



BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

MATERIAL SELECTION POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

A critical element within the mission of the Bedford Public Library is: to provide access to informational, educational, cultural and recreational library materials and services in a variety of formats and technologies; to be responsive to the public library needs of the community; and to uphold the public's freedom of access to information. The library's mission also includes developing and maintaining the library as the cultural and meeting center of Bedford.

In accordance with this mission, the Bedford Public Library subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights, Access to Digital Resources and Services (an interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights), Freedom to Read Statement and other policies on intellectual freedom authored by the American Library Association (ALA), and available in the most recent edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual, published by the American Library Association.

GOALS OF SERVICE

The Bedford Public Library's objectives are:

1. To provide materials that will enrich and support the community, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the citizens.
2. To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.
3. To provide recreational materials that will bring enjoyment and entertainment.
4. To provide a background of information which will enable patrons to make intelligent judgments in their daily life.
5. To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that citizens may develop the practice of critical reading and thinking.
6. To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

7. To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATERIALS SELECTION

The responsibility for collection development coordination and supervision lies with the Library Director, who is accountable for the growth and maintenance of the collection. The Library will apply established professional standards in the selection and retention of its materials. Selected staff members have collection development responsibilities for specific collections, subject areas, or formats. All staff members make suggestions for new and replacement materials.

SELECTION TOOLS

The following journals are the standard first source to assist in the selection process: Library Journal, School Library Journal, Horn Book, Booklist, Kirkus Review, New York Times Book Review, and Publisher's Weekly. Other standard selection tools such as the Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction, Fiction Core Collection, and Children's Catalog are also consulted. Other review sources of a specialized nature, including popular media, are used for specific collections. Bestseller lists including the New York Times Bestseller List, Boston Globe Local Bestsellers List, and Publisher's Weekly Bestsellers Lists may also be consulted.

FACTORS INFLUENCING SELECTION

The following factors will be taken into consideration when selecting materials:

1. Needs of the community
2. Size of the budget
3. Desire to develop a diverse collection
4. Physical quality and durability of the material

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Materials are judged by standards appropriate to their purpose and nature. Not all guides and criteria are applicable to every item and they vary in importance. The following evaluation criteria are used as they apply to all formats, including audio-visual and digital materials, equipment, and other non-book items:

1. The materials meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation and are appropriate to the ability and needs of the patrons.
2. The materials are selected because of the content and value of the work as a whole.
3. The materials contribute to literary appreciation or have aesthetic value.
4. The authors are competent and qualified in their field.
5. The publishers are reputable.
6. The materials are objectively and impartially selected to provide a diverse collection that reflects major viewpoints in a field.
7. The materials exemplify the most current information that is necessary on a topic.
8. It is not in the best interest of the library that we acquire textbooks or condensed books.
9. For non-book materials: ease of access, the format's compatibility with widely available hardware, and the item's durability should also be considered.

POLICIES BY FORMAT

- Books – The library will buy high quality hardcover, paperback, and board print books whenever possible.
- Large print books – The library will continue to provide a well-rounded collection of large print books for visually impaired readers.
- Periodicals – The library will provide a well-rounded collection of news magazines and magazines of special interest, endeavoring to buy ones that are indexed in reputable and available sources.
- Newspapers – The library will provide the print version of local and national newspapers on a daily and weekly basis as well as electronic access to many newspapers, endeavoring to purchase national newspapers that are indexed in reputable and available sources and local newspapers.
- Audio Material – The library will purchase audiobooks in a variety of formats in the unabridged version whenever possible. The library will also purchase music of interest to the community.
- Films – The library will buy films of good quality, focusing on those which most enhance our collection and meet the recreational and educational needs of the community.
- Databases – The library will provide databases that will enhance the collection. These electronic resources will be well reviewed, user friendly, and kept current. They may also provide information not available through another format.
- Microform – The library will purchase selected local newspapers on microfilm/fiche.

- Ebooks and downloadable audiobooks – The library participates in the New Hampshire State Library’s Downloadable Books Consortium and the GMILCS Digital Library Group to provide access to ebooks and downloadable audiobooks. Selection of those materials is governed by the Consortium’s and GMILCS collection development policies. The library director may supplement this collection, using the evaluation criteria in this policy.

SELF-PUBLISHED MATERIALS

Self-published materials will be considered when they are written by a Bedford author and there is substantial community interest in the work or if the topic is of local significance. This policy’s evaluation criteria will also apply.

