

Southwick Public Library
Materials Selection Policy: Juvenile, Young Adult, and Adult

Purpose and Goal:

The mission of the Southwick Public Library is to provide for the cultural and informational needs of all populations of the greater Southwick area, and to supplement their educational endeavors. It is the intention of the Southwick Public Library to fulfill these goals through a collection of materials that are both book and non-book in format and is threefold:

1. First, to maintain a well-balanced and broad collection for reference and research.
2. Second, to support the education and enlightenment of patrons.
3. Third, to provide recreational resources.

Authority and Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of the Board of Library Trustees to establish policies for the selection of library materials consistent with state and federal law. Selection of materials shall be done by the appropriate department. Children's Librarians will order the Children's Room materials, the Young Adult Specialist will order the Young Adult Materials, and the Director will order the Adult Materials. Suggestions from patrons are welcome and will be given due consideration when a "Recommendation for Addition to the Collection" form has been completely filled out. In accordance with patron privacy, completed "Recommendation for Addition to the Collection" forms will not be kept after a decision has been made on ordering the material requested.

Criteria for Selection:

Each type of materials must be considered in terms of the audience for whom it is intended, and no single standard can be said to hold for all facets of the collection. Some materials will be purchased in terms of artistic merit, scholarship, or value to humanity, others will be purchased to satisfy the informational, recreational, or educational interests of the community. Perceived popularity of a given item shall be reason enough for purchase, if it is deemed to be age-appropriate for the collection for which it is being considered.

Reviews in professionally recognized periodicals, book review websites, and bibliographies are primary sources for materials selection. Also, those materials that have been requested by patrons shall be checked against the reviews in these sources and, if recognized as filling a need in the collection, shall be added to it.

Materials will be collected for what is known as the Bibliotherapy collection, a special collection in the children's room. These are items aimed at helping youth cope with serious problems. The same guidelines hold for these materials.

Specific Principles for selection will include some or all of the following:

1. Contemporary significance or permanent value
2. Accuracy
3. Authority of author
4. Relation of work to existing collection
5. Price, format, and ease of use
6. Scarcity of information in subject area
7. Availability of material elsewhere in the community
8. Public demand, interest or need
9. Attention of critics, reviewers, and subject specialists

The needs of patrons are consistently changing and the process of assessing these needs is continuous. Patrons contribute to this process by recommending materials for purchase. Staff monitor titles that are reserved by the public and subject areas which receive the heaviest use, as well as keep aware of trends, and needs in the community. Materials and resources will be ordered in accordance with the Library Bill of Rights (see Appendix E).

Self-Published Materials

Self-published or independently published books or other materials created by local authors or producers who wish to donate a copy will undergo the same evaluation process as all other library materials.

Educational Role and Textbooks:

It is the role of the Southwick Public Library to supplement the educational endeavors of our patrons. For this reason, the collection reflects the subjects covered in the curriculum of the Southwick Schools. Textbooks, however, shall not regularly be

purchased, as they should be provided by the schools themselves. Exceptions are made only when a textbook is recognized as the best provider of information in a given subject.

Gifts:

The library is not currently able to take donations, the exception being if the Friends of the Library are hosting a book sale, but the request for donations will be advertised. Another exception being items that are of local or historic value (such as items that would be added to the Reference/Local History collections). If a patron has such an item they would like to donate, they are responsible for contacting the Director to set up a time to meet and bring the item in to see if it should be added to a special collection. Donations that are left at the library either outside the library or in any of the library's book drops may be disposed of.

Collection Maintenance:

The library keeps the collection vital and useful by retaining or replacing essential materials, and by removing on a systematic and continuous basis, those works that are worn, outdated, of little historical significance, or no longer in demand. If an item is considered to not be an essential source of information, and it has not circulated within three years, it may be weeded.

It is the responsibility of staff to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed or lost. Items are not automatically replaced. Decisions are based on need, demand, and budget.

Access to Library Materials:

Due to the diversity of library users, it is almost inevitable that materials selected to serve the needs, interests, or tastes of one group may be of no interest to, objectionable, or inappropriate for another segment of the library-using public. Responsibility for youth's reading, listening, or viewing material rest solely with their parents or legal guardians. In particular, the selection of materials for the adult collection is not restricted by the possibility that children or adolescents may obtain materials considered inappropriate by their own parents or legal guardians. Patrons are able to check out any available library item regardless of their age and the department in which it is found (the exception being Library of Things items that include tools, etc. of which users must be at least 18 to sign the waiver and be a resident of Southwick).

Reconsideration Procedures:

Patrons who have questions, concerns, or comments about a particular item should fill out a "Resource Reaction Form" form (staff will note informal, verbal complaints and report them to the Director- the Director will keep a record of reported verbal concerns/comments, etc.) but for the item to be reviewed, a completed form is required. The completed form should be turned in to the Director. Once the "Resource Reaction Form" has been completed and received by the Director, the Director will respond to the patron's concerns in writing. If the patron feels that this response is insufficient, they may complete a "Request for Reconsideration" form. Once the "Request for Reconsideration" form has been completed and turned in to the Director, the Director will add the item to the next trustees meeting agenda. If the form is received too close to conform to Open Meeting Law to add the item to the agenda, it will be added to the subsequent meeting. Please note that submitted forms will become public record. Trustee meetings are open to the public, and the patron whose concern is being addressed shall be notified in writing of when their concern is scheduled to be heard. The "Request for Reconsideration" form shall be reviewed by the Trustees, with commentary from the Library Director, Children's Librarians, and/or Young Adult Specialist, depending on the department in which the item is found. The Trustees will review the Request in terms of the library's policies and come to a decision on the item. The item(s) in question will remain available until the review has been held. If the final decision is not found satisfactory by the individual who completed the form, they may appeal to the Board of Library Trustees by expressing their concerns and intent to appeal the decision in a letter sent to the Chair of the Board of Library Trustees. The Chair of the Board will inform the Library Director to add it to a subsequent agenda.

