

Middletown Public Library's Collection Development Policy

Purpose

This Collection Development Policy offers guidance to Library staff in the selection and retention of materials for the Middletown Public Library and serves to inform the public of the Library's principles for selection and collection maintenance.

General Principles

The Collection Development Policy is based on the Library's Mission and the long-established principles of the Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement, the Library Bill of Rights, and relevant interpretations, as adopted by the American Library Association (ALA).

Certain principles shape the nature and use of the collection. These include:

- The principle that the collection contains original ideas necessary for the functioning of a democratic society and therefore public opinion is not the sole guide for the selection of material.
- The principle that access to the collection is free and open to all age groups.
- The principle that the collection covers the interests and views of all age groups.

Collection Objectives

The Middletown Public Library provides a contemporary, relevant collection of resources in a wide range of formats to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of its community. The Library strives to meet these needs within the limitations of space, staffing, and budget. The Library endeavors to make use of new technologies and formats to offer library users the greatest access to information and ideas.

The Library maintains a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction materials. Materials and formats are not maintained past their relevance. This ensures a collection of current interest to our patrons. Textbooks and materials of a highly technical or specialized nature more appropriate for research or special libraries are generally excluded from the collection.

The Library strives to build a diverse collection that reflects our community and contains content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically represent a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

The Library recognizes that there are ideas, opinions, viewpoints, beliefs, and philosophies which are subject to discussion and debate and that any community will be made up of citizens with divergent viewpoints. The Library endeavors to provide access to diverse points of view within the limits of financial resources and physical space. Inclusion in the library's collection is not an endorsement of a particular point of view or belief.

Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. The Library Director delegates the responsibility for materials selection to library staff qualified by training or experience. All staff members and the Middletown community are encouraged to recommend materials for consideration.

General Criteria for Materials Selection

When considering materials for purchase, library staff refer to patron requests, reviews in professionally recognized publications, news media, recommended lists by professional organizations, literary awards, and the popularity of similar items.

Certain factors influence the selection of materials for the library's collection. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, will be reviewed in terms of the following standards:

- Community needs and interests
- The importance of the subject matter to the collection
- Authoritativeness
- Availability of the material in the Ocean State Libraries (OSL) consortium
- Price and availability
- Timeliness or permanence of the material
- Favorable reviews in professionally recognized publications

Elements of the Middletown Public Library Collection

Adult Nonfiction

Adult nonfiction is selected on the basis of permanent or timely value to the community and collection, accuracy of information, authoritativeness, clear presentation and readability, and social significance.

Adult Fiction

A range of genres and literary styles, anticipated popular demand, local interest or appeal, and patron requests to purchase are the main criteria for selection of adult fiction.

Teen

Materials in the teen collection are published for and marketed towards middle schoolers and/or high schoolers (grades 6-12, or ages 12-18). The teen collection includes fiction and popular non-fiction. Materials are selected based on anticipated popularity, patron requests, reviews, award lists, and representation within the collection. Resources for academic needs, including reference materials, may overlap somewhat with the children's collection at one end and the adult collection at the other. An effort is made to insure access to titles on the school summer reading lists. The resources of the entire Library are available to users in this age group.

Children's

This collection serves the needs of young people from birth to middle school and includes materials specifically designed to help children develop a love of reading, learn to read proficiently, and complete school assignments. Selections are based on professional resources and the requests of parents/guardians, children, and teachers. The durability and cost of specific formats are also taken into consideration. The resources of the entire Library are available to children who wish to go beyond the children's collection.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Newspapers and periodicals are selected on the basis of subject coverage, usefulness, interest, and readability. Decisions for selection in this category are based on patrons' interest, the available budget, and space limitations.

Media

The selection of media, such as DVDs, blu-rays, music CDs, audiobooks, video games, and other formats, will follow the same general criteria as that of print materials. The collection is maintained in formats that are in demand by Middletown users, reflect current technology, and conserve space.

