

GALE FREE LIBRARY  
23 HIGHLAND STREET  
HOLDEN, MASSACHUSETTS 01520

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY  
Adopted by the Board of Trustees, January 2022

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# GALE FREE LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees of Gale Free Library establishes a materials selection policy in order to define the standards and criteria used to ensure that all residents of the Town of Holden have access to information and resources that meet their educational, cultural, and recreational needs. The specific purposes of this Materials Selection Policy are to:

- Define the library's collection development principles
- Inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made
- Serve as a guide to librarians in choosing from a vast array of materials available

The Board delegates to the Library Director and library staff the responsibility for collection development in accordance with the materials selection policy.

NOTE: "Materials" has the widest possible meaning and may include hardbound and paperbound books, E-Materials, pamphlets, magazines, journals, newsletters, maps, newspapers, microfilms, comic books, manuscripts, computer software, online databases and resources, and other formats that may be appropriate for library collections.

"Selections" refers to the decision that must be made either to add a given item or retain one already in the collection. (See also "Gifts and Memorials" and "Collection Maintenance")

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

Gale Free Library serves the adults, young adults, and the children of the Town of Holden as a center for:

- Popular materials for personal enrichment and enjoyment
- Independent learning opportunities to meet individual needs for information
- Education support for those engaged in formal programs of study

The Materials Selection Policy serves as a guide in the development of currently useful collections of materials in a variety of formats to meet these needs. We acquire materials of contemporary significance and popularity, which may not have enduring interest or value, and materials of more permanent value, that enrich the collections and maintain an overall balance for the future.

Selections of library materials is carried out by trained and experienced library staff using standard bibliographic resources, authoritative reviews and their own specialized subject knowledge. They take into account the nature of the

community, the library's holdings and other resources available to our users, and the financial resources of the library.

The library is the interlibrary loan access point for the community, offering to users a rich store of resources not available at the local level. It participates in the Library Incentive Grant and Municipal Equalization Grant programs and is a member of the C/W MARS automated network.

In addition to in-house interlibrary loan services (the delivery to the Holden library of materials borrowed from other libraries for the use of Holden patrons); patrons may use the nearby Worcester Public Library and its Talking Book Library, as well as all other public libraries in the state. These libraries may impose various restrictions on use.

## **CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

### **Use of Criteria**

In the selection process, each criterion is not necessarily applied to each work and the weight of individual criteria will vary. At times, one criterion will be a determined factor in choice; in other cases, several criteria will form the basis for choice. The order of criteria in the following lists is not an indication of importance.

### **General Criteria**

Each resource is considered for its value, its format, and the audience for which it is intended. Each item is evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular selection. The following general criteria are used in selecting materials:

- Popular demand (e.g.: best seller, high current interest)
- Present and potential relevance to local interests and needs
- Availability of material in more comprehensive library collections in the area
- Value of the material and subject matter in relation to existing collections
- Opinions of critics and reviewers
- Appropriateness of physical form for library use
- Importance as a "document" of the times
- Reputation and/or significance of the author and producer
- Cost
- Historical significance
- Permanent value as a standard work
- Quality and style of writing or production
- Inclusiveness

### **Criteria for the Selection of Fiction in any Format**

In selecting fiction, the library uses no single standard of literary quality but attempts to choose titles in all categories of fiction writing in order to reflect current literary standards and meet local interests. This includes genre fiction, including but not limited to mysteries, westerns, light romance, suspense, fantasy, science fiction, and historical novels. Criteria specific to fiction selections are:

- Representation of important movements, genres, trends
- Authoritative editions or productions of classic and standard titles
- Vitality and ability to sustain interest
- Artistic presentation and experimentation
- Effective characterization
- Insight into human and social conditions
- Story content

### **Criteria for the Selection of Nonfiction in any format**

The library acquires materials of both permanent and current interest in all subjects, based upon the merits of a work in relation to the needs and interests of the community. Criteria specific to nonfiction selection are:

- Objectivity
- Representation of opposing viewpoints on subjects of interest to the community
- Originality
- Timeliness and currency
- Accuracy, authenticity
- Local interest
- Level of difficulty
- Clarity of presentation or readability
- Appearance of the title or author in standard or special bibliographies, lists and indexes

### **FORMATS**

In addition to the application of the criteria given above, there are specific statements that apply to the materials of different formats selected by the library.

