



Collection Development Policy

Introduction

The St. Joseph County Public Library Materials Selection policy exists to serve as a guide in the selection of materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. Library staff create collections and services for the community of contemporary interest and enduring value, featuring print, non-print and digital material. The Library acquires, organizes and maintains these materials in order for library patrons to improve the lives of our residents.

Objectives and Criteria of the Materials Selection Policy

It is the responsibility of the St. Joseph County Public Library to provide, within its financial ability, a diverse, equitable, and inclusive collection of materials which embraces broad areas of knowledge and interest -- including materials of contemporary significance and of permanent value.

The Library recognizes an obligation to make available materials for enlightenment and recreation, even though such materials may not have enduring interest or value. Major guidelines governing selection of Library materials are:

- Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A) and Diversity in Collection Development (Appendix E) of the American Library Association;
- The needs and demands of people and community organizations, both expressed and anticipated;
- The merit of the work (material is judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not by selected or random passages);
- The obligation to reflect within the collection differing points of view on controversial subjects;
- The existing collection, budget and services.

SJCPL recognizes the purpose and resources of colleges, universities, special libraries and information centers in the St. Joseph County area and does not needlessly duplicate functions and materials. The Library does not provide multiple copies for school use, nor does it supply locally adopted textbooks. Interlibrary loan service provides access to materials available from other libraries in the state when they are not available in our library.

Local Author Collection Policy

The St. Joseph County Public Library welcomes current residents of St. Joseph County to donate a copy of their new work to add to our Local Author Collection at the Main Library. Please fill out the Local Author Donation form located on the library's website.

Items related to local and family histories will be shelved in the Local and Family History Department.

Responsibilities for Materials Selection

The Library Board of the St. Joseph County Public Library has the final responsibility for selection of materials. The Library Board, in turn, delegates to the Library Director the authority to interpret and guide the application of the selection policy. The Director assigns librarians qualified by training or experience to the Collection Development Department to apply this policy in building and maintaining collections. Professional librarians in this department use their experience and knowledge of books, resources, publishers, and professional reviews in the process of selecting materials.

Labeling of Library Materials

Controversial library materials will not be marked or identified by Library personnel to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no item is controlled except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft following the Labeling and Rating Systems (Appendix F) of the American Library Association.

Use of Library Materials by Minors

The Library Bill of Rights and Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors (Appendix G) of the American Library Association states that the rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of age, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, socioeconomic or education level, or social or political views.

The responsibility for reading, listening to, viewing and using library materials and equipment by minors rests with parents or legal guardians.

Youth Selection Policy

In selecting library materials for children, the Library's policy is to provide a diverse, equitable, and inclusive collection that meets the informational, recreational, and cultural needs of children from birth through 8th grade.

Maintaining the Collections

The library will remove from its collections any materials which no longer serve a need based on currency, physical condition and demand. Items will be replaced or removed as appropriate. The library uses Evaluating Library Collections (Appendix H) from the American Library Association.

Replacement of a missing, lost and damaged item is based on availability, permanent value, and importance of the item, user demand and timeliness

Donated items will be managed in the same manner as purchased library materials (see section 6.2).

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The St. Joseph County Public Library recognizes that there may be complaints about specific titles and types of material selected for the Library's print, non-print and digital collections.

Individuals or organizations who wish to request an item for reconsideration must reside within the St. Joseph County Public Library service area and complete the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form located on the library's website. The Library will conduct a review following guidelines in Challenged Resources (Appendix I) from the American Library Association.