



## COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

### OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

A consideration of the Stoughton Public Library's objectives and functions is a necessary prelude to a statement on library materials selection policy. These objectives are shared by most public libraries.

Every library which does not acquire all print and media materials must of necessity employ a policy of selectivity in acquisitions. Large numbers of library materials are eliminated on the basis of expense, availability elsewhere, and usefulness to the community at large. The Stoughton Public Library's objectives are:

- To cooperate with all other constructive educative agencies toward higher goals, never forgetting that "the library is primarily an instrument of self-education."
- To provide as service center, more than as storehouse, the printed and allied materials, the creative, exciting and controversial ideas, for all the community to weigh and to use for information, self-development, expansion of knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of life and the attainment of high ideals.
- To combat all attempts at censorship, thought control, authoritarianism and class, race or religious prejudice: and to encourage the open mind and respect for individuals regardless of their status.
- To plan and program library activities and staff assignments in proportions that emphasize basic functions which are to promote reading, study, informational and reference help.
- To see that the library, in all aspects of its planning, tries to keep abreast of current problems and the needs of society and the community.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As long as a book, album, film, or game is not banned by law, either in this Commonwealth or nationally, it is, or could be, made available to the community. Serious works which present an honest picture of some problem or aspect of life are not excluded because of coarse language or frankness. These include some classics.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press, with certain exceptions defined by law, are part of our national heritage and are accepted and defended by our courts. Official censorship and restriction of news in peace time are considered typical of totalitarian, not democratic, states. As an agency supported by municipal funds, the public library must heed these recognized principles. The public library is based on the belief that the people have the right and duty to make the ultimate decisions on public questions. It follows, therefore, that free access to all points of view on public questions must be permitted.

On questions on which there are two or more widely supported opinions or theories, and about which definite facts have not been established or which by their very nature are not susceptible of factual proof, the Library will provide material on both or all sides as availability permits.

## OVERALL SCOPE AND GUIDELINES

### Purpose and Intent

To meet the diverse needs of the Town of Stoughton, the Library attempts to provide print materials ordinarily found in general library collections, as well as music, films, and other materials in the English language. These items are offered in a variety of formats, including but not limited to standard press books, print magazines, newspapers, paperbacks, CDs, DVDs, electronic books, online subscriptions, and multi-media editions. Similarly, materials in Portuguese are also provided as space and resources permit. No attempt is made to purchase all "best sellers" or "blockbusters" as such, but most reader, listener, and viewer requests stem from these, and demand is one criterion of selection. First editions, collectors' items, and textbooks are generally not purchased, and the need for items to satisfy highly specialized interests are met through Inter-Library Loan rather than acquisition. In keeping with the mission of the library and the stated objectives, Stoughton Public Library also collects and loans some non-traditional items, such as electronics, tools, and outdoor games and recreational equipment. The existence of a particular item or viewpoint in the collection is an expression of the library's commitment to intellectual freedom and not an endorsement of that or any other point of view.

### Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility for the Stoughton Public Library collection rests with the Library Director or their designee. The Library Director, as well as by professional library staff, who are qualified by reason of education, training, and experience, make selections in accordance with policies set by the Library Board of Trustees. Other library staff members and the general public are encouraged to recommend materials for consideration.

### Selection Method

Selection refers to the decision to retain, as well as to add to, an item to the library collection. Selection is based upon awareness of the diverse needs and interests of the individuals in the Stoughton community, balanced against evaluation of material and knowledge of the collection's strengths and weaknesses. It is characterized by flexibility, open-mindedness and responsiveness to the changing needs of the library community and should be continually evaluated.

Selection aids such as professional reviews in Library Journal, Kirkus Review, American Libraries, New York Times Book Review Section, and The Horn Book are relied on for reports on current titles, but patron and staff requests are also carefully considered in relation to the total library collection and budget.

Items are measured by objective guidelines. The entire work, rather than individual parts, is evaluated. It is the overall contribution of the work that is critical for acceptance or rejection. A single standard cannot be applied to each work, but all items, whether purchased, contracted for, or donated are evaluated with the following criteria in mind:

- Attention of critics, reviewers, reference books, and the public
- Accuracy, timeliness of data and reliability

- Price, suitability of format for library purposes, durability and ease of use
- Contribution to diversity or breadth of collection
- Relevance to community interests and needs
- Reputation & qualifications of the author, creator, or publisher
- Local significance of the author or creator of the work
- Support of library's mission and goals
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Contemporary significance, permanent value or popular interest
- Suitability of subject, style, and format for intended audience
- Commercial availability of the material

#### Duplicates

Duplicate copies of very popular books, CDs, DVDs and other library materials are bought if the title is likely to be useful in the Library's permanent collection. In general, another copy of a title is added to the collection when there is an excessive number of "reserve requests" for the title. Some duplication of the classics occurs in the Children's Collection, the Young Adults Collection and the Adult Collection, but only when the title is in great demand and suitable to the various age groups and reader interests of these groups.

#### Withdrawal of Materials

Systematic removal of materials no longer useful is essential in maintaining the purposes and quality of the Library's collections. Accordingly, library staff maintain a regular and continuous program of evaluation to discard or replace items in the collections as needed. This process involves a careful study of individual items, taking into consideration the condition of the item, usage patterns over the past 5 years, the number of copies in the Library, coverage of the field by more recent or authoritative sources, ~~the~~ and the inclusion of the item in professional and popular lists.

#### Replacement of Materials

It is not the Library's policy to replace automatically all library materials withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear. Several factors are weighted in regard to replacement: (1) Existence of adequate coverage in a field, (2) Availability of later or better materials, (3) Demand for that particular title, (4) significance of that title to the Library's permanent collection.

#### Gifts and Donations

Gifts of library materials or other material are accepted with the proviso that they do not have to be added to the collection. Gifted or donated items are subject to the same selection processes stated above and may be added as new titles, duplicates or replacements, or they may be discarded according to the needs of the Library.

### PRIMARY COLLECTIONS

#### Adult Collections

Fiction:

This extensive collection includes both popular contemporary works and traditional classic literature. While the majority of the collection is comprised of general fiction, we

also have specific genre collections that include Mystery, Science Fiction, Thriller, Romance, and Westerns. Large print materials are available in the preceding categories, where availability, funding, and usage allow.

In selecting fiction for adults, the Library has set up no arbitrary single standard for determining quality. An attempt is made to satisfy a public varying greatly in tastes, social and economic backgrounds, and educational levels. Selection, then, does not mean choosing only the most distinguished ~~novels~~ materials, but also the most competent, pleasing and successful ~~books~~ items.

Nonfiction:

The library acquires materials that provide a core of basic knowledge. The library selects materials that address contemporary issues; provide self-help information; facilitate continuing education; enhance job-related knowledge and skills; increase knowledge of the community, the country, and the world; support business, cultural, recreational and civic interests in the community; nourish intellectual, aesthetic, creative and spiritual growth; and present different viewpoints on issues.

In selecting material for general reading in the subject fields, readability and popular appeal, soundness of the author's attitude and approach, quality of writing and values beyond the trivial are considered.

#### Young Adult Collections

In general, Young Adult collections are geared to patrons aged 12-18, overlapping somewhat with Children's Services at one end of the range and with Adult Services at the other. Materials are selected using the same general criteria that are used in the selection of adult material, but with the focus on the experiences, maturity, and interests of young people. The resources of the entire library are also available to this age group, and the general reference, audiovisual, and periodical collections include materials that appeal to young adults.

Fiction:

The Young Adult fiction collection consists of materials written for or appealing to this particular age group, regardless of genre. Every effort is made to provide teenagers with fiction that deals with their concerns in open, honest ways, and which meets their recreational and academic reading needs. Diversity of content is a priority along with the quality standards mentioned earlier in this policy.

Nonfiction:

Where space, funds, and availability allow, nonfiction for young adults is selected in similar subject areas found in Adult and Children's nonfiction collections. Titles are chosen for their timeliness and appeal. The staff makes every effort to purchase factual books which are clearly written and attractive in format.

#### Children's Collections

The principles which guide the selection of materials for children are fundamentally the same as those for adult materials. The collection is carefully chosen for parents, educators and children of all ages and abilities with emphasis on materials which entertain, stimulate the imagination, develop reading ability, and enable children to learn about the world around them in all its

diversity. A wide variety of books for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers is a high priority for the collection. These include board books, picture books, and beginning readers that are well reviewed and in demand.

Although particular attention is focused upon the needs of students, duplication of books and materials sought by students is not extensive because the Public Library should serve to supplement school library resources, but not duplicate them.

Materials are evaluated for reading level, interest level, and treatment of the subject for the age of the intended audience. Materials are chosen to assure a well-rounded representation of all points of view as with adult and young adult books.

**Fiction:**

The fiction collection for children includes popular authors and well-reviewed titles with an emphasis on diversity to represent the Stoughton community as a whole.

**Nonfiction:**

The children's nonfiction collection is broad based to emphasize the various educational topics of this age group as well as current events. Regular units of study in the school curriculum also influence selection.

## **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

### **Local History Collection**

The purpose of the local history collection is to preserve the materials that document the history of Stoughton and to make these materials available to researchers and the general public. Most of the local history collection is housed in The Barbara Daly Canavan Trustees Historical Room. Use of the Historical Room is covered under a separate policy.

The major emphasis of the collection is material containing significant local historical information about Stoughton, including some genealogical resources. The room is also home to an institutional collection documenting the history of the Stoughton Public Library. Presently, the collection includes materials by and about the people of Stoughton, annual town reports, Stoughton High School Yearbooks, lists of Stoughton residents, maps, and genealogical information. A variety of formats are collected, including but not limited to books, pamphlets, maps, photographs and microfilm. The local historical collection does not collect information dealing with the day-to-day operations of the town.

### **Selection Criteria**

Consideration for inclusion will be based on the overall merit of the material and in its usefulness in understanding Stoughton history.

### **Gifts**

A signed Deed of Gift is necessary to legally transfer ownership of donated items of a historical nature to the Stoughton Public Library. Donated materials will not be accepted if restrictions are placed on them. Material in poor condition will not be accepted.

### Library of Things

The Library of Things is a collection of non-traditional items that complement the library's mission to provide an opportunity for all to inform and educate themselves in part through a diverse collection of materials, educational services, and enrichment programs of interest to the entire community. Items include tools, electronics, lawn games, and more, and they are selected based on the needs and interests of the Stoughton community. Suggestions for purchase are evaluated using the same selection criteria as other materials and are not automatically added to the collection.