**DVDs:** Materials are collected that appeal to the practical and recreational need of the broadest range of our users. Our collection emphasis is on:

- Feature films, both current and classic, for all ages
- High quality DVDs for children with preference for those based on original illustrations and quality children's literature and for those on popular subjects. We try to avoid commercially oriented juvenile materials, such as cartoons with licensed characters having as their purpose the marketing of products
- Cultural performances, including concerts, operas, and plays

- Informational DVDs, including health, exercise, travel, computer instruction and the like.

**AUDIOBOOKS:** A wide range of fiction and titles on popular topics are collected to meet the needs of the broadest range of our users. Unabridged versions of titles are preferred but abridged versions are acquired when interest in a title warrants inclusion. Our collection emphasis is on:

- Adult fiction, including recent best sellers, genre titles (e.g. mysteries), by both popular and critically acclaimed authors, and some classics
- Popular adult nonfiction, including best sellers, biographies, and true adventure
- Children's popular and classic fiction of high quality and enduring worth

**PERIODICALS:** A selected and limited range of popular magazines and newspapers are purchased to provide information on current issues and events and general and topical recreational reading.

- Magazines: Print copies of local interest titles of proven high interest are acquired to meet informational and recreational needs. In addition, a subscription to a digital library with full text articles provides a much broader spectrum of titles, especially for informational needs.
- Newspapers: We have a commitment to acquire the local newspapers (*The Landmark* and *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*), a state newspaper (*Boston Globe*) and a major business newspaper (*Wall Street Journal*).

**LARGE PRINT:** A limited number of popular fiction and nonfiction titles are acquired annually to update and supplement the basic large print collection.

**TEXTBOOKS:** Textbooks, defined as works whose published form clearly indicates its intended use as a principal teaching aid, are normally not acquired for the collections. An exception is made when other kinds of monographic publications in an important and basic subject area are not readily available. Examples might be general and introductory textbooks in physics or accounting. Textbooks are never acquired to support the curriculum of any school or course of study.

**COMPUTER SOFTWARE:** Computer software in any form is not acquired for circulation, due to a number of issues: hardware compatibility, licensing, volatility of format, and cost. Software is acquired for reference work (see "Reference Collections").

## **GIFTS AND MEMORIALS**

The library welcomes the generosity of those who wish to help the library by making gifts and has developed the following policies to ensure that such gifts serve to benefit the community that uses the library.

#### **Acceptance of Gifts of Books and Other Materials to the Library Collections**

Gifts of books and other library materials suitable for borrowing and reference use are accepted by the library without commitments as to final disposition and with the understanding that they are not necessarily to be added to the collections. The Material Selection Policy's "Criteria for the Selection of Library Materials" will be used in evaluating gift materials. The library will not accept for the collection any materials in which the donor retain an interest or for which conditions of use are set. The following stipulations apply to donated materials:

- All gifts are final
- Gifts may be added to the collection, sold, exchanged, given to the Friends of Gale Free Library or other libraries, or discarded.
- Gifts cannot be appraised for tax purposes by library staff.

#### **Donations to Special Gifts Funds and Memorial Funds for Materials**

Monetary gifts to the library's Special Gifts Fund and to designated Memorial funds are used to acquire books and other materials in accordance with the Materials Selection Policy and the library's collection development plan. Donors may use the library's gift form to make suggestions regarding format, location, or broad subject (See for in Appendix). Appropriate recognition is given on the item and all gifts are acknowledged in writing by the Library Director.

