

Norfolk Public Library Collection Development Policy

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COMMUNITY AND LIBRARY DESCRIPTION:

Norfolk is a residential community that has recently experienced rapid growth, but still retains characteristics of a small New England town. The town encompasses 15 square miles and has 9,270 residents according to the 1990 census. The public library has made every effort to keep pace with the growth (265% increase in 30 years) of the community.

The library's primary role is the provision of formal education support services to the student population. A secondary role is to provide popular materials to children and adults of all ages, from preschoolers to retirees.

The mission of the Norfolk Public Library is to serve the educational, informational and recreational needs of the community. The Norfolk Library plays a significant role in delivering library and media services in the public schools and provides services to young children, students, adults, and retired persons in the public library. As an informational resource, the library and its staff seek to enhance access to large amounts of materials through active links with other libraries, the regional library system, and the use of electronic information storage and retrieval, as well as development of Norfolk Library's own permanent circulating and reference collections. Additionally, it is recognized that a significant part of the library's very high per capita circulation is in the area of recreational materials and the library continues to make available recreational library materials in all relevant media.

Purpose and Responsibility:

Collection development is the responsibility of the Director of Libraries and library staff in accordance with the policy established by the Board of Trustees.

This Collection Development Policy provides guidance in the selection of materials and informs the public about the principles upon which selections are made. This statement was approved and adopted on March 23, 1994 by the Norfolk Public Library Board of Trustees which assumes full legal responsibility for any policies stated herein.

The Collection Development Policy of the Norfolk Public Library does not exist in a vacuum, but is a balanced philosophy, reflecting knowledge of the community and its needs and resources, a variety of review sources, and an evaluation of materials in relationship to the overall mission of the library. This policy provides an objective and rational means of examining collection development and a consistency that supersedes individuals on the staff or Board.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM:

The Norfolk Public Library Board of Trustees subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, Free Access to Libraries for Minors: an Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and supportive documents of the American Library Association as a basis for formulating this policy. The appendix of this policy statement contains copies of these and other pertinent documents. Further, the Norfolk Public Library affirms its belief in the following basic policies:

As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and edification of all people of the community. In no case should materials be excluded because of race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors.

Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our time: no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

It is essential in a free society to provide access to all library materials. No restrictions are placed on what anyone may read. Well-intentioned individuals or groups may occasionally question the inclusion of an item in the collection because of fear or doubt about the effects of the material on impressionable persons. Although this concern is understandable, the risk to society is far greater if public access to ideas and information is restricted. Neither an individual, group, or the library staff or trustees has a right to decide what others may or may not read.

The library staff does not remove materials from its shelves, at the request of any individual or group. In addition, the library staff and trustees will oppose coercion on the part of an individual or group seeking to have materials added to the collection which are contrary to the collection development policy.

Censorship should be challenged by libraries in the maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment.

The rights of an individual to use the library shall not be denied or abridged because of age, race, religion, national origins, or social or political views. Unrestrictive selection policies, developed with care for principles of intellectual freedom and the Library Bill of Rights shall not be vitiated by administrative practices which restrict minors to the use of only part of the library's collections or services.

STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY MATERIAL:

Anyone wishing to express concern about any library material, either print or audio-visual, may file a complaint with the Director of Libraries. The complainant must fill out a *Request for Reconsideration of Library Material* (form appended). The Director, in consultation with the appropriate staff member (in charge of Adult or Youth Services) will re-examine the item in question. A decision on the suitability of the item for inclusion in the Norfolk Public Library collection will be made on the basis of the Library's Collection Development Policy. The Director's decision may be appealed to the Board of Trustees, who shall be the final authority.

SERVICE GOALS:

The following principles have been set by The Board of Trustees:

- to support the right of creative writers to depart from conventional standards;
- to promote understanding of our society and world; and
- to preserve freedom of thought and information.

The Board also pledges to make library materials available for the educational, informational, recreational, and inspirational needs of the community. Ownership of library material does not necessarily mean an endorsement of the ideas or points of view contained in the material.

The aim of the Norfolk Public Library is to make all of the library's collection easy to use, to avoid reluctance or embarrassment on the public's part in asking for materials, and to serve all of the public efficiently, pleasantly and without discrimination. For these reasons, the library's collection is on open shelves, arranged to provide maximum self-service.¹

No materials are removed from open shelves or kept in a restricted area because of controversial nature, or because they are more suitable for one age level than another, or because their subject matter, viewpoint, or treatment may be distasteful to certain individuals or groups.

