

**Oliver Wolcott Library**  
Materials Selection Policy  
Revised, April 1996

**I. Purpose**

A written policy aids library staff to be clear about the goals and methods of materials selection so that they can acquire a useful, well-rounded collection of books and other materials to meet the needs of the community.

A policy statement helps the library board determine whether staff is doing an acceptable job of building a collection that is relevant to community needs.

A policy statement explains to the public the basis upon which materials are selected and maintained, and helps answer questions regarding the presence or absence of certain materials.

**II. Intellectual freedom**

In the process of Selection, the Library supports the principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the first Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. These are clearly expressed in "The Library Bill of Rights" adopted and amended by the American Library Association. That document is appended to this policy.

The Library also supports the ideas expressed in the "Freedom to Read Statement".

**III. Responsibility for materials selection**

The selection of books and other library materials is the responsibility of the Library Director and, under his or her direction, other members of the library staff, in accordance with the selection guidelines herein described.

Suggestions for purchase from the public are welcome and encouraged.

**IV. Selection criteria**

The following criteria are used in selecting materials:

- Favorable reviews from reliable review media
- Reputation of author and publisher
- High degree of user appeal
- Contribution towards breadth of viewpoints on controversial issues
- Popular demand
- Timeliness or permanence
- Value commensurate with cost and/or need
- Local author and/or local interest

**V. Review media**

Review media include, but not limited to, the following

- Booklist
- Kirkus Reviews
- Library Journal
- School Library Journal
- Publishers Weekly

**VI. Selection guidelines by area of collection**

**A. Reference/information materials**

Materials will be purchased to meet the public's need for factual and statistical information in the many areas of human knowledge in which people are interested and to provide sources to answer information questions. Reference materials will be evaluated and weeded regularly. Special consideration will be given to appropriate format. Some materials will be acquired in CD-ROM format when possible, taking into consideration usage patterns and the cost of a given CD-ROM product versus its print equivalent.

**B. Fiction**

The library collection includes representative novels and short stories of the past and present, notable for literary quality, cultural value and popularity. Every effort is made to reorder classics and bestsellers as the need arises. Mysteries and science fiction books are identified as such by labels on the books' spines.

**C. Nonfiction**

Nonfiction materials are selected according to the aforementioned criteria.

Textbooks shall be added to the collection only when they supply information in areas for which there is no other source of information.

**D. Children's materials**

*1. Picture books*

New picture books will be added based on favorable reviews, patron requests and themes related to school curricula. Replacement copies will be provided whenever possible, as these titles go out-of-print quickly.

*2. Easy readers*

A special fiction section of books of limited vocabulary (7-25 words) is maintained.

*3. Fiction for older readers*

A collection of books for readers on a grade school level will be maintained, with new titles added based on the aforementioned selection criteria.

*4. Nonfiction*

Nonfiction will be selected in accordance with the general criteria outlined in this policy. Special consideration will be given to materials that support the curricula of the Litchfield public schools in a general manner. Library staff will visit the school libraries regularly in order to become acquainted with those collections.

*5. Computerized sources*

A collection of games to enhance learning and reference sources on CD-ROM will be maintained for use on the children's multimedia network. Selection will be based on reviews, suggestions from patrons and price.

**E. Young adult**

Young adult materials are selected with special concern that they meet the recreational and informational needs of the age group 11-16. The books are marked "YA" on their spine and are shelved together to let young adult readers know that the books were selected especially for their use.

**F. Large print books**

Large print books will be added to the collection following the same selection criteria established for the general collection. Emphasis will be on works of fiction as they are in the greatest demand.

**G. Historical collection**

The Library seeks to acquire one copy for reference use of printed items contributing to the knowledge of Litchfield history. Every effort shall be made to collect and identify materials deemed to be historically significant. Duplicates of material likely to be useful for circulation are acquired when available. Types of material included in this collection are pamphlets, documents, maps, transcripts and books. Other types of material, such as paintings and museum objects, are the concern of the Litchfield Historical Society and Museum and are generally not collected by the Library.

#### **H. Sound recordings**

Compact discs and audiocassettes are selected with these points in mind:

1. Excellence of interpretation and technique
  2. Importance of the artist
  3. Need for material based on requests
  4. Price
- I. Books on tape

Books on tape are selected to build a collection of classic and popular novels and works of nonfiction. An effort will be made to purchase unabridged books on tape whenever possible.

#### **J. Instructional recordings**

Instructional recordings, such as language tapes, are added to the collection based on need, demand and price.

#### **K. Videotapes**

Videotapes are selected following the same criteria used for other materials, according to availability and price. Adult videocassettes are chosen to include entertainment and artistic films, with an emphasis on classic and foreign movies and performances of ballet, opera, etc. Nonfiction videos are purchased to supplement the print collection, with an emphasis on travel and instructional tapes.

Top-quality children's videos will be selected, especially those related to children's literature.

#### **L. Periodicals**

Periodicals are selected to keep the library collection up-to-date on current issues, to provide material not yet in book form, for reference work and for general reading.

Periodicals will be purchased in "hard copy" when they are not available in full-text on CD-ROM when they are used more for browsing and general reading than for research, subject to availability and price. Periodicals for professional use are purchased for the library staff to make materials selections and to keep them aware of current trends in the field. Back issues of periodicals are kept commensurate with space and demand.

#### **M. Newspapers**

The Library keeps the weekly Litchfield newspaper. Other local and national papers are supplied upon sufficient demand and within budget and space limitations.

### **VII. Gifts**

Gifts materials shall be judged by the criteria herein outlined and shall be accepted or rejected for the collection accordingly.

### **VIII. Replacement, mending, binding**

The Library does not automatically replace all books withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear. In each case, the need for replacement is weighed with regard to several factors: number of copies owned, extent of adequate coverage of the field, other similar materials in the collection, and demand. The library mends books and does minor repair on other media. The

Library endeavors to bind, within budget limitations, any books that cannot be repaired and are necessary to the collection. The choice of books for rebinding is made in accordance with established selection criteria.

#### **IX. Weeding**

Library collections, not being static, require an active weeding and discarding policy. The collection should be active, up-to-date and useful to its clientele. Candidates for weeding include outdated material, items no longer of interest or in demand, unneeded, duplicated, worn or damaged items. Frequency of circulation community interest and availability of newer and more valid materials and the availability of materials at other Connecticut libraries or through interlibrary loan are of prime consideration in the decision to withdraw material.

#### **X. Access to collection**

Materials will be freely and easily accessible to the public. Patrons are free to select or reject for themselves any item in the collection. Children are not limited to the children's collection, although juvenile materials are kept together to facilitate use. Responsibility for a child's reading, listening and/or viewing must rest with the parent or guardian.

#### **XI. Objections and complaints**

Objections to materials owned by the Library should be made in writing, giving reasons in detail. Materials Reconsideration Forms are available for this purpose. Any such request for reconsideration will be reviewed by the Library Director, the staff and the Library Board. A decision, based on the principles set forth in this Materials Selection Policy, will be forwarded to the complainant and will be final.