considered before adding these items.

C. Digital Collections

Digital collections have become a growing and increasingly important part of the Library collection. Digital collections used at Union Free Public Library currently provide access to e-books, downloadable audiobooks, e-magazines, databases, movies, and television shows. Digital resources may be evaluated for ease of use, vendor reputation, and cost before being implemented in the library. The materials available in these digital collections may be curated by the vendor or by consortial agreements, and thus are not necessarily evaluated by the library staff on an individual basis.

Responsibility of Guardians to Minors

The responsibility for library materials chosen by a child rests with the child and the parents or guardians of the child, and not with the library staff. Parents or guardians of students attending the Union Free Public Library with the Union School on a regular basis may wish to review the materials their children bring home. The Library Staff will make every effort to guide children to materials which are age-appropriate and to recommend materials relevant to their interests, but the Library Staff cannot censor any patron and will not be held liable in the event that a child does not take the advice of the Library Staff. The ability of children to access potentially age-inappropriate materials shall not prevent said materials from being acquired by the library for general use.

Children and caregivers must also decide which digital materials are appropriate for the child to consume, and the ability of children to access digital library resources that may be considered age inappropriate by their caregivers shall not affect the selection process of digital resources for the public's use.

Gifts

Gifts donated to the library will be made without conditions. The same criteria that are applied to the purchase of materials will be applied to donations. The decision to accept gifted materials will lie with the Library Director. The Library reserves the right to dispose of or sell gift materials that do not meet Collection Development Criteria.

Weeding & Withdrawal of Material

To maintain a collection that is current and in good physical condition, it is necessary to weed the collection at regular intervals. This will be carried out by the staff on a yearly basis using the CREW method ("Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding," a professional tool for weeding library collections). The disposal of the weeded or withdrawn materials will be at the discretion of the Library Director in conjunction with the Board of Directors. Items withdrawn because of loss or damage will not necessarily be replaced.

Items directly reflecting genealogy, local history, state history, old city/town maps generally should not be discarded.

Items may be weeded if they are:

- outdated or inaccurate;
- worn or damaged;
- no longer of interest.

The decision to weed an item may be affected by:

- availability of the resource through other channels, such as interlibrary loan;
- availability of better, newer, or more accurate replacement resources;
- circulation statistics.

Controversial Materials

Inclusion of an item in the library's collection does not signify the Library's endorsement of the author, publisher, or subject matter. Library materials may contain controversial topics. Language or subject matter that may be offensive to some does not indicate that a work should be preclusively banned or removed from the Library. The acquisition of adult collection materials shall not be

impacted by the ability of children to access these materials. The library shall not prohibit or otherwise limit the availability of any book by banning, censoring, or challenging library books or other library materials.

Request for Reconsideration of Material

Any Union Library cardholder may request to have selected material reconsidered. Material will not be removed from the shelves if a controversy arises over it. The material will remain available while the procedures for reconsideration of material are followed.

Procedure:

- The patron will request a Reconsideration Form from the Library Director.
- The Library Director may provide a copy of the Selection Criteria to the patron initiating reconsideration of material and explain why the material was chosen.
- The Library Director will review the Reconsideration Form, if the cardholder chooses to submit one, and will consider the targeted material within the framework of Collection Development outlined in this policy, and make a decision. A reply shall be sent to the patron requesting the Reconsideration, explaining the decision.
- If further reconsideration is requested by the patron, the patron's Form and all pertinent information will be forwarded to the Library Board of Directors.
- The Library Board of Directors will review the request and the material being challenged and respond to the patron when the review is completed. All Board decisions are final.