#### **Other Gifts (Real Property, Art Objects, etc.)**

See separate policy "Gifts to the Library"

### **COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

The library continually evaluates its collections in response to the changing nature and needs of its community through *withdraw (weeding)*, replacement, and duplication of titles.

**WITHDRAW** (weeding) of library materials is an integral part of collection development, especially in the maintenance of an up-to-date and currently useful collection. The following categories of material are considered for weeding:

- Worn or mutilated items
- Duplicate copies of seldom used titles
- Material that contain outdated or inaccurate information
- Superseded editions of specific titles
- Materials no longer of interest or demand as determined by patterns of use

**REPLACEMENT:** While the library tries to own copies of standard and important works, it does not automatically replace all items withdrawn due to loss, damage, or wear. The “General Criteria for the Selection of Library Materials” *is* applied to decisions on replacements.

**DUPLICATION** of titles is governed by popular demand, importance of the material, and budgetary limitations.

**DISPOSITION:** The library’s unwanted materials are donated to the Friends of Gale Free Library and then sold at public sale or offered to other institutions.

## **CHILDREN’S AND YOUNG ADULT COLLECTIONS**

The library’s Materials Selection Policy, including the *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Freedom to Read* statement, applies to the selection of children’s and young adult materials. The following statements are made in addition to and not in place of the Materials Selection Policy.

Additional policy statements can be found in the selection “Formal Education Support”.

### **Children’s Materials**

Formats of materials include DVDs, picture books, board books, fiction and nonfiction books (*both hardcover and paperback*), spoken audio discs and a variety of digital resources aimed at children.

Guidelines for selection:

- Materials are purchased that reflect the changing needs of families. Some sample topics are divorce, illness, sibling rivalry, sex education. In general these materials are shelved together in a “Parents” collection.
- Materials are purchased that represent a child’s popular culture
- The need to provide materials that relate to developmental levels and reading ability is a factor in selection.
- Collection priorities are the acquisition of the best of new children’s literature and replacement copies of standards and classics. Some criteria used are:
  - Emphasis on titles that inspire and cultivate a love of literature and reading
  - Emphasis on literature that develops the child’s imaginative abilities
  - Emphasis on art and science titles
  - Emphasis on diversity

## **YOUNG ADULT MATERIALS**

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

Nonfiction on topics popular with young adults is also acquired.

## **REFERENCE COLLECTIONS**

Reference materials for adults and children in all formats are intended to provide quick, concise and up-to-date information in the library on topics in frequent demand. Our resources are supplemented by the reference collections of the Worcester and Fitchburg libraries as well as access to specialized collections such as the resources of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Collections are selective rather than comprehensive. It should be noted that our collections are supplemented by staff and public access to Internet resources and subscription databases.

Additional policy statements can be found in the section “Formal Education Support”.

### **Guidelines for Selection**

In addition to the “Criteria for the Selection of Library Materials”, special factors are considered in the selection of reference materials, such as

- Cost: not only are many reference materials very costly, but the variations in cost of different formats (print versus internet access; for example) must be weighed
- Complexity: since we serve the full range of community needs, from middle school students to professionals, we acquire materials at various levels of complexity. Highly specialized professional level materials are not acquired.
- Format: ease of public access, cost, and ready availability of updates are considered when deciding among possible formats
- Authenticity: we make a special effort to acquire accurate and reliable reference materials
- Ease of access to information: such factors as indexing, readability, illustrations, charts and graphs, and organization are weighed

**Internet:** The Internet provides an incredible array of information of all kinds to its users. Refer to the library’s Internet Policy (See Appendix) and the American Library Association’s *Assess to Electronic Services, Resources and Networks; an interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* (See Appendix).

## **FORMAL EDUCATION SUPPORT**

The library serves as an educational resource center for students and teachers in Holden and the area, although it receives no funding or other support from the school district.

Selections of materials for the adult collections, for the children’s collections, and for adult and children’s reference collections reflect the demand from the community for



materials to meet the needs of curriculum-based assignments. Consequently, the library purchases:

- A wide range of materials that will satisfy the demand for immediate information or supplementary reading on subjects in the local school curricula
- Practical educational resource materials in the areas of literature, science, history, and art to be used by teachers and others working with children.

An attempt is made to purchase as many titles as possible on Holden elementary and middle schools' recommended reading lists. In the case of required reading lists, we attempt to acquire every title.

## **LOCAL HISTORY**

Collection Development Policy for Local History Room, Gale Free Library, Holden.

- I. Statement of purpose of the collection  
The Local History Room was established to help preserve Holden's history and provide an opportunity for the public to learn about Holden's heritage. Materials are preserved using accepted methods, and are housed under safe, secure conditions. Therefore, materials in the Local History Room may not be taken from the room without the permission of the Library Director.
- II. Types of programs supported by the collection – research, exhibits, in-house programs, community outreach
- III. Clientele served by the collection – Scholars and professionals, general public, secondary and high school students
- IV. Priorities and limitations of the collection-In order for the collection to support its purpose, selectivity and maintenance is critical.
  - a. Geographic areas collected-The library acquires materials dealing with the Town of Holden, and, when appropriate, those dealing with the four neighboring towns comprising the Wachusett School District (Paxton, Rutland, Princeton, and Sterling). In addition, selected titles relating to Massachusetts and New England are kept in the Local History Room, although the Local History department does not actively collect such materials.
  - b. Subjects collected
    - The history of the Gale Free Library and Holden, as well as information about the region's current and past social, economic, religious and cultural life
    - Descriptive material on Holden and immediate surrounding area-geography, directories, guidebooks, yearbooks
    - Town histories

- Genealogical materials, including records and family histories, related to Holden's founding families
  - General genealogy resources, including guidebooks.
  - Published works by Holden authors
  - Town documents and reports published by the Town or for the Town by private firms or other agencies
  - c. Forms of materials collected-books, diaries, pamphlets, newsletters, reports, letters, speeches, newspapers and serials (in hard copy and microform), manuscripts, maps and atlases, clippings, postcards, photographs, electronic materials, paintings, posters, stereo views, genealogical records, memorabilia. Specified ephemera will be reviewed by the Head of Reference before becoming part of the collection.
  - d. Exclusions-Furniture and 3-dimensional museum objects; government records, such as Board of Education minutes; vital statistics besides those of Holden, the four adjacent towns of the Wachusett School District, and the city of Worcester.
- V. Resource sharing- Select local history resources may be shared with organizations, contingent upon review by the Head of Reference and Library Director. Select local organizations may be permitted to house materials in the Local History Room. This is subject to approval by the Library Director. If approved, the organization must provide a detailed list of materials to be housed, and the list reviewed and accepted by both parties.
- VI. Gifts-The Library welcomes donations to the Local History collection, provided they are in good condition (free of dirt, mold, moisture, and pests). Donors are asked to sign a "Statement of Gift," which transfers ownership of the gift to the Gale Free Library. The donor and library each will receive a copy of the Statement.
- The library reserves the right to decline donations. Examples include those that are out of scope, or that require preservation resources beyond what is feasible. This will be decided by the Head of Reference and the Library Director.
- VII. Weeding-The Gale Free Library reserves the right to withdraw materials that do not coincide with the Local History Collection guidelines. These items may be returned to donors, offered to other organizations, donated to the Friends of the Gale Free Library, added to the general collection or discarded.
- VIII. Policy Review-This policy, and its implementation, will be reviewed on an annual basis.

#### Additional Local History Room Policies and Procedures:

The Local History room is open during specified hours, which are posted. During this time, the Local History Librarian is available to assist patrons with their questions and research. Appointments for other times may be made at the librarian's convenience. For specialized research projects and questions, time may be arranged with the Local History Librarian for consultation.

Letters of inquiry about genealogy, local history, etc are answered when scheduling permits. If photocopying of this research material is required, a voluntary contribution representing the library's cost is requested.

Telephone and online questions are responded to by the Local History Librarian. Call backs and emails will be made if necessary.

