

## **Austin Fletcher Memorial Library**

### **Collection Development and Maintenance Policy**

#### **1. Purpose/Scope of Collection**

The Collection Development and Maintenance policy (the "policy") of the Austin Fletcher Memorial Library of Hampton, CT, (the "library") provides direction for the growth and development of library collections. This policy applies to both the digital and print materials in the library's collection. The library strives to select, acquire, curate and provide free and easy access to materials, in all formats, that meet the varied needs and interests of the community. This policy provides guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials that anticipate and meet the needs of the community. It also addresses collection maintenance, and replacement and weeding of materials.

The library makes every effort to provide library materials for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all Hampton residents. Library materials should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole. The library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

Specific acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular or controversial in nature. The library's acquisition of such items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression. The library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom adopted by the American Library Association as expressed in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements. No library material or display shall be removed or program canceled because of origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display or program, or because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the CT general statutes.

This policy applies to all materials in the library's collections.

#### **2. Key Definitions**

The library's collection is the assemblage of books and other materials, in any format (for example, but not limited to print, electronic media, downloadable audio books, and digital resources), owned or licensed and maintained by the library and made available to the public at no cost.

### **3. Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials**

The library's Board of Trustees delegates the oversight and management of the collection, within the guidelines of this policy, to the Library Director and librarians who are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials. Responsibility for the selection, maintenance, replacement, and weeding of materials rests with the designated professional staff under the overall direction of the Library Director. The library's Consortium-level collections may be governed by an additional set of collection criteria.

### **4. Procedures**

#### **4-1. Selection Criteria**

**A.** A librarian reviews library and educational material within a public library using professionally accepted standards: material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age appropriate or grade-level material, and continued demand of material. The library applies the following general criteria when considering materials for acquisition:

1. Public demand, interest or need
2. Accuracy and effectiveness of material
3. Anticipated potential for long-term public interest
4. Favorable assessments by reputable critics, reviewers, or organizations in professionally recognized publications
5. Prominence and credibility of author and publisher
6. Relation to existing collection and other material on the subject
7. Timeliness and importance of material as a document of the time or current or historical significance of the author or subject
8. Availability and affordability
9. Compatibility of format for library use
10. Value as resource material
11. Suitability of subject or style for intended audience
12. Local origination or relevance to Hampton CT, and the region
13. Public's ability to procure a resource from alternative sources
14. Availability of electronic bibliographic records

See also the library's Rare Book Collection Policy.

**B.** Selection of materials is based on the professional knowledge and judgment of library staff whose expertise includes familiarity with all types of materials, knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection and awareness of the needs and interests of the community. Suggestions from patrons are always welcome and are given serious consideration. However, staff will determine which suggestions it follows. Library materials, displays and programs shall only be excluded for legitimate professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in this policy, the library's Display Policy and the library's Program Policy.

Any library staff member who, in good faith, implements the actions described in this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

**C.** Textbooks are generally not considered for the library's collection unless they are the best or only available source of information in their subject area and serve the general public and adult learning community. The library does not purchase multiple copies of textbooks for use by students, as that is the responsibility of the town Board of Education.

**D.** Self-published books by Hampton or Connecticut authors will be considered for the library collection if they are donated, meet the library's standards of quality, and are determined to be of suitable interest to the public.

**E.** Where possible, the library makes electronic information available in the physical library building and remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. The library will help patrons to ensure they can use its electronic databases.

**F.** Born digital materials are materials created in a digital format before print or other formats. They are distinct from analog items that are subsequently digitized, such as paper manuscripts or photographs. To accept born digital materials, the library confirms the materials:

1. Copyright and licensing
2. Redaction of personally identifiable information
3. Restrictions, if any, on use or circulation
4. Maintenance and evolution of accepted formats

## **4-2. Collection Maintenance**

Maintenance of the collection includes discarding, replacing, rebinding, and repairing library materials. If material is lost or damaged, it may not necessarily be replaced depending upon the number of duplicate copies or similar materials in the collection, existence of adequate coverage of the subject field, and demand for the specific author, title or subject. It is sometimes preferable to purchase current materials rather than replace or repair older ones. The library staff serve as arbiters in such decisions.

## **4-3. Weeding**

Weeding, when referring to libraries, describes the removal of materials from the library collection. Weeded materials may contain outdated or inaccurate information, have multiple duplicate copies, be of no current interest, be inconsistent with evolving community standards, or be in poor condition.

Library weeding is a regular, ongoing process performed by the Library Director and the Assistant Librarian to keep all collections current and useful. Weeded materials in good condition may be sold, donated, or disposed of in any manner the Library Director deems appropriate. Generally, standard titles of permanent literary value and materials of local significance are not weeded even if they may meet the criteria for so doing.

## **4-4. Gifts/Donations**

The library welcomes gifts of books and other materials for the collection and applies to gift materials the same standards of selection that govern purchases. Gift materials are accepted with the understanding that those meeting the library's selection criteria may be retained and those that do not may be sold or donated to local non-profit organizations. See the library's Gift Policy for more information.

## **4-5. Digital Collections/Databases**

Digital resources and databases refer to those materials or services that require a computer or another device for access including, but not limited to, numerical, graphical and textual files, electronic journals, ebooks, digital media, bibliographic or full-text databases and Internet resources. Some of these resources, such as ebooks/ eaudiobooks picked directly by the staff will observe the same collection policies as print materials.

Resources provided by the Connecticut State Library as well as vendors that provide base collections of their own for their resources will have items selected by the organization's individual collection development policies. These collections are subject to vendors and publisher collection development policies and licenses. Issues

concerning technology, access, maintenance, vendor support as well as licensing terms are additionally considered for resources.

#### **4-6. Controversial Materials**

**A.** The library recognizes that some library materials may not be considered appropriate by all patrons. Library selections will not be made based upon anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work relative to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the library patron community.

**B.** Responsibility for the reading, listening and viewing habits of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. The library maintains several age-appropriate collections for children and teens. Materials may be reassigned among these sub-collections based on the age appropriateness of the content. Selection of adult material will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently be read, heard, or viewed by children. The removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive is prohibited.

**C.** Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft.

**D.** The decision by an author, publisher, or other content creator to withdraw their work from the market and stop selling or publishing it will not be considered sufficient reason alone for the library to withdraw it from the collection.

#### **5. Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

The library recognizes not all users will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Therefore, some materials selected for the collections may seem controversial and even distasteful to some library users. It is always the right of an individual not to read, view or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of a library user to deny access to library materials to others. The freedom to choose from a broad range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged. When evaluating library materials, the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements from the American Library Association are used as guiding documents. All these documents are available on the library website.

#### **6. Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy**

The library limits its consideration of requests to reconsider materials, displays or programs to residents of Hampton CT.

The library Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of hearing from the public regarding its material selections. Library administration and staff seriously consider

suggestions made by Hampton residents and taxpayers. The completion of the Material Review and Reconsideration form does not guarantee either accession to the collection or removal from the collection but does ensure the attention of library staff to user opinion, interests, and concerns.

Please see the Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy and accompanying form for further information.

## **7. Policy Location**

This policy is housed on the library's website at [fletchermemoriallibrary.org](http://fletchermemoriallibrary.org) Physical copies are also available from the Library Director.

This policy complies with -CT Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322, 323. The library neither approves nor disapproves of the views expressed in materials included in the collection.

Approved by the FML Board of Trustees on September 24, 2025