

**WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**  
**September 17, 1996**

**Library Mission Statement**

The West Hartford Public Library System shall serve as the central cultural, educational and informational resource for the West Hartford community:

- by assembling, organizing and administering collections of information in a variety of formats;
- by facilitating free access to its collections;
- by providing entry to the developing regional, national and global information infrastructure;
- and by encouraging the use of library resources for reference, education, recreation and personal growth.

**Purpose of Materials Selection Policy**

The purpose of the Materials Selection Policy is to guide the librarians and to inform the public of the principles upon which selections are made. Basic to the Policy are the "Library Bill of Rights", as adopted by the American Library Association and the "Freedom to Read Statement" issued jointly by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers. These documents are included as Appendices A and B. The policy is directed toward building and maintaining, within the limits imposed by available funds and space, a collection of library materials representing a comprehensive range of interests, tastes, viewpoints, values and levels of ability. The intent is that the collection be balanced in order to serve the greatest number of library users and potential library users within the West Hartford community.

**Types of Materials**

The library provides access to information in a wide variety of print and non-print formats. Presently, books, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, government documents, maps, videocassettes, audiocassettes, CD-ROMs, microfilm, and educational toys are included in the library's collection. In addition, the library purchases access to information through databases, information services and online services. In the future the types of materials acquired will change as new technologies become available.

**Criteria of Selection**

Materials selection is an interpretive process based on the professional knowledge and judgment of the staff. This knowledge includes familiarity with all types of materials, familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of the existing collections, and awareness of the needs of the community. Staff members consult standard bibliographic works and published reviews in professional and general periodicals for evaluations of available materials. Suggestions from patrons are welcome and are given serious consideration. General criteria applied in selecting library materials include:

1. Suitability of physical form for library use.
2. Suitability of subject and style for intended audience.
3. Present and potential relevance to community needs.
4. Insight into human and social condition.
5. Importance as a document of the times.

6. Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject.
7. Availability of similar materials through interlibrary loan.
8. Reputation and/or significance of author.
9. Skill, competence and purpose of author.
10. Attention of critics, reviewers and public.
11. Local Interest.
12. Library Presentations.
13. Heavy demand for popular items.
14. Budget Limitations.

The library will collect local and state historical materials and works of local authors. Legal, technical and medical works will be acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the general public.

Textbooks may be purchased when the subject content constitutes the best available source of needed information. It is not the responsibility of the library to supply textbooks or curriculum material used in the local schools, nor multiple copies of a title sufficient to meet the simultaneous need of every student in a class.

### **Children's Materials Selection**

The Children's Division provides materials for children from infancy through eighth grade; for example, books, magazines, audio and videocassettes, compact discs, computer programs, and toys, as well as materials for parents. Juvenile materials are selected with the same care and judgment as adult materials, and are kept on open shelves where they are available to all children. Children may borrow materials from the adult collection. Ultimate responsibility for children's reading matter rests with their parents or guardians.

### **Gifts**

The library welcomes gifts of books and other materials, applying to such gifts the same standards of selection that govern purchases. Gift materials are accepted with the understanding that those which are useful to the library will be retained and other items disposed of at the library's discretion. Donations of funds to be used for the West Hartford Library Foundation's purchase of materials are also welcome. The wishes of the donors will be considered in the selection of the materials.

The library does not appraise gifts nor provide evaluations of gifts for tax purposes. Collections of books will not be accepted with conditions or restrictions which necessitate special housing or which dictate the ultimate disposal of materials no longer needed.

### **Discarding**

The library has an obligation to discard materials that are obsolete or in poor condition, as well as duplicate copies of titles no longer in demand. Disposal of materials withdrawn from the collection will be governed by the Library Board's Policy on Discarded Materials.

### **Controversial Materials**

The library recognizes that some materials may offend some patrons. Selections will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collections and to serving the interests of library patrons. Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of adult materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents and no materials will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of storage or protecting it from mutilation or theft. The selection of any material is not a library endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. A patron wishing to recommend the exclusion of an item from the collection must submit to the Library Director a signed statement giving reasons for such exclusion. Such recommendations will be considered by the Library Director, the staff and Library Board. The decision, based on the principles in this Materials Selection Policy, will be forwarded to the patron. This decision will be final unless overruled by a court of competent authority.

### **Responsibility**

The Library Board delegates authority to the Director and staff to interpret and apply the Materials Selection Policy. Final responsibility for selection lies with the board.

Approved by the West Hartford Library Board  
September 17, 1996