



## Materials Selection Policy

### Statements of Purpose

**Vision** The New Berlin Public Library is a vital community destination open to everyone.

**Mission** Provide a welcoming space for community connections with access to materials and services that enhance education, entertainment, culture, creativity, and curiosity.

### Principles

*Certain principles shape the nature and use of the Library collection:*

- The principle that the collection contains original, critical, and unorthodox ideas necessary for the functioning of a democratic society. Therefore, public opinion is not the sole guidance for the selection of material. It is the position of the Library Board of Trustees that society is at a greater risk through the suppression or censorship of information and ideas than from their free and open discussion.
- The principle of free and open use for all and that individual choice is paramount and protected. Materials are arranged in a way to facilitate access to the information. They are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents. No restriction is placed on their use except for the purpose of protecting them from injury or theft.
- The principle that the collection covers interests and views of all ages. The selection of materials for adults is not restricted by the possibility that children or adolescents may obtain materials some consider inappropriate.

The New Berlin Public Library and its Board of Trustees supports the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read, and the Freedom to View Statements which reaffirms these principles. These statements are located on the New Berlin Public Library website for viewing.

**Note:** "Materials" has the broadest possible meaning. It includes, but is not limited to, print, audiovisual, electronic and physical formats.

### Selection and Responsibility

**Selection**—Selection refers to the decision to retain as well as to add materials to the collection. It is based upon awareness of the diverse needs and interests of the individuals in this community, balanced against evaluation of material and knowledge of the collection's strengths and weaknesses. The selection policy is also shaped by the budget, space considerations and accessibility of alternative information sources, such as the Bridges Library System, in which the New Berlin Public Library is a member.

**Responsibility**—The Library Board of Trustees has the legal authority to establish and amend policy. The ultimate responsibility for selection of materials rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees.

This responsibility is shared by other members of the professional staff; however, because the Director must be able to answer to the Library Board and the public for actual selections made by the staff, he/she has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

### **Selection Criteria**

Materials are measured by objective guidelines. The entire work rather than individual parts is evaluated. It is the overall contribution of the work that is critical for acceptance or rejection. No single criterion can be applied to all materials. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated (see Donated below), are considered in terms of one or more of the following criteria:

- Contemporary significance, permanent value, or popular interest
- Quality of writing (style, readability)
- Accuracy, reliability, scope, and complexity of subject matter
- Date of publication and/or timeliness of content
- Prominence, authority, or competence of the author, creator, or publisher
- Literary merit
- Public recognition of author, editor, illustrator, film maker, or source vis-à-vis media, critic, etc.
- Relation to existing collection
- Price and availability
- Format, durability, and ease of use
- Scarcity of information on subject
- New Berlin author or local references
- Physical limitations of the library building
- The special needs of library patrons for materials in accessible formats

### **Digital Materials and Databases**

The New Berlin Public Library contributes funding support to digital materials and databases provided through state-or system-wide buying pool. These digital materials include audio, video, and electronic books, and are selected through the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium, which includes representatives from the Bridges Library System. The New Berlin Public Library has no direct control over the WPLC selection other than to recommend titles. Relevant selection committee and collection development policies are set through the appropriate organizations.

### **Collection Development Objective**

*Definition of Collection Levels*—The following terms are used to define both the extent of the existing collection in given subject areas (collection density) and the extent of current collection activity in the area (collection intensity).

**BASIC**— A small number of current titles indicative of a specific area of knowledge.

**STANDARD**— A selective group of standard titles emphasizing current materials which form the basis of a collection in specific areas of knowledge.

**REPRESENTATIVE**— A balanced collection, at a size slightly above the standard that covers most aspects of a subject field without going into great depth.

**CLASSIC**—Items of recognized and permanent value and/or enduring interesting and appeal; and/or definitive, reliable, authoritative.

**POPULAR**—Items geared to the understanding and taste of the general public, requiring no special knowledge or training to appreciate, as opposed to scholarly works for use by advanced researchers.

**MASTER**—A work of immense authority or greatness in the field. **CORE**—The most essential materials available in a subject area.

**ACCEPTED**—Those materials which are considered to be the standard works in a general or specific subject area.

Materials are selected with the primary purpose of being useful to the general public. The Library is a supplementary source for student use and generally does not collect textbooks or highly technical and scholarly works.

The Library's selection process relies upon the expertise and knowledge of the professional staff. Selection of specific items is based on knowledge of the existing collection, budgetary constraints, and community needs and interests. The process involves checking reviews in professional journals and popular book review sources and decisions are guided by, but not limited to, the following general criteria:

- Contemporary significance, permanent value, or popular interest
- Quality of writing (style, readability)
- Accuracy, reliability, scope, and complexity of subject matter
- Date of publication and/or timeliness of content
- Prominence, authority, or competence of the author, creator, or publisher
- Literary merit
- Public recognition of author, editor, illustrator, film maker, or source vis-à-vis media, critic, etc.
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## **A. Adult Collection**

### **Non-fiction**

The non-fiction collection emphasizes timely, accurate, and useful informational materials to support individual, business, government and community interests. It also emphasizes materials that are current and high-demand. Materials are available for all ages and reading levels and in a variety of formats.

Materials are selected to represent a continuum of opinions and viewpoints when available.

Titles with continued value and those of current, accepted authority are part of the library collection. Textbooks are included when they are the only source available on the subject, when useful to those doing independent study, or when they give an overview of a subject, but are not added in support of a specific curriculum. As a new field emerges, the library attempts to respond with timely additions.

When choices exist, selection is based on readability, clarity and appeal. Requests from library users are given high priority. When demand is high, multiple copies may be purchased, subject to budget limitations.

## **Fiction**

The collection focuses on twentieth and twenty-first century literature including classic and standard titles, diverse genres and special interests. There is no one standard for inclusion in the fiction collection. Each work is evaluated in comparison with other fiction works or authors of similar type. Because of the large volume of fiction published, it is possible to purchase only a representative selection with emphasis on major authors and the most popular examples of a genre. User requests from materials of this type influence the addition of additional copies.

Fictional subgenres, such as mysteries, romances, horror, thrillers, science fiction, fantasy, and western are purchased at a standard level. An effort is made to ensure access to a variety of titles on school summer reading lists.

Hardcover copies are preferred to paperback because of durability. However, the paperback fiction continues to expand because of public preference and because many titles are available only in this format.

## **Reference**

Many reference standards such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, directories, bibliographies, etc., are available online and via proprietary electronic databases to which the Library subscribes. Print reference materials are included within the non-fiction collection for circulation. Unique local historical titles may be held in the Reference Collection.

## **Recordings and Books on CD**

Currently, a balanced collection of recordings are available. In order to remain responsive to public need, the Library will evaluate new developments in the field of audiovisual formats for possible inclusion in the Library's collection.

## **DVDs/Blu-Ray**

DVDs and Blu-Ray DVDs are acquired according to general selection criteria

## **Electronic Databases**

Electronic databases, while not developed as part of the collection, are an integral part of the informational services the library provides, and as such, funds are allocated for their use. These databases are notable for their timeliness and efficiency in locating information. The Library subscribes to a core of electronic databases through the Bridges Library System and other vendors.

## **Other Print and Digital Materials, Magazines and Newspapers**

Periodicals are serials that are issued at stated intervals, generally more frequently than annually, and which contain separate articles, stories, and other writings. Periodicals are an important source of ideas and topics before such information is available in book form. In addition, they provide recreational, how-to, and consumer information. Periodicals represent an ongoing commitment in terms of subscription costs, storage, and binding.

In general, single subscriptions of a title are maintained. Selected titles are retained for one year in hard copy. Many additional periodical titles are available through the *BadgerLink* statewide network or through *OverDrive*, the online database we purchase cooperatively through Bridges Library System. *BadgerLink* and *OverDrive* greatly enlarge the amount and scope of information available to our customers. Informational, recreational, and cultural periodicals for children ages 4-12 are purchased for the juvenile collection and are reviewed yearly for additions and deletions.

*The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the *Waukesha Freeman*, and *New Berlin Now* are the priority purchases of newspapers, followed by the *Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. Copies of newspapers are held for a maximum of two months.

## **Collections for English as a Second Language**

While the New Berlin Public Library has defined its clients as the residents of New Berlin and Waukesha and Jefferson Counties, the general statements in the collection development plan apply to adult readers of English. However, the Library will purchase foreign language materials as appropriate for local demographics.

