

SOMERS LIBRARY  
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT,  
MATERIALS SELECTION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Somers Library is a Municipal Library chartered by the State of New York to serve all residents of Somers, New York. As a member of the Westchester Library System, it also provides services to the larger community.

Somers Library will strive to select and maintain, without bias or limitation on the right to know, a comprehensive collection of print, non-print, and electronically accessed materials to meet the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of the residents of Somers, New York. Further, the library will develop wide-ranging collections to meet the various ages, interests, educational, reading levels, and cultural backgrounds of its citizens.

Somers Library supports the American Library Association's guidelines for public access to information, which includes the ALA's *Library Bill of Rights*, the *Freedom to Read*, and the *Freedom to View* statements.

Somers Library believes in freedom of information for all and does not practice censorship. While anyone is free to reject for themselves materials of which they do not approve, this cannot be exercised to restrict freedom of others to read or inquire.

Parents or legal guardians are responsible for monitoring materials used by their own children. Library selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that materials may be accessible to minors. Materials are not labeled to show approval or disapproval or to indicate certain philosophies. Except for items kept for professional use, access to items is not restricted except for protection from damage.

A formal process has been developed to assure that complaints and requests for reconsideration by residents of Somers are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Library staff will have Request for Reconsideration forms readily available for submission. The Library will carefully reevaluate an item when a Request for Reconsideration form is submitted.

This collection development policy will periodically be evaluated and revised as times and circumstances require.

### **Responsibility for Materials Selection**

Selection of library materials is and shall be vested in the Director of Somers Library and members of the staff designated by the Director who are qualified by reason of education, training, and experience.

### **Selection Guidelines**

Materials for the library collection, including periodicals, are chosen for a wide variety of reasons such as information, self-education, and the recreational pursuits of library users. The decision to add an item to the collection by purchase is usually the result of selection based on demand or need.

Selection based on need: library materials are added to the collection for the purpose of updating and further developing certain subject areas. Materials are selected from reviews in professional journals, availability lists, vendor catalogs, bibliographies, and experts in the subject matter areas.

The library does not exclude books that are biased, partisan, or anti-social, or which may offend the tastes of some citizens for reasons of frankness of vocabulary or description, unless these books are below our accepted standards of selection. A balanced collection strives to represent all points of view on a subject, even those that might be considered extreme. The purchase of any item by the library does not constitute endorsement of the views expressed.

The decision to include or exclude a particular item in the library's collection is based on a number of considerations, although they may not all be applicable to each item:

- Relevant to community needs and interests
- Permanence or timeliness
- Artistic merit or literary value
- Evaluations in professionally recognized critical guides
- Significance of subject
- Educational and informational value
- Representation of various points of view

- Availability of material elsewhere
- Permanent value as source material
- Vitality and originality of thought
- Entertaining presentation
- Author's reputation or significance
- Accuracy and authoritativeness of content
- Historic importance
- Funds and space
- Suitability of physical format for library shelving and circulation, including binding, readability, packaging, specialized equipment needs, and quality

### **Classic and Contemporary Materials**

The Library makes a distinction between those which depict prejudice as an aspect of real life and those which offer derogatory stereotypes as valid representations. The latter are not added to the collection. However, materials which authentically portray a period or way of life are accepted even if stereotyping is included. Materials which portray the prejudices of real or fictional characters are also considered acceptable. Materials recognized as classics are acceptable even though they may contain passages widely viewed as objectionable by current standards.

### **Professional and Special Materials**

Professional and special materials, such as legal, medical, and religious works, are purchased only if they are of general interest.

### **Items Excluded from Selection Materials**

- Textbooks and curriculum based works, unless they provide the best or only source of information on a subject, or to complement an existing area with another perspective.
- Scholarly and technical materials that are carried by academic or special libraries.
- Materials that are available solely through infomercials or personal websites when authoritative information about them is lacking.

### **Audiovisual Material**

Audiovisual material is added to the library's collection with consideration to patron demand and budget constraints. The Library acquires this material primarily in the most popular format.

### **Gifts**

The Library accepts gifts of materials but reserves the right to evaluate and to dispose of such gifts in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials.

### **Children's Materials**

Children's materials are purchased by the same general principles that govern selection of adult materials. Responsibility for the choice of reading material for minors rests with their parents or guardians. Selection of materials for the library collection is not restricted by the possibility that minors may obtain materials their parents consider inappropriate, nor are children limited to the children's collection.

### **Materials Withdrawal Policy**

The Library continually withdraws items from the collection, basing its policy on:

- current library professional guidelines
- the elimination of outdated or erroneous materials
- availability of newer or more valid materials
- materials no longer of community interest or in demand
- unneeded duplicates
- worn or mutilated material

Some materials may be exceptions including some items dealing with local history, special editions, and award-winning children's books.

### **Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Whenever any patron objects to the presence or absence of any library material, the complainant will be given a fair hearing. All complaints that cannot be readily resolved by staff members will be referred immediately to the Director, who will discuss the matter with the complainant. *Materials subject to complaint shall not be removed from use pending final action.*

If the patron wishes, he or she may submit the form “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” or “Request for the Addition of Library Materials.”

- If it is a request for the withdrawal of an item, the Director will examine the item, check reviews of the item and determine if it conforms to the standards of the Materials Selection Policy.

The Director will decide whether to add, withdraw, or restrict the material in questions and will write to the complainant, giving the reasons for the decision. The Board of Trustees will also be notified of the complaint and of the Director’s decision. If the complainant wishes to contest the decision, he or she may present the complaint to the Board of Trustees. This may be done by letter or by attending a Board meeting. The Board will consider the complaint and the Director’s recommendation. The written decision of the Board shall be final and shall be reported to the complainant.

*Approved by the Board of Trustees on September 20, 2023*