

**POLICY:** **MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

**SECTION:** **III – Public Service Policies – Collections**

**MOTION#/DATE:** **00 - 102 – June 26, 2000**

**REVISED:** **07 - – December 10, 2007**

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### **Effective Date**

December 10, 2007

### **Policy Objective**

To guide staff in the acquisition of material that is of current interest and/or lasting value to existing or potential Library users.

To familiarize Library users with the principles upon which selection decisions are made for Toronto Public Library collections.

### **Underlying Principles**

The selection of materials for the Library is driven by principles defined in the Library's Mission Statement.

Ongoing material selection activities are founded on staff familiarity with existing collections, their awareness of the needs of Library users, and their knowledge of retrospective, current and future trends in informational and recreational materials suitable for public library use.

Except where limited by law, children are entitled to borrowing privileges and open and ready access to materials and facilities provided by the Library. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for monitoring and limiting the use of Library materials by their children.

The Library endeavors to provide equitable access to its extensive collections through a multi-tiered service delivery model which rationalizes the location, scope and focus of collections. In addition, items may be delivered to any branch at the user's request. The Library materials budget is maximized through coordinated and controlled expenditure.

## Policy Statement

The selection of Library materials is driven by the principles defined in the Library's Mission Statement described in part as providing "universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas...".

The Library selects:

- contemporary materials representing varying points of view and which are of current interest and possible future significance, including materials which reflect current conditions, trends and controversies;
- source materials and thoughtful interpretations which document or shed light on the past;
- materials that inform and increase an individual's ability to function effectively as a member of society;
- materials that provide an aesthetic experience, stimulate the imagination and increase an individual's potential creativity;
- materials that expand an individual's understanding of the world in which they live;
- materials in the two official languages, English and French, as well as materials which reflect the diverse linguistic or cultural heritage of the Toronto community;
- materials that entertain and may enhance an individual's enjoyment of life.
- textbooks and curriculum-related works are purchased when they are considered to be useful as an introduction to a subject, are the only source of information, or because their content is considered essential to a library collection.

Staff selection activities are supported by attention to review media, bibliographies and reviewing tools, consultation with the publishing industry, authoritative discussions of genres or subject areas, and recommendations from Library users. Activities are responsibly exercised within the context of available funds.

Special consideration is given to materials with Canadian content, that record the Canadian experience or that relate to life in Canada or the lives and works of Canadians.

The Library does not keep, acquire or purchase material that the Canadian courts have found to be obscene, hate propaganda or seditious.

No materials are excluded from selection solely because of the "race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offences, marital status, disability, family status, sex, sexual orientation and/or receipt of public assistance" of the creator of the work.

No materials are excluded from selection solely because they may come into the possession of a child.

In adopting this Policy, the Board endorses the Canadian Library Association's Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Ontario Library Association's Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library.

The Library Board, in establishing this Materials Selection Policy, was cognizant of Section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which guarantees everyone the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.

## Scope

The Materials Selection Policy applies to all formats including print, non-print, audio-visual and electronic materials.

## Application

This policy applies to any Library staff or organization that undertakes the selection or withdrawal of materials for the Library's collections and to all Library staff involved with accepting and evaluating gifts to the branch collections.

## Specific Directives

### 1. Selection Criteria

Library staff consider:

- Suitability of format for Library use;
- Suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience;
- Relevance to community users;
- Insight into the human and social condition;
- Importance as a record of the times;
- Relationship to the existing collection;
- Reputation, skill, competence or significance of the originator of the work;
- Attention of critics, reviewers and the public;
- Demand for material;
- Reputation of the publisher or producer;
- Clarity, accuracy and logic of presentation;
- Purchase price and other budgetary considerations.



## 2. New Formats

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to Library collections. Budget considerations, community needs and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format.

The selection of material in any new format may result in the Library's decision to retire specific items or material formats from its collections in order to responsibly accommodate trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

## 3. Withdrawal Activities

Selected materials are regularly assessed for their condition, accuracy, currency and usage, within the context of the Library collection, and relevance to Library users. The withdrawal of materials from any collection is a formal process conducted by knowledgeable staff, **according to written guidelines**, as a necessary means to maintain collection vitality, size and scope.

An item that is the subject of a libel action of which the Library becomes aware will be removed from the collection until the action is finally resolved when, depending on the outcome of the action, it will be returned to the collection or permanently withdrawn.

## 4. No Endorsement of Content

Selection of an item for a library collection does not constitute endorsement by the Library of either the content or viewpoint expressed in that item.

