

## **Thomaston Public Library Collection Development and Maintenance Policy**

### **Purpose and Scope**

This policy of the Thomaston Public Library (the "Library") provides direction for the growth and development of the collections of the Library and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. The mission of the Thomaston Public Library is to provide accurate, timely, and useful materials in a variety of formats and technologies. Library and other educational material are collected in response to public demand and with reference to the informational, educational, recreational, professional, cultural and other needs of the community. The Library supports lifelong learning and the love of reading.

It is the objective of the Library to provide accessible materials for people of all ages, making available carefully selected materials that will meet the needs and interests of the Thomaston community. The Library aims to provide library materials for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides residents with access to the widest array of library and other educational materials. Library materials should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole. The Library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

This policy applies to the both the digital and print materials in the Library's collection. This policy provides guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials that anticipate and meet the needs of the community. It also addresses collection maintenance, including replacement and weeding of materials.

All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the CT General Statutes and is in accordance with Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322, 323.

### **Key Definitions**

The Library's collection is the assemblage of books and other materials, in a variety of formats (print, electronic media, downloadable audio books, digital, etc.), owned or licensed and maintained by the Library and made available to the public at no cost.

### **Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

Specific acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular, or controversial in nature. The Library's acquisition of such items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression. The Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom adopted by the American Library Association as expressed in the following documents:

- [Library Bill of Rights](#)
- [The Freedom to Read Statement](#)
- [The Freedom to View Statement](#)

No library material, display or program shall be removed, or programs be cancelled, because of origin, background, or viewpoints expressed in such material, display, or program or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display, or program. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the CT General Statutes.

### **Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials**

Library Director and professionally trained staff select library materials in accordance with policies approved by the Library Board of Trustees. These staff members are tasked with selecting, maintaining, replacing, and weeding materials to ensure the collection provides broad access to library and educational resources. Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials.

Consortium-level collections may be subject to additional collection criteria. Additionally, some 3<sup>rd</sup> party services make it difficult to individually select or deselect items based on quality standards, but only on price or format.

### **Selection Criteria**

The selection of materials is guided by the professional knowledge and judgment of Library staff, whose expertise includes familiarity with a wide range of resources, an understanding of the strengths and gaps within the existing collection, and awareness of the needs and interests of the community as well as having the professional training to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library materials. Patron suggestions are always welcome and given thoughtful consideration; however, final decisions rest with Library staff, who will determine which suggestions are appropriate for action.

To build and maintain a collection based on professionally accepted standards of material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age appropriate or grade-level material, continued demand of material, the Library applies the following general criteria when considering materials for acquisition:

- Public demand, interest, or need
- Favorable assessments by reputable critics, reviewers, or organizations in professionally recognized publications
- Anticipated potential for long-term public interest
- Prominence and credibility of author/illustrator and publisher
- Relation to existing collection and other material on the subject
- Timeliness and importance of material as a document of the times; current or historical significance of the author or subject
- Value of resource in relation to price, availability, and materials budget
- Compatibility of format for Library use

- Suitability of subject or style for intended audience
- Local origination or relevance to Thomaston, CT, and the region
- Existing holdings and availability at other libraries through resource sharing
- Availability of electronic bibliographic records

The Library cannot purchase all materials requested but will attempt to extend its resources through our consortium and interlibrary loan.

Textbooks will generally not be considered for the collection unless they are the best or only available source of information in their subject area and serve the general public and adult learning community. The Library does not purchase copies of textbooks for use by students.

Self-published books by local or Connecticut authors will be considered for the Library collection if they are donated, meet the Library's standards of quality, and are determined to be of suitable interest to the public.

Library materials, displays, and programs shall only be excluded based on legitimate, professionally recognized standards as outlined in the Library's *Collection Development and Maintenance Policy* and *Material Display and Program Policy*. Any librarian or Library staff member who, in good faith, carries out the responsibilities and decisions described in these policies shall be immune from civil or criminal liability and shall be afforded the same protection in any judicial proceeding arising from such implementation.

### **Youth Selection Guidelines**

The Children's collection offers developmentally relevant materials that meet the informational and recreational needs of children ages birth through high school. In addition, the Children's collections contain materials on child development for parents and caregivers.

The Juvenile collection is relevant, of appropriate size and quality, and represents a diversity of views and expressions and is aimed at children from birth through grade 6. To ensure the collection is appropriate and well-chosen, the children's librarian consults professional review sources as well as the recommendations of readers, including children, educators, parents, and caregivers.

The Teen collection offers developmentally relevant materials that meet the informational and recreational needs of preteens and teenagers in grades 7 and up. The Library maintains a collection that is relevant, of appropriate size and quality, and represents a diversity of views and expressions.

### **Digital Collections & Databases**

The Library has some collections & databases made available state-wide or at the consortium level that may be governed by an additional set of collection criteria. The Library also individually may pay for access to some digital collections as a whole or with limited ability to choose within the collection.

Wherever possible, the Library makes electronic information available in the Library and remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for

selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. The Library will make every effort to provide assistance and ensure that the public learns how to use its electronic databases and collections.

### **Collection Maintenance**

Weeding is a term used by libraries to describe the careful and ongoing removal of materials from their collections. Such items may contain outdated or inaccurate information, have multiple