PURCHASE SUGGESTIONS FROM PATRONS

Bedford Public Library cardholders who would like to suggest that the Library purchase an item may submit a Purchase Request Form in person or submit a request via phone, mail, or email. Requests should include the title, author, publishing information, reviews of the resource (as available), and how the patron heard about the item. The librarians will use the evaluation criteria when determining whether to purchase the item. Generally, they will first attempt to borrow the item for the patron via interlibrary loan.

GIFTS

The Library welcomes the gifts of materials, but reserves the right to evaluate them in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials. Gifts which do not meet the objectives of this policy may be refused. Bookplates may be provided for gifts, and a form for tax purposes may be provided to the donor. No other conditions may be imposed relating to any gift either before or after its acceptance by the Library. The library cannot accept gifts of textbooks, Reader’s Digest Condensed books, or encyclopedia sets. Gifts are accepted provided:

1. The gift meets the same standards of selection as those applied to original purchases.
2. The gifts can be integrated into the general library collection and do not need special housing.
3. The library staff may dispose of the gift, at its discretion, if it does not fit the collection needs, is out-of-date, or is in poor physical condition not warranting the cost of repair.
4. The donor arranges for an outside source to evaluate the gift for tax purposes, if such an evaluation is needed.

ACCESS TO MATERIALS

Library material will be maintained on open shelves or displays freely and readily accessible to Library patrons, except as protection from damage or for space or security reasons. All Library patrons are free to select or reject Library materials for themselves. Individual or group prejudice cannot restrict the freedom of use and/or access to others.

The Library has a Children's Room to accommodate Library use by children and families, but children are not limited to use of the children's collection. Selection of Library material is not restricted by the possibility that items may come into the possession of children.

MAINTENANCE/DESELECTION

The Library Director and/or librarians have the responsibility of discarding (weeding) and disposing of library materials. As part of the ongoing selection process, the librarian will periodically evaluate the collection in terms of its usefulness. Lack of demand, obsolete or erroneous information, or poor physical condition are the main reasons for eliminating an item from the collection. These materials will be marked discarded. Discarded materials of possible use to others will be offered to charitable, historical, educational or public institutions, sold, or discarded at an appropriate transfer station, at the discretion of the librarian.

As part of its mission, the Bedford Public Library strives to provide current material, accurate information, and an accessible collection in good condition. Systematic removal of material, referred to as weeding, is essential to maintaining the quality and usefulness of the Library's collection. Materials that no longer meet the mission of the Library are identified, withdrawn and discarded according to accepted professional practices. Those librarians who have a direct role in the selection of materials regularly review the collection in their respective responsibility areas using CREW as well as other standard methods of weeding (the CREW method calls for Continuous, Review, Evaluation, and Weeding of the collection).

Even though meeting the above criteria, certain materials may not be discarded because of their unique nature.

RESOURCE RECONSIDERATION PROCESS

The Bedford Public Library selects materials based on the criteria specified within this policy. The Library does not advocate particular views or beliefs but attempts to provide free access to a well-balanced collection of topics, appropriate for different age levels and opinions to all members of the community. Each individual has the freedom and responsibility for making choices about what to read. No labels will be assigned to materials beyond those indicating genre.

To file a request for reconsideration, the requesting individual must be a resident of Bedford. Anonymous submissions will not be considered.

Patrons who wish to request the withdrawal or reclassification of material currently owned by the library are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the library director. If the patron is not satisfied with the director's response to their request, the director will provide the patron with information and a form to request formal reconsideration of the library resource. Upon receipt of a formal written request, a committee of professional staff, including but not limited to the library director and librarians responsible for collection development, will be formed. The committee will make a decision regarding the retention, relocation or removal of the item. During the reconsideration process, the material will remain in place and may not be removed.

Once a decision has been reached regarding the status of the item, a letter explaining the decision will be sent to the patron who initiated the Request for Reconsideration. All stages of this process will be completed in a timely matter. If the patron does not agree with the reconsideration committee's decision, they may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees' decision will be final. Patrons shall submit one request at a time, and shall wait until the Trustees resolve a request before filing an additional request.

Time limit: Any resource reconsidered under this procedure will not be the subject of a review again for a period of five years from the date of the Library Director's receipt of the initial objection form.

Adopted by the Bedford Public Library Board of Trustees 03/29/2002

Revised 12/09/2021

Revised 05/05/2023