## 5. Access to Collections

- (a) For user-information purposes and the guidance of borrowers, videos owned by Toronto Public Library are labeled with viewer classification codes outlined in the Film Classification Act available from the Ontario Film Review Board. **If a viewer classification code is not available from the Ontario Film Review Board, the Library may use Canadian Home Video Association and the Motion Picture Association of America classification codes.**
- (b) The Library may control use of any collection material in order to protect items deemed susceptible to theft or damage by users, or to ensure the widest possible use of materials by Library customers.
- (c) The Library does not mark selected materials in order to indicate approval or



disapproval of item contents or attempt to expurgate information contained in selected items.

**6. Gifts and Donations**

- (a) The Library welcomes gifts of materials from individuals or groups.
- (b) Gifts-in-kind to the Library's Special Collections follow the **Donations of Gifts-In-Kind to Special Collections Policy**.
- (c) The same criteria and guidelines that apply to the selection of all Library materials are used to evaluate gifts. It is understood that gifts are freely given without conditions attached, unless specifically negotiated beforehand, and that all donations will be used or disposed of as the Library deems appropriate.
- (d) Tax receipts are issued by the Toronto Public Library Foundation only for items that meet the selection guidelines and are accepted into the collection.

**7. Customer Requests**

- (a) Library users may place formal requests for the purchase of collection materials by completing a form **provided by the Library**.
- (b) All suggested purchases are reviewed by Library staff who apply to the customer request the same selection criteria that are applied to all materials purchased by the Library.
- (c) The originator of a request will be notified of the Library's selection decision.

**8. Resource Sharing / Inter-Library Loan (ILLO) Services**

- (a) Items that fall outside the selection criteria of the Library or that are "out of print" or temporarily unavailable can be requested by Library customers from other library systems by using regular Inter-Library Loan services. Fees for the service occasionally apply.
- (b) Application for Inter-Library Loan service can be made at any local library branch of the Library.

- (c) The Library recognizes the purposes and resources of other information agencies in the City and does not needlessly duplicate materials.

## 9. Reconsideration of Materials

- (a) The Library believes that a vital society encourages members of its community to actively participate in an open exchange of ideas and opinions. Material selectors consequently strive to provide the widest possible range of resources within Toronto Public Library collections.
- (b) The content or manner of expressing ideas in material that is purposely selected to fill the needs of some Library users, may, on occasion, be considered to be offensive by other Library users. The Library recognizes the right of any individual or group to reject library material for personal use, but does not accord to any individual or group the right to restrict the freedom of others to make use of that same material.
- (c) Library users who object to materials located in the collection are asked to complete a written request for the reconsideration of the materials. Request forms are available for this purpose at all Library branches.
- (d) Decisions made about challenged materials will be communicated to the originators of the requests following completion of a formal staff review.
- (e) An annual report on challenges to Library materials is provided to the Board.

## **Accountability**

The responsibility for selection of materials is vested in the office of the City Librarian which delegates this professional activity to qualified and knowledgeable staff.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: References
- Appendix 2: Toronto Public Library Mission Statement
- Appendix 3: Canadian Library Association's Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom
- Appendix 4: Ontario Library Association's Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library
- Appendix 5: Definitions
- Appendix 6: Contact



**Appendix 1**

**References**

This list contains the most significant legislation and Toronto Public Library policies relating to the Materials Selection Policy.

Federal Legislation

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as amended.  
*Criminal Code* (R.S., 1985, c. C-46) as updated.

Provincial Legislation

*Film Classification Act*, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.17 as updated.  
*Ontario Human Rights Code*, 1990, c. H.19 as updated.

Toronto Public Library Policies

Donations of Gifts-In-Kind to Special Collections Policy as updated.

Appendix 2

**Toronto Public Library's Mission Statement**

Our mission describes our role within the community and our service philosophy.

Toronto Public Library provides free and equitable access to public library services which meet the changing needs of the people of Toronto.

Toronto Public Library preserves and promotes universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment. New technologies extend access to global information beyond Library walls.

The Toronto Public Library upholds the principle of Intellectual Freedom.

Effective partnerships enhance the Library's ability to provide service throughout the City.

Toronto Public Library staff are accountable for the effective management of Library resources and for the quality of Library service offered to the people of Toronto.

June 26, 2000



Appendix 3

**Canadian Library Association's Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom**

All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society.

Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some sections of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.

Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.

November 18, 1985

Appendix 4

**Ontario Library Association's Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library**

Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom.
2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.
3. A full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs.
4. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services.
7. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user.
8. An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the library administration, library board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of children's services.
9. Library policies written to include the needs of the child.

*Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, November 1998*



**Appendix 5**

**Definitions**

**Materials:** All of the items that comprise library collections regardless of format.

**Collections:** The various holdings of the Library organized by category, e.g. fiction collection, French collection

**Format:** The medium in which information is presented, e.g. a book, DVD, e-video

**Inter-Library Loan:** The service through which customers may request that items not owned by or missing from the Toronto Public Library be borrowed from other institutions, subject to availability and the interlibrary loan policies of the lending institutions

## Contact

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