

Collection Development Policy for Cambridge Community Library

Introduction

The Board of Trustees of the Cambridge Community Library has adopted the following collection development policy to guide librarians and to inform the public of the principles upon which the selections are made.

This policy guides the maintenance of a local collection that balances the limits of budget and space with meeting the needs of its patrons and the community. The broad, general-interest subject matter of the local collection will be complemented by access to materials from the other member libraries of the South Central Library System to provide wide availability of materials for the public.

Cambridge Community Library supports the individual's right to have access to ideas and information representing all points of view. The library board affirms the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to View, and Freedom to Read policy statements (see Appendix) in support of acquiring and managing collections.

Responsibility for Selection

All staff members, as well as members of the general public, are encouraged to suggest and recommend materials to be considered for purchase. The ultimate responsibility for selection of materials rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Cambridge Community Library Board of Trustees. The Director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

Digital materials may be selected at the consortium or state level.

Criteria for Selection

Collections contain popular works, classic works that have withstood the test of time, and other materials of general interest. With a patron base that can include infants to the elderly, public libraries are diverse and represent a broad demographic. The Library's selection criteria takes into account the various interests and needs of the patrons the library serves. The collection provides items of differing complexity reflecting a broad range of human experience in a variety of material formats, including print, audio-visual, and electronic, to serve the needs of the entire community.

Since the library does not promote particular beliefs or views, the collection will contain various positions on important subjects, including views that may be unpopular or controversial. The selection of any material or resource does not constitute an endorsement. Selection decisions are guided by the merits of the work, collection needs, and interests of a diverse community. Responsibility for choosing what an individual will read or view rests with that individual.

Responsibility for the use of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians.

To build a collection of merit, purchased and donated materials are evaluated according to the following objective guidelines. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable. An item may be judged on scholarship, artistic merit, historical documentation, or the ability to satisfy the recreational and entertainment needs of the entire community.

The main points considered in the selection of materials are:

- Individual merit of each item
- Popular appeal or demand from local and system patrons
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Cost and budget
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Availability from other system libraries
- Attention by critics and professional reviewers

The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title that is in demand. Consideration will be given to requests from library patrons and to books discussed on public media. Materials will be judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.

Materials selected for children will meet the general need of the community with consideration given to vocabulary suitable to the age of the intended audience and quality of illustrations. Materials covering topics that make them valuable to children with special needs, talents, problems, or interests are also considered.

Materials may be selected that are for use only within the Library.

Multiple copies may be purchased based on system-wide demand, local interest, and budget.

Interlibrary Loan

Cambridge Community Library belongs to the South Central Library System. Through LINKcat, our patrons have access to the shared collections of over 50 libraries in addition to what is available from our local collection. In exchange, we agree to lend our materials to other libraries through the same interlibrary loan system. If the patron's need is beyond this extensive collection, the ability to utilize outerlibrary loan to request materials from libraries nationwide is available.

Gifts and Donations

Donations of used books and other materials are directed to the Friends of the Cambridge Community Library. The Friends have agreed that the library staff may have first selection of any

donated items that would be a useful addition to our collection. The Friends may sell, donate to another local organization, or dispose of any donations they receive.

Memorial gifts for additions to the collection are accepted using the same selection criteria as for purchased materials. Suitable bookplates will be placed in the books. Selection of the titles is made in consultation with the Library Director.

Maintenance of Library Materials

Most library materials are processed in such a way to ensure their maximum use under normal circumstances. All materials returned to the library are inspected for damage. Items that are damaged, but still usable, are mended before being returned to circulation.

Withdrawal of Materials

Keeping a library collection up-to-date and attractive requires a continual withdrawal and replacement process. This weeding effort ensures the best use of the available space to meet patron needs.

Materials in the following categories are candidates for weeding:

- Materials that are badly damaged or worn out from use
- Materials that are no longer factual or accurate
- Popular or buzzworthy materials which are no longer timely
- Materials that have had little recent use and are of questionable value
- Materials which have a newer edition
- Materials that contain outdated or harmful representations of groups of people
- Materials that exceed the space available for them

Replacement of materials that are withdrawn is not automatic. Consideration will be given to:

- The number of copies within the library system and duplicate copies locally
- Adequate coverage of the subject elsewhere in the collection
- Demand for that title or materials on that subject
- Existence of an updated edition

Withdrawn materials may be given to the Friends of the Library for their book sale or disposed of by other means. When a patron pays for a damaged item, they may have the withdrawn item.

Requests for Reconsideration

The Library Board recognizes the choice of library materials by library users is an individual matter, and some materials may be deemed inappropriate or offensive by patrons. While an individual may reject materials for themselves, they cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials of others. Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some requests for reconsideration, the following procedures have been developed to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the principles set forth in this policy.

Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of library materials selected by children, as well as their use of the library, rests with their parents or legal guardians. At no time will the library staff act in place of a parent. Selection of materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that items may come into the possession of children.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft. Library materials will not be considered for exclusion from the collection based solely on single words or passages taken out of context.

Procedure for Requests for Reconsideration

A patron expressing a concern or objection to library material should receive respectful attention from the staff member first approached. This staff member should use their own best judgment in attempting to answer the concerns or clarify the situation. If the patron is not satisfied, the staff member should refer the person to the Library Director. After talking with the Library Director, the patron may ask for reconsideration in the following manner:

- A “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” form must be completed, signed, and returned to the Library Director. Patrons must reside in Cambridge (Dane or Jefferson Counties), and possess an active library card to have their request considered and only one request per patron will be considered at a time.

- The Request for Reconsideration will be acknowledged in writing by the Library Director within ten (10) days or as soon as possible, via email.

- The Library Director will evaluate the item in question. This will be completed in no more than thirty (30) business days of the initial request for reconsideration. The Director’s recommendation will be emailed to the patron. Once a title has been reconsidered, it will not be reviewed for a period of 5 years.

- Patrons may appeal the decision of the Library Director to the Cambridge Community Library Board of Trustees. An appeal must be made in writing and delivered to the Library Director. Upon receipt of the written appeal, discussion of the appeal will be scheduled on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Library Board. The decision of the Board regarding the item is final. Again, once a title has been reconsidered, it will not be reviewed for a period of 5 years.

- No materials will be removed from the collection without Board action. During the process of reconsideration, the material in question will remain on the shelf.

Appendix

- Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form
- [Library Bill of Rights](#)
- [Freedom to Read Statement](#)
- [Freedom to View Statement](#)

Approved: 4/10/2024