Digital Collections

The Middletown Public Library offers access to subscription databases and digital collections. The selection of digital collections will follow the same general criteria as that of our physical collections and is based on budget restrictions. The library also provides access to digital collections that are offered through Ocean State Libraries and the Office of Library and Information Services.

Collection Maintenance

Collection maintenance or “weeding” is part of the continuous evaluation of the library collection by the professional library staff. In order to maintain a collection that is up to date, reliable, in good condition, and relates to the needs and interests of the patrons of the Middletown Public Library, materials are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Materials are withdrawn when they are deemed to be outdated, inaccurate, seldom used, or in poor condition.

Replacement of Materials

The library does not automatically replace items that are withdrawn from circulation due to loss, damage, or wear. Decisions will be made based on the following criteria:

- Demand for the specific material
- Number of copies held at the library and in the OSL consortium
- Availability of more up-to-date materials on the subject
- Funding

Gifts and donations

Gifts/donated materials are accepted by the Library with the understanding that they will not necessarily be added to the collection and with the provision that no conditions are placed on their use, location, or disposal. Gifts are evaluated by the same criteria as purchased items. All donations become the property of the library and cannot be returned. Gifts/donated material may be added to the library collection, sold for the benefit of the library, or disposed of in a manner appropriate to their condition and usefulness.

The Library cannot assess the value of gifts but, if requested, will provide a receipt for income tax purposes, stating the number of titles donated and the date of donation. Gifts of money for the purchase of memorial or other materials are accepted through the Friends of the Middletown Public Library. The donor may specify the general nature or subject area of material to be purchased. Selection of specific titles, however, will be made by the Director or their designee.

Local authors, self-published authors, unsolicited materials

Materials submitted by local authors, self-published authors, and unsolicited materials from publishers will be considered for inclusion in the library collection using the General Criteria for Materials Selection.

Censorship and Reconsideration of Library Materials

The choice of library materials by patrons is an individual matter. The library recognizes that some materials may be controversial or offensive to an individual, but maintains that individuals can apply their values only to themselves. No one can exercise censorship to restrict access to library materials by others. The library has a commitment to obtain and make available opposing views on controversial topics. The library does not promote or endorse particular beliefs or views but provides resources which can be freely examined by any individual in order to make a personal decision.

The selection of library materials is predicated on the customer's right of access to information and freedom from censorship. Many materials are controversial and any given item may offend some person. Selections are not made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but on the merits of the material and collection needs.

The library will not label materials or limit their availability based on a specific philosophy or belief. The library may temporarily relocate material to feature it on display. All displays will adhere to the Library Display Policy.

Selection of materials will not be inhibited or restricted by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of minors. Parents and guardians are responsible for overseeing their minor children's use of the Library's collections and services and determining which library materials are appropriate for their children. The Middletown Public Library does not stand in place of a parent and is not charged with a parent's rights, duties, and responsibilities.

The Middletown Public Library supports intellectual freedom and endorses the [American Library Association \(ALA\) Freedom to Read Statement](#), [Freedom to View Statement](#), [the Library Bill of Rights](#) and all relevant [interpretations](#). Patrons requesting reconsideration of library materials must complete the Middletown Public Library Request for Reconsideration form in its entirety. Only signed forms will be considered. The Library Director will acknowledge receipt of the form within two weeks. Anyone filling out the form must be a Middletown resident with an active Ocean State Libraries (OSL) library card.

The relevant library staff will review the material to ascertain whether it meets the standards set forth in the library's Collection Development Policy, and will make a written recommendation to the Library Director as to the validity of the request. During this process the material in question will remain on the shelf and available for circulation.

The Library Director, after reviewing the recommendation, will render a decision as to whether the library material remains on the shelf or is removed from the collection and will notify the patron of said decision. A final appeal may be made to the Library Board of Trustees.

A copy of the request form without identifying patron information will be sent to the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom.

Approved by the Middletown Public Library Board of Trustees on Tuesday, September 17, 2024