

Stoneham Public Library

431 Main Street, Stoneham, Massachusetts 02180

Materials Selection Policy

The Stoneham Public Library selects, organizes, preserves and makes available materials that contribute to the cultural, educational, and recreational enrichment of our diverse community. The Materials Selection Policy establishes guidelines for the selection and placement of books and other materials in the Stoneham Public Library.

A. Principles of Selection

1. The Stoneham Public Library obtains, organizes and makes available print and non-print materials which record the thought, expression, and opinion of mankind. Within the limits of space and budget, the collection offers patrons materials in a choice of format, treatment, and level of difficulty. In this way most individual library needs can be met and service provided to individuals of all ages.
2. The professional staff of the Library in making selections should do so in a manner based upon principle rather than personal opinion, reason rather than prejudice, and judgment rather than censorship.
3. To build collections of merit and significance, materials must be measured by a number of criteria. The basic test for selection of any item is whether it is of proven or potential interest to the people served. Other factors to be considered in adding specific materials to the Library's collection shall include: present collection composition, demand, timeliness, the current audience, significance of subject, suitability of physical form to library use, permanent value as source material, budgetary or space restrictions, viewpoint diversity, and the contribution of a work to its subject area. Both the adult and youth collections will contain supplementary sources for student use, but the Library cannot provide sole curriculum support. The Library usually will not purchase textbooks. Suggestions of items and subjects to be considered for inclusion in the Library collection by the public are encouraged. Professional staff shall regularly consider all suggestions for purchase according to the materials selection policy.
4. Materials should be selected both to satisfy the prevalent tastes, needs and reading abilities in the community and to provide diversity in recognition of changing and minority interests. In choosing materials to suit a variety of tastes, differing viewpoints on controversial issues will be included. The Library neither approves nor disapproves the views expressed in materials included in the collection.

5. The library does not serve as censor of the reading of any member of the community. It should be clearly understood and emphasized that the library does not endorse all opinions expressed in the materials which are stocked.

6. It should also be recognized that some materials chosen may be offensive to some readers but may be meaningful and significant to others. Works being considered should be viewed as a whole, not in isolated parts.

7. Responsibility for the reading of minors rests with their parents or local guardians. Selection of adult material will not be restricted by the possibility that these materials may come into the possession of minors. The library should not be expected to act in loco parentis.

8. In providing materials for student use the library cannot provide multiple copies of individual books or textbooks for school assignments, nor can it duplicate subject materials extensively.

B. Responsibility for Selection

1. The initial responsibility for materials selection lies with the professional staff at the library operating within the areas of service to children, young adults, and adults. All staff members and the general public may recommend material for consideration. Professional staff shall regularly consider all suggestions for purchase according to the materials selection policy.

C. Placement of Materials

1. Placement of materials within each library is generally based upon assigned classification and appropriate age groupings.

2. The public has free access to all library materials. Those items which themselves need protection because of rarity, cost, susceptibility to loss or damage, fragility or format unsuited to heavy use are available on a limited basis.

D. Disposal of Materials

1. In order to maintain a vital, current collection which meets the needs of the community, examination of materials is an ongoing process. When library books lose the value for which they were originally selected, they should be withdrawn. An item is considered for discard when it is Obsolete, misleading or outdated, worn beyond use, damaged, no longer circulating and/or used for reference purposes, or one of many copies of a formerly popular title. Space availability and low circulation over a period of time are other factors that may influence the withdrawal decision.

2. Withdrawn materials are not automatically replaced. Replacement is considered

in relation to adequate coverage in a specific subject area, availability of more current or better titles, suitability according to this selection policy and demand for the title.

E. Gifts of Materials

1. Donations of materials or funds to enrich the library collection are welcome. Gift additions must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. The right to accept or refuse conditions placed upon gifts of materials or funds is reserved to the professional staff at the library.

2. Gifts, including memorial items, are subject to these withdrawal and replacement policies.

3. Upon request a note of receipt will be issued for donated items. However, it is the donor's responsibility to determine the fair market value of the donated materials.

F. Reconsideration of Library Materials

1. Any library patron who is a resident of Stoneham may question the presence of an item in the Library's collection. If the patron concludes that a specific item does not meet the guidelines of the Materials Selection Policy, he or she may complete a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form. The completed form will be reviewed by the professional staff including the Library Director, and the patron will be informed of the disposition of the request.

2. Patrons not satisfied with this disposition may then appeal to the Board of Trustees through the Library Director, who will forward the request to the Board along with staff recommendations. After reading the item in question and full consideration of the specific material, the Board of Trustees shall make final determination of the matter. The patron shall be notified of this action in a timely manner.