

Library Collection Development Policy

The goal of collection development is to provide patrons with materials in a wide variety of formats that reflect the diverse interests and needs of the community. This policy, along with the principles of the American Library Association “Library Bill of Rights” and “Freedom to Read Statement”, serve guide staff in materials selection.

The policy enables the staff to provide a balanced collection that will reflect and support all library users.

Responsibility for Collection Development

While the staff of the Merrimac Public Library assist in the process of materials selection, the ultimate responsibility is with the library director. The library director, along with the Board of Library Trustees, create, review and approve of the Library Collection Development Policy.

Materials Selection Process

The Library staff have extensive education, training, and experience selecting materials for the collection. The staff uses many sources to aid in their selection process including, but not limited to: professional review journals, network purchase alerts, general print and media tools, awards lists, book review resources, patron requests, and special local interest or need. This is true for all formats: books, DVD’s, Books on CD, databases, online streaming offerings, eResources, and the Library of Things.

Collections of eResources are most often purchased as a package, in which case the director does not select the specific titles of the collection, but a predetermined group of titles. These titles fall under the same principles, policy and procedures as individually purchased materials.

The addition of an item to the collection does not constitute an endorsement of the viewpoint or beliefs included in the material by the library or the Town of Merrimac.

Criteria for Selection

When selecting materials in all formats, the staff use some or all of the following, with some categories carrying more or less weight depending upon the item:

- Popular demand/appeal
- Suitability of material for the collection and patrons
- Budget

- Existing library holdings including ILL and eResources
- Reviews and award lists
- Community interest: local history, authors, language, etc.
- Patron request
- Community need: target age, reading ability, language, etc.
- Accuracy of information and authority
- Supports the library mission
- Need to provide a variety of formats

Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a single part.

Weeding

Weeding is done on a regular basis by the library staff to keep the collection relevant, popular, accurate, and in good condition. Weeding is a physical necessity as there is limited space within the building. Weeded materials are handled the same way as donated materials. Some criteria used when determining whether to withdraw an item include but are not limited to:

- is the information provided still accurate or relevant
- is the book dated and no longer reflects today's society/cultural norms
- is the book in poor condition
- if a book is still popular, can it be reordered
- are other copies available in the library system through ILL
- has the book circulated recently/ how many times has the book circulated
- are there other books on the same subject

Donations

When a donation is offered to the library, the same collection policy will be followed as for purchased materials. Once the item is donated, it becomes the property of the library and will not be returned to the owner. The library reserves the right to add the item to the collection, add the item to the in-library book sale or the Friends of the Library annual book sale or send it to recycling. All proceeds support the Library. If the item is added to the collection, and later weeded, it will be recycled or added to the book sale. There is no

requirement for the library to accept a donation or give any reimbursement for any items that are donated to the library.

Self-published authors and local authors often donate their work to the library. The donated materials will be appraised for the collection in the same manner used for purchased items.

Materials Reconsideration

The library director and Library Board of Trustees recognize that some items may be controversial or offensive to some library patrons. Materials will be selected and or weeded based upon the Collection Materials Policy and procedures, and not based upon individual views or beliefs. The decision of where, when, or how a material is housed or displayed is determined by the library staff, and follows the guidelines established in the “Display Policy”. Any request to remove an item from the collection, move the item to a different location in the library, limit the display of the item, or restrict who may have access to the item will need to follow the policy and procedures detailed in the “Policy and Procedure for Reconsideration of Library Materials.”

Parents or legal guardians are responsible for the selection of materials for their children.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees May 2023

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