Request for Reconsideration of a Program:

The library's procedure for Reconsideration for materials also extends to library programming. The same procedure as described above will be used to Reconsider programs. If a patron expresses a concern regarding a program they can submit a Resource Reaction form. Following the process above, the Director will respond in writing. Should the patron feel this response is insufficient, they may submit a "Request for Reconsideration" form. The patron should do so in a timely fashion so their concerns can be addressed before the program date as the Trustees meet once a month on the second Tuesday at 7pm. If the form is received too close to conform to Open Meeting Law to add the item to the agenda, it will be added to the subsequent meeting. Please note that submitted forms will become public record. Trustee meetings are open to the public, and the patron whose concern is being addressed shall be notified in writing of

when their concern is scheduled to be heard. If the final decision is not found satisfactory by the individual who completed the form, they may appeal to the Board of Library Trustees by expressing their concerns and intent to appeal the decision in a letter sent to the Chair of the Board of Library Trustees. The Chair of the Board will inform the Library Director to add it to a subsequent agenda. Library sponsorship of a program does not endorse the content of the program or views expressed by participants.

The library community room is eligible for booking outside groups (see the Community Room policy for full details). The library does not endorse the content, purpose, etc. of eligible groups that book the community room.

Request for Reconsideration of Displays:

The Southwick Public Library will frequently pull books/other library materials from the shelves to create displays for public browsing. All items in displays have been purchased under the Materials Selection Policy. Library staff create displays based on seasonal themes, genres, books relating to upcoming events, newsworthy topics, new items, among others. The items chosen for displays are determined by the department creating the display. The display or dissemination of materials in displays does not constitute town support, sponsorship or endorsement, nor does the absence of titles reflect non-support. If a complaint is to be made about a library display, the complainant should follow the reconsideration procedures below.

Please note, the Trustees meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm, however, due to inclement weather, scheduling, or other issues, dates may be changed or meetings may be canceled. The public is responsible for checking the community calendar at southwickma.org for information about scheduled meeting dates. If a meeting is canceled, the Board of Trustees will make every effort to publicize the information.

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees 6/14/2022, updated May 2, 2023

Appendices:

- A. Recommendation for Addition to the Collection Form
- B. Resource Reaction Form
- C. Request for Reconsideration Form: Library Materials
- D. Request for Reconsideration: Library Programs
- E. American Library Association: Library Bill of Rights

Appendix A

Recommendation for Addition to the Collection

Title of Work: _____

Author: _____

Format: Book _____ Video _____ Other (specify): _____

Which collection do you recommend this item for?:

_____ Children's _____ Young Adult _____ Adult

How did you hear of this book and why do you recommend it?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

To be filled out by appropriate staff (Children's, Young Adult or Adult:

Will the item be purchased? _____ Yes _____ No

Why? _____

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Appendix B
Southwick Public Library
Resource Reaction Form

This is a:

Commendation Observation Recommendation Complaint

This form has been developed to assist library users on expressing opinions that they might have in regard to the resources of the Southwick Public Library. All completed forms will be replied to by the Director. If need be, the topic will be added to a Board of Trustees of the Southwick Public Library meeting agenda to be discussed.

1. Please identify the resource about which you want to comment:

- a. Libraries Policies
- b. Library Staff
- c. Library Facilities
- d. Library Programs
- e. Library Materials
- f. Other, please

detail: _____

2. Please make your comments as specific as possible. Use the other side of this form as needed:

3. Your recommendation:

4. Your name (please print): _____

5. Address: _____

6. Telephone: _____

7. Email: _____

8. Library Card Number (if applicable): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C
Request for Reconsideration: Library Materials

The following form must be filled out in its entirety for consideration by the Board of Trustees.

Title of Work: _____

Author: _____

How did you become aware of the item?

Did you read the entire book?

Please tell us your concerns, include specific page numbers:

What age group do you think this material is appropriate for?

What suggestions would you make concerning the placement of this item in the collection?

The Board of Library Trustees take the reconsideration process seriously. The library staff will be consulted on placement of the materials. Trustee meetings are open to the public. You will be notified of the date of the meeting in which your request shall be heard.

Your Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D
Request for Reconsideration: Library Programs

The following form must be filled out in its entirety for consideration by the Board of Trustees.

Program: _____

Date of Program: _____

How did you become aware of this program?

Please tell us your concerns regarding the program, being as specific as possible:

What age group do you think this program is appropriate for?

What suggestions would you make concerning this program?

The Board of Library Trustees take the reconsideration process seriously. The library staff will be consulted on the program. Trustee meetings are open to the public. You will be notified of the date of the meeting in which your request shall be heard.

Your Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

American Library Association: Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights.