

Section 11: Materials Selection Policy

11.0 Materials Selection Policy.

11.1 Philosophy and Goals. The mission of the Rowley Public Library is to make available a broad range of library materials, to provide up-to-date and accurate information, and to offer services and programs desired by the community of Rowley. The Library also acts as the most convenient point of access for the needed materials and information and actively seeks to make community members and organizations aware of library resources and services.

11.1 What Is Provided. The Rowley Library provides books, periodicals, printed matter, audio, and audiovisual materials for all ages that seek information, mental stimulation and enrichment, or entertainment for their leisure hours. Because library materials and information come in a wide variety of formats, the Library fulfills its mission by buying materials in both print and non-print form. Cassettes, compact disks, and DVDs are examples of some formats being purchased.

- Members of the staff select library materials after consulting professional review media. Staff members consult with each other to review the needs of the community as documented in circulation statistics and requests. Final responsibility for the purchase of materials resides with the Director of the Library.
- The Rowley Public Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in the "Library Bill of Rights," a document issued by the American Library Association. Included in this statement is the commitment to honor the rights of an individual to use the library regardless of age, race, religion, national origin, or social or political views. Accordingly, the staff of the library provides equal service to all Library users. Children and adults are equally free to use the entire library and to borrow all materials in the circulating collection.

11.2 Objectives & Criteria for Selection, The library strives to maintain its permanent collection by acquiring material that is of historical, literary, or practical worth. Selection is considered a judgmental and interpretive process involving: a general knowledge of the subject, a familiarity with the materials in the collection, and recognition of other needs of the community.

- Library staff attempt to meet the patrons' demands. Material is bought that is both pertinent and timely. Books that have current political and social significance are given high priority for selection. The Library makes a special effort to obtain material representing all sides of controversial issues. Staff members look to see that the author presents his or her material accurately, clearly, and in a readable manner.
- The Library updates materials in the areas of education, health, government, technology, science, and current events to meet the informational needs of our patrons. Local history and genealogical materials relating to Rowley are particularly sought for the collection. Histories, vital records, town reports, pamphlets about Rowley, books by local authors, and books about this area are collected.
- The Library will consider whether or not the material under consideration duplicates materials already in the Library's collection. Each resource must be considered for its

value, its format, and the audience for which it is intended. No single criterion is applicable to all purposes. Some resources may be judged primarily for their artistic merit, scholarship, or value to humanity; others are chosen to satisfy the informational, recreational or educational interests of the community.

- Selection decisions are made based on a variety of evaluative activities performed by the staff. Tools used in this process are professional journals and professional reviews from sources such as *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, *VOYA*, and popular reviewing media such as *Amazon.com* and *The New York Times Book Review*.
- Materials in a variety of formats are considered for inclusion in the Library's collection, including books, serials (such as periodicals and newspapers), and other print materials; videocassettes, audiocassettes, CD-ROM, online electronic reference resources, CDs, and DVDs. The content of an item is analyzed for appropriateness of format; when identical information is offered in a variety of formats, appropriateness to the overall collection is considered.
- The Library leaves to parents the job of determining what a child may view or read. Otherwise, each reader is privileged to select for himself or herself among the items the Library has purchased, and no one is obliged to read what they do not like.
- The strengths and weaknesses of the total collection are continually under review and efforts are made to improve weak areas and replace worn or outdated material through selective acquisition of materials.
- The Library has request forms that patrons can fill out for any materials they wish to request. The forms are kept on the Circulation Desk, or patrons can ask if they don't see them.

11.3 Responsibility for Selection. The Board of Trustees formulates policies for the selection of all materials within the broad framework of the objectives and purposes of the Library. The Trustees delegate the responsibility of implementing these policies through materials selection to the Library Director.

The Library Director will ensure that the library staff purchase materials in conformance with these policies for selection. No Library employee shall be dismissed for the selection of library materials made in good faith and in accordance with this policy.

11.4 Gifts and Memorials. Donations of books and materials to the library are welcomed, with the understanding that the same criteria of selection will be applied before adding donated materials to the collection. When these items are accepted, it is with the understanding that such donations are final, that materials become the exclusive property of the Library and that the Library controls their disposition in whatever way is deemed appropriate. The Library cannot guarantee that any gift will be part of the collection or that it will be kept permanently. Those materials not selected will be refused, sold, or discarded.

- No donations that are accompanied by qualifying instructions as to disposition, housing, or use will be accepted.
- The Library welcomes monetary gifts for the purchase of books and other library materials. Those making monetary donations may wish to recommend how their

contributions are to be used. The Library will comply with such requests whenever possible. The Library reserves the right, however, to commit donations to services and projects in keeping with its priorities.

- The Library also accepts monetary contributions for materials to be purchased as designated memorials. Gifts of any size are welcomed for this.

11.5 Weeding. Systematic removal of materials no longer useful to the collection is essential in maintaining the purposes and quality of resources. Weeding is as important as the original selection, and the same criteria are applied in order to assure the development of a timely and quality collection.

The Rowley Public Library uses criteria from *The CREW Method; Expanded Guidelines for Collection Evaluation and Weeding for Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries* by Belinda Boon (Austin, Texas: The Texas State Library, 1995).

CREW stands for “continuous review, evaluation, and weeding.” This method has been time tested and is very valuable. The CREW method gives six general criteria for considering weeding an item from a library's collection. These have been summed up with the acronym MUSTIE:

M	Misleading, factually inaccurate
U	Ugly, worn beyond mending or rebinding
S	Superseded by a new edition of by a much better book on the subject
T	Trivial, of no discernible literary or scientific merit
I	Irrelevant to the needs and interests of the library's community
E	Elsewhere—the material is easily obtainable from another library

11.5.1 Age & Usage Criteria. There are two factors that contribute to a MUSTIE evaluation, although these factors vary according to the type of material and subject matter. They are the age of the material and usage statistics. For example, the CREW handbook suggests that any book in medicine (the Dewey 610s) that is more than five years old should be considered for weeding. In history (the Dewey 930s–990s), the age of materials does not become an issue until they are 15 years old. In most areas of non-fiction, materials that have not checked out in three years can be considered for weeding. In fiction, if a book has not gone out in two years, it can become a candidate for weeding. The CREW handbook gives these criteria in detail for all the Dewey classes and also covers audiovisual materials. It also supplies very useful comments that can help staff make professional judgments about weeding.

It should be noted that while the criteria listed in the *CREW Manual* represent general guidelines for the field, the Rowley Library may use slightly different criteria, depending on the situation.

The Rowley Public Library also uses criteria for possibly keeping materials that would otherwise be weeded. Some typical criteria for keeping materials include:

- **Special Collections/Strong Local Interest.** The Rowley Library has an extensive collection of genealogy and local history texts that will always stay a part of the

collection. In addition, the Library has collections of gardening and other topics that are specific to Rowley that may be kept longer than other non-fiction materials.

- **Outstanding Literary, Historical, or Scientific Value.** Some books or other materials may be kept because they are simply very important. Some of these books may have achieved classic status. Other books, while not classics, appear in lists of recommended titles, which means that experts in the field feel that they are especially valuable. The most commonly used recommended lists are the Wilson catalogs. These include: *The Children's Catalog* (<http://www.hwwilson.com/print/childcat.htm>) for fiction and non-fiction for elementary school age children, *The Middle and Junior High School Catalog* for both fiction and non-fiction (<http://www.hwwilson.com/print/mjhscat.htm>), *The Senior High School Catalog* for fiction and non-fiction (<http://www.hwwilson.com/print/srhscat.htm>), *The Public Library Catalog* for adult non-fiction (<http://www.hwwilson.com/print/publibcat.htm>), and *The Fiction Catalog* (<http://www.hwwilson.com/print/fictcat.htm>) for adult fiction.

When it is decided that a book should be "kept," it doesn't necessarily mean that the same copy that has been considered for weeding is kept. The book may be rebound or replaced with a newer copy. If neither of these actions is possible, the status of the book may be changed. It may be removed from the circulating collection and placed in the reference collection, for example.

11.6 Controversial Selections. Any resident of Rowley that has a concern regarding the selection of a specific title is welcome to discuss the interpretation the matter with the Library Director. Should the resident desire further edification from the governing body of the Library, the resident should put their concerns in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board will then study the matter relative to the individual concern and the selection principles as promulgated.

Any individual who desires may express his or her objections to particular Library materials by completing a *Statement of Concern about Library Materials* form (see below). After the form is completed, it will be brought to the attention of the Library Director, who will evaluate the original reasons for the purchase of the material. The Library Director will then respond to the person making the objection. The Board of Library Trustees will address any remaining objections.

Rowley Public Library
STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY MATERIALS

Name _____ Date _____
Address _____ Phone _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Resource on which you are commenting:

_____ Book _____ Audio-visual Resource
_____ Magazine _____ Content of Library Program
_____ Newspaper _____ Other

Title: _____

Author/Publisher or Producer/Date: _____

1. What brought this resource to your attention?
2. To what do you object? Please be as specific as possible.
3. Have you read or listened or viewed the entire content? If not, what parts?
4. What do you feel the effect of the material might be?
5. For what age group would you recommend this material?
6. In its place, what material of equal or better quality would you recommend?
7. What do you want the library to do with this material?

Additional comments:

11.7 Fiction Collection. The Library attempts to purchase a wide variety of fiction to satisfy the needs of all of our borrowers. The Library staff choose titles on the basis of reviews that consider, among other things, the appeal of a book for a specific audience, the artistic skill evident in its rendering, and the literary reputation of the author.

11.8 Non-Fiction Collection. This collection emphasizes timely, accurate, and useful informational materials and those which are current and in high demand.

Non-fiction is selected to represent a continuum of opinions and viewpoints when available. Textbooks are included when they are the only source available on a 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. Requests from Library users are given high priority.

11.9 Paperbacks. Paperbacks selected for the adult paperback collection serve three main purposes. First, some paperbacks are added to meet the demand for popular, easily portable, inexpensive reading material. Second, duplicate copies of popular hard cover titles are purchased to meet heavy demand. Third, duplicate copies of some titles on school reading lists are purchased to make these titles readily available as they are needed.

Because paperbacks are inexpensive, relative to hard cover books, and because they are easily damaged, their cataloging and processing are kept to a minimum. A balanced paperback collection is not a primary goal, and books frequently are weeded. These considerations result in a paperback collection that is constantly changing and useful mainly for browsing.

11.10 Reference Collection. Reference materials are for use in the library. Reference works include encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, directories, bibliographies, etc., as well as more specialized materials that support the information needs of Library users. Since many reference titles are expensive and are published in multiple volumes, budgetary and space limitations heavily influence purchases for this collection.

11.11 Local History & Genealogy Collection. The Rowley Library has an extensive collection of local history and genealogy materials and assembles and maintains this collection. The Local History Room is equipped with stand-alone temperature and humidity controls for the preservation of fragile items. The library encourages citizens and historic groups to donate written materials and maps, relevant to Rowley's history, for preservation and use.

11.12 Children's Collection. Materials selected for the children's collection meet similar standards as all other materials selected for the Library's collection. Special effort is made to continuously update the collection and to weed worn and outdated materials. High priority for purchase is given to books of use and value to parents, teachers, and other people working with children.

- The Children's Department strives to provide children with the materials necessary to aid their educational and personal development. Some items may be included that might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children. While some books are too mature for one child, other children may be ready for them. Only each child and his or her parents can decide what material is suitable for that child to read.
- Elementary and high school libraries serve the curriculum needs of the students. While not duplicating these resources or attempting to follow all the changes in curriculum, the Rowley Public Library does recognize the need to provide a wide variety of cultural and recreational reading matter for students and to provide some basic class related materials for students seeking to complete their assignments outside school hours.

11.13 Young Adult Collection. The young adult user of the Library has access to the entire collection. Limitations to be placed upon the reading materials of the young adult are left to the discretion of the parents.

- A young adult collection has been developed for the purpose of meeting the recreational reading and informational needs of the middle school and high school age population. Materials are chosen from reviews in journals or through book lists from established sources. The fiction collection consists primarily of YA fiction from many genres. Some adult titles of special interest to young adults also are included. The resources of the entire library are available to young people who wish to go beyond the children's and young adult collections. For additional information on this topic, please refer to the following two references:

- “Free Access to Libraries for Minors”, found online at:
<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=Interpretations&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8639>
- “Access For Children And Young People To Non-Print Materials” found at:
<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=Interpretations&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=31870>

11.14 Periodicals. The Library attempts to purchase a wide variety of periodicals to satisfy the needs and interests of all of our borrowers.