No one is allowed to use their personal prejudices, tastes, or moral standards to interfere with free and convenient access to materials.

THE SELECTION PROCESS:

Collection development decisions are made on the basis of staff judgement and expertise and by evaluating reviews in library reviewing journals and other library selection tools. Factors used in making decisions include:

- popular demand
- community needs and interests as determined by library use
- current interest and usefulness
- cost
- physical characteristics and quality of the item
- availability through other sources such as A.B.L.E. or the inter-library loan network of the

Eastern Massachusetts Regional Library System.

The selection of any given material is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. Selections are made

¹exceptions: back issues of periodicals & newspapers are located in storage areas and may be requested at the main desk; some forms of a-v media and valuable books may be kept in closed shelving for security reasons.

solely on merits of the materials in relation to the collection and the needs of the users. The library contains materials representing various viewpoints on public issues of a controversial nature. Inclusion of materials is based on two factors: the quality of the material and the needs of the community.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS:

Both juvenile and young adult materials are selected with the same care and judgment as adult materials. The collection is carefully chosen for children of all ages and abilities, with emphasis on materials which educate and entertain, stimulate the imagination, develop reading ability and enable children to learn about the world around them. Materials are purchased in both print and non-print formats.

A small collection of materials specifically selected for young adults is maintained by the library. Materials are selected as a bridge to the adult collection. Novels and recreational materials are selected because of their special appeal for this age group. In general, this is a browsing collection.

The Norfolk Public Library is committed to developing a collection of materials that support the local school district curriculum.

Children and young adults are not limited to the special collections selected for them. They are encouraged to make full use of the entire collection to the extent that their interests and capabilities allow.

USE OF MATERIALS:

The collection of the Norfolk Public Library is available to all community residents and registered borrowers. Materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents, no materials are marked to restrict their use by ages, and no materials are sequestered except to protect valuable items from injury or theft.

Responsibility for use of materials by children and young adults rests with their parents or legal guardians. The selection of material for the adult collection and access to it is not restricted by the fact that children may obtain materials their parents may consider objectionable.

SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION:

The Norfolk Public Library has identified two main service roles: that of popular materials library and that of education support center.

The popular adult collection highlights genres and topics for which local interest and need is known to exist. These areas include current, high-interest fiction, biographies of popular figures, self-help, crafts, home-repairs, how-to material, and other high demand non-fiction. The popular juvenile collection focuses on highly recommended picture books for pre-schoolers and on popular reading of standard titles by children of school

age.

The education support collection focuses on curriculum related (non-textbook) materials for the Norfolk Public Schools and King Philip Regional School District.

In order to meet the diverse needs and interests of all residents, the library provides materials in a variety of formats including print materials (books, magazines, large print) as well as non print materials (videocassettes, audiocassettes--book and music--compact discs, games, etc.).

It is impossible for a small library to individually hold a balanced, comprehensive collection that is strong enough to meet all community needs. As a member of the A.B.L.E. network and the Eastern Massachusetts Regional Library System, the library supplements its collection with materials borrowed from these sources. In addition, requests for materials not available within the collection may be obtained through the Region's Interlibrary Loan Network.

WEEDING THE COLLECTION:

In order to maintain a collection that is current, reliable, in good condition, well used, and that relates to the needs and interests of the residents of Norfolk, materials are withdrawn on a systematic and continuing basis. Materials are discarded when they are judged to be dated, inaccurate, seldom used, in poor condition or otherwise no longer appropriate.

The criteria used in selection also apply to the process of withdrawing materials from the collection. Materials withdrawn from the Norfolk Public Library are disposed of in a manner consistent with their quality and condition. Materials removed because of dated content or poor condition are not imposed on another library or institution.

GIFTS:

Gifts are accepted with the understanding that they may or may not be added to the collection. Gift materials, including titles new to the collection, are subject to the same selection and weeding standards as materials purchased by the library. See Guidelines (appended) for specific materials that the library will accept. The donor will fill out and sign the "Donation of Materials Agreement."

ADOPTED - March 23, 1994