

100. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

GENERAL POLICY

The Seekonk Public Library acquires and makes available materials that inform, educate, entertain, and enrich individuals in the community. The Library provides, within financial limitations, a general collection of materials embracing broad areas of knowledge, and timely materials on current issues. Within the framework of broad objectives, selection is based on community demographics and evidence of areas of interest. Ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the library director, who operates within the framework of policies approved by the Board of Library Trustees. The Library supports the individual's right to access ideas and information representing all points of view. The Seekonk Board of Library Trustees has adopted the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements.

Collection Development Objectives

The library collection is developed with the following objectives:

- to provide materials that meet the customers' interest and needs in a timely manner;
 - to provide materials and programming to pre-school and grade school to support early literacy and scholastic enrichment
 - to provide a broadly based and diverse collection that can support the goals of the library;
 - to provide a balance of viewpoints on all subjects in its collections;
 - to purchase current materials proportionate to levels of demand and use, taking care to anticipate and respond to indications of significant new needs;
 - to practice ongoing collection management, using output measures, reports from the automated library system and other data for continuous collection evaluation;
 - to keep the collection current by weeding worn, obsolete and dated materials from the collection on a regular basis;
 - to keep abreast of technological changes which affect the development of the collection;
 - to be aware of the resources available in surrounding libraries and avoid duplication of resources while ensuring wide coverage of subjects;
 - to continue participation in cooperative programs concerning shared resources within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
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Criteria for Selection

All materials for acquisition, whether purchased or donated, are considered according to the following criteria:

- Literary merit
- Critical reception (ie. reviews published in standard sources including Library Journal, School Library Journal, New York Times)
- Accuracy and authority of information
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Scarcity, or abundance, of material on the subject in the collection
- Durability and quality of format
- Informational and recreational needs of the users
- Local demand
- Local History merit
- Price and availability
- Condition of material
- Donations, self-published materials, and books by local authors will be subject to the same criteria as all other items in the collection
- Titles whose intent is to promote hate and/or violence may be excluded

Date Approved: 1/3/1997

Last Reviewed: 10/15/25

Amended: 10/19/22

101. 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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. 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.
7. 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.

Last ALA amendment January 29, 2019.

Last Confirmed: 10/15/25

102. The Freedom to Read

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.
2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.
7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enriches the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

Last amended by ALA June 30, 2004.

Last Confirmed: 10/15/25

103. Freedom to View

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest possible access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video and other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer of filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

Last Confirmed:10/15/25

105. Request for Reconsideration: Procedures

A singular obligation of the public library is to reflect differing points of view within the collection. The Seekonk Public Library does not endorse particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply endorsements of the viewpoint of the author. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered.

Comments from members of the community about the collection or individual items in the collection frequently provide librarians with useful information about interest or needs that may not be adequately met by the collection. The Library welcomes expression of opinions by customers, but will be governed by the Book Selection Policy in making additions to or deleting items from the collection.

Customers with serious concerns about library materials will be asked to put their requests in writing by completing and signing the form entitled Request for Reconsideration.

Upon receipt of a formal, written request, the Director will ask background information from the staff as to criteria used in ordering the material in question, its place in the collection, and the reasons for having the material in the collection. Outside consultants may be asked for additional information as is pertinent to the subject in question.

The Director will, at the earliest possible date, study the information provided by the library staff and respond, in writing, to the person. The Director will keep the Board of Library Trustees informed of all Requests of Reconsideration of library materials and the disposition of the requests.

In the event that the initiator of the request is not satisfied with the decision of the Director, they may request a meeting before the Board of Library Trustees by making a written request to the Chairman of the Board. Upon the receipt of the request, the Board may make the request an agenda item and they will be notified of the time and place of the board meeting. The Board of Library Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of the presentation and the number of speakers at the meeting.

After hearing from the person(s), the Board will determine whether the issue has been handled in accordance with stated policies and procedures of the Seekonk Public Library, will review the background information provided by library staff, will review the position of the customer, and will also review the decision of the Director. Based on the information presented, the Board may vote to uphold or override the decision of the Director. Until a final decision is made, the title will remain in the library collection. After issuing a decision on the title in question, the library will not review additional requests on the same title for three years.

Amended 12/18/24 ; Reviewed 10/15/25

106. Request for Reconsideration About Library Resources [form]

Name _____

Date _____

Address _____

City* _____ State _____ Zip _____

**Only challenges from Seekonk residents will be considered*

Phone # _____

Do you represent:

Yourself _____

An organization (name) _____

Other group (name) _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

____ Book

____ Video

____ Magazine

____ Content of a Library Program

____ Music

____ Other

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

2. Have you read/viewed/listened to the entire work? If not, what parts did you read/view/listen to?

3. What brought this to your attention? What do you think might be the result of reading/viewing/listening to this work?

4. Can you suggest another material on the same topic that would make a better addition to the library's collection?

5. Please comment on the resource as a whole as well as being specific on these matters which concern you (cite specific content/pages/sections). (Use other side if needed.) Comment:

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