Photocopying of most of the local history collection is permitted. Patrons are responsible for this procedure, but assistance will be given if needed. Cost of photocopying is the patron's responsibility. Photocopying of any fragile materials are to be handled by the staff. Materials that cannot be photocopied are clearly marked.

The microfilm reader/printer is available for public use. If necessary, instructions for use will be given. There is a minimal charge for printing. Reels must be rewound and returned to boxes after use. Patrons with their own reels are permitted use of the microfilm reader. Please check with staff to see if time is available.

If more than one research file folder is being used at a time, care must be taken that the contents of each folder are kept separate.

Books and other research materials are not to be re-shelved or filed by patrons. A designated area is provided for materials needing re-shelving.

In general, materials are not to be taken out of the Local History Room. However, if permission has been granted to temporarily move materials to another location (for example, if patron wishes to review materials that require a large work area), materials must be signed out under the supervision of a staff member, and must remain within view of a staff member while they are being used. When patron is done reviewing materials, they must be signed back in upon their return to the Local History Room, and approved by a staff member.

No eating or drinking is permitted in the Local History room.

## **INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP**

Freedom of expression, of speech and of the press, was proclaimed in the Bill of Rights to the United States constitution and is essential to the democratic form of government. As a public institution open to all without restriction of any kind and without charge, the public library has significant role to play in the preservation of an individual's access to the full range of information and knowledge. We have an obligation to provide our users with access to as wide a spectrum of materials as possible and without regard for the

possibility that some users may object to certain materials on moral, religious, political, or other grounds.

The library collections are developed with the entire community in mind. Selection of materials is predicated on the patron's right to be informed and his/her right to be free from censorship by others. Even though some materials are controversial and their content may offend individual users, selections are not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval. Works that present an aspect of life honestly are not necessarily excluded because of frankness of expression. Decisions rest on the merit of the work in relation to the development of collections and to serving the needs and interests of the community.

The presence of particular materials in the library's collection does not imply endorsement of the ideas expressed in those materials.

Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents. No item is sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury and theft.

Responsibility and authority for the listening to and reading and viewing of library materials by children and young adults rests with the parents or legal guardians. Materials are not excluded because of the possibility that children or young adults may obtain materials their parents or guardians consider objectionable.

The library endorses the principles of the *Freedom to Read* statement and the *Library Bill of Rights* adopted by the American Library Association. All documents and interpretations are incorporated as part of this selection policy (See Appendix).

The public has a right to request additions to the collection and to question material now in the collection. At the same time, the library is opposed to the removal from its shelves, at the request of any individual or group, of materials that have been chosen according to the materials selection policy. In addition, the library will oppose efforts on the part of an individual or group seeking to have materials added to the collection that are contrary to the selection policy. There is an established process for the reconsideration of library materials (See Appendix). Requests for reconsideration must be in writing and provide the name and address of the complainant. Anonymous or unwritten complaints are not considered as requests for reconsideration.

## **REVISION OF THE MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees from time to time and revised as required by changing circumstances.

## **APPENDICES - AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST BY PATRON**

1. Library Bill of Rights
2. Library Bill of Rights: Interpretations
  - a. Access for Children and Young People to DVDs and other Non-print Formats
  - b. Access to Electronic Information, Services and Networks
  - c. Information Resources and Access
  - d. Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Gender or Sexual Orientation
  - e. Challenged materials
  - f. Diversity in Collection Development
  - g. Economic Barriers to Information Access
  - h. Evaluating Library Collections
  - i. Expurgation of Library Materials
  - j. Free Access to Libraries for Minors
  - k. Restricted Access to Library Materials
  - l. Statement on Labeling
  - m. Universal Right to Free Expression
3. The Freedom to Read
4. Gifts: “Thank You” form for donations of materials
5. Gifts: “Gift to the Gale Free Library” form for monetary donations
6. Reconsideration of Library Materials: form
7. Reconsideration of Library Materials: procedure
8. Gale Free Library Internet Policy