### **B. Young Adult Collection**

The Library makes available materials in a variety of formats that are aimed at addressing the needs and concerns of young adult users. In general, Young Adult Services is geared to the middle school and high school age, overlapping somewhat with Youth Services at one end of the range and those for adults at the other. There is, however, a wide range of users for these materials and this factor is given consideration when developing this collection.

Needs of young adults differ in kind and intensity from needs of adult users. These users often look to the library for materials and resources to meet academic demands. Young adult materials are selected from the same criteria used in selection of adult materials, but with the focus of the experience, maturity and interests of young people.

The themes in young adult fiction generally center on the struggle to develop an identity and set of values and to find a place in the larger community. Every effort is made to provide teenagers with fiction that deals with their concerns in open, honest ways, and which meets their recreational and academic needs.

Teenagers read non-fiction extensively to gain information on topics of concern to them, such as personal appearance, sex education, careers/colleges, crisis and coping information, hobbies, music, school assignments, social justice, etc. The staff makes every effort to purchase books which are clearly written and appealing to this age range.

## **C. Youth Services Collection**

Materials in the Youth Services collection are selected in response to the needs and interests of young people, recognizing their diverse tastes, backgrounds, abilities and potentials.

In choosing materials for children, age is a determining selection principal. Materials are evaluated for reading level and treatment of the subject for the intended audience. In addition to the general criteria list, other considerations include illustrations, vocabulary and theme.

In addition, Youth Services also provides materials for parents, supplemental resources for homeschool families, and resources for teachers.

### **Donated Materials**

Donated materials are added to the library collection using the same criteria as that governing original material selection. Donations of new titles, books on special subjects, or collections of unique value and/or great interest which meet the criteria are processed.

Used books in good condition are evaluated for potential use as duplicates, replacements, or new titles. If they warrant the expense of processing, they are added to the collection.

The Library Director may determine whether gifted materials in good condition, but not needed, will be donated to the Friends of the New Berlin Public Library, Inc., the proceeds of which are used to benefit the Library. The Library will not accept donations with odor, water damage, rot or bug infestation and will determine how to dispose of those donated materials that are not suitable for the library or for donation to the Friends of the Library.

The Library cannot be responsible for the appraisal of gifts for income tax or any other purposes.

No conditions may be imposed to any gift after its acceptance by the Library.

### **Recommendation and Reconsideration of Library Materials**

The public has a right to request materials to the collection and to question material currently in the collection. Recommendation and Reconsideration request forms are available with a Librarian or on the Library's [website](#).

### **Reconsideration of Materials**

The New Berlin Public Library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some clients. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this collection policy.

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 injury or theft.

Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that these items may come into possession of children. Responsibility for what children read or view rests with their parents or legal guardians. Parents/guardians may inquire with the librarian about the library's policy and procedure for placing restrictions on their child's library card.

To request for material to be withdrawn from the collection, moved or sequestered must complete a "Material Selection Inquiry." The inquiry will be reviewed by the staff and the Director.

### **Material Selection Inquiry Process**

*The process for responding to the Inquiry will be as follows:*

1. A "Material Selection Inquiry Form" may be obtained from the Librarian and must be filled out by the complainant. Use one form per item.
2. The inquiry will be reviewed by the staff and the Library Director.
3. During the process of reconsideration, questioned materials remain in the active collection until an official decision is made.
4. The Librarian in charge of the applicable section or collection will meet with the individual making the inquiry.
5. If agreement is not reached in the first step, then the second step is a meeting with the Library Director and the Librarian in charge of the section/collection.
6. If agreement is not reached in the second step, then the complainant is referred to the Library Board. The inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the New Berlin Public Library Board of Trustees. To allow staff sufficient time to investigate and respond to the inquiry, forms received less than seven days before that month's meeting may be postponed to the next month's meeting.
5. As a non-partisan, quasi-governmental body, the Board will not base its determination on personal bias or prejudice or because the materials or their author/creator may be viewed as controversial or objectionable.
6. The Library Board's decision is final.

### **Previous Reconsideration Requests**

Requests to reconsider materials, which have previously undergone the reconsideration process, will be referred to the Library Director. Repeated or redundant requests by an individual or a group to reconsider materials with differing titles but similar content will be restricted as follows:

- If the Library Director concludes a request may be redundant, he/she will notify the complainant(s) that the item(s) in question, having already undergone a thorough review and reconsideration process, will not be reevaluated.
- In the event that a complainant charges a particular item is not protected under the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, the onus of proof rests with the complainant.

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