

# Sunderland Public Library — Sunderland, MA

## Collection Development Policy

### **Purpose of the library and community to be served**

The Sunderland Public Library provides access to materials and services to meet the recreational and informational needs of the citizens of Sunderland, Massachusetts and of all our patrons. Our primary emphasis is on meeting the need for popular materials for all ages. In addition, the library provides complementary educational support for the elementary and secondary school levels and outreach services to the entire community.

The library maintains a collection of materials sufficient to serve as a first resource for reference and independent learning, as well as for popular reading, for all ages. The library seeks to complement the library resources of the schools serving Sunderland and not to duplicate their special functions or holdings. The library will not attempt to purchase materials required by formal courses of education unless those materials are of general interest and otherwise conform to the library's selection criteria. Access to additional informational resources through Interlibrary Loan/System-Wide holds is provided through a variety of resources, including the Massachusetts Library System and C/W MARS.

The Trustees of the Sunderland Public Library adhere to the principles of the American Library Association's *Freedom to Read Statement* and the *Library Bill of Rights* for access to information for all users. The library serves people of all ages, beliefs and backgrounds. Many points of view on many issues are represented to allow people to form their own judgements. This means that the library may circulate materials whose manner of presentation may be offensive to some individuals. The library itself does not promote particular beliefs or views. Because responsibility for a child's reading and use of library materials rests with the parent/guardian and not with the library, children will have access to all library holdings, as will all patrons. Access to fragile or valuable materials is limited to use in the library, under staff supervision.

### **The Selection Process**

The Board of Library Trustees formulates and sets library policy, including policy on collection development. The Library Director is responsible for the selection of materials under this policy and for all other aspects of collection development.

In general, selection is based on three factors:

- Community interest and demand.
- The individual merit of each title.
- The library's budget and existing collection.

Library staff use the American Library Association publication *Booklist* as a primary selection tool, frequently consulting other professional and publishing review materials as well. Some materials are examined first hand through visits from sales representatives or preview boxes. All patron requests for materials will be considered and titles will be purchased if there is sufficient demand, if the budget allows and if the materials meet a need in the collection. Donated materials will be accepted at the

discretion of library staff and with the stipulation that if the library cannot use the materials, they will be discarded or given to the Friends of the Sunderland Public Library for their Book Sales.

All selections, both purchased and donated, must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Author's authority – the reputation and/or significance of the author.
- Author's competence – the skill of the author; clarity, accuracy and logic of factual presentation; vitality and originality of thought; artistic excellence in presentation.
- Quality of the physical format – bindings, durability, technical quality of audiovisual formats.
- Permanent value – source material or a record of the times.
- Public interest – significant interest of critics and the public.
- Relation to existing resources – the need to maintain a balanced collection, including accurate, current information and an even representation of minority views.

Fiction: The library seeks to provide a wide selection of fiction of current popular interest in a variety of styles and genres, and a reasonable selection of older titles of recurrent interest or special literary merit, for our Adult, Young Adult and Juvenile Fiction collections. A variety of formats are available, including regular print, large print, paperbacks, audio books, and movies. Excellence of illustration is an important criteria for selection of children's materials, both fiction and nonfiction.

Nonfiction: The library selects according to accuracy, currency and representation of various viewpoints. These criteria apply to both our adult collection (which includes material for young adults) and our juvenile collection. Areas of high demand are represented in greater variety and numbers than the areas of low demand.

Reference: The library seeks to provide a collection of basic reference tools, relying on the resources of the Massachusetts Library system and C/W MARS for more specialized reference works. Accuracy, currency, comprehensiveness and ease of use are the primary criteria for selection.

Periodicals: The library selects a variety of popular magazines to fill the need for recreational as well as informational reading. Criteria for selection are representation of community interest, attractiveness of format and accuracy of information. Back issues are kept for one year and use of these is facilitated by Massachusetts Library System Supplied databases.

### **Weeding and discarding**

In order to maintain a balanced, useful, attractive and interesting collection, materials are regularly discarded from the shelves. Criteria for weeding include physical condition, accuracy and currency of information, circulation history and usefulness of material in relation to other materials in the collection. Materials no longer consistent with the purposes and objectives of the library will be discarded.

Discarded materials are donated, sold to, or recycled by other organizations at the discretion of the Library Director.

### **Reconsideration of materials**

Well intentioned persons or groups occasionally question the inclusion of items in library collections. Although the Board understands and appreciates their fears and doubts about the effects of materials on impressionable persons, the Board takes the position that the risk of not providing access to information and ideas is greater than the risk of providing it.

Should a patron feel that an item in the library's collection should be withdrawn or relocated in the collection they are encouraged to fill out the *Request for Reconsideration Form*. The *Request for Reconsideration Form* is available at the library and on the library's website.

#### **Reconsideration Process:**

- Patron completes the *Request for Reconsideration Form* in its entirety and gives it to the Director in person, by email, or mail.
- The item in question will remain in the library collection during the reconsideration process.
- The Director sends the *Request for Reconsideration Form* to the members of the Board of Library Trustees to review.
- The Board will discuss the *Request for Reconsideration* at an upcoming meeting. The Board has 90 days from the receipt of the form to add the discussion to an upcoming meeting's agenda.
- The Director will share the Board's response to their *Request for Reconsideration* with the patron.

Patrons should keep in mind that in an effort to provide Library patrons with diverse sources of information and the widest possible range of ideas and viewpoints, the Library will acquire some controversial materials. Some of these materials may be offensive to individuals or groups because of perceived profanity, social, economic and political ideas, religious viewpoints, the background of the author, the kinds of information provided, illustrations, or other reasons. Acquisition or use of any item does not imply approval or endorsement of the contents. Indeed, it cannot, since such a variety of ideas is collected. The Board believes it is essential to provide such materials if the American ideal of freedom is to be retained.

The Library recognizes that young people need access to all the information and ideas that are essential to their growth. Therefore, anyone, of any age, who is eligible for a Library card may use any materials in the Library and is not to have that privilege limited by any staff member. If parents wish to deny their children access to certain materials, they must take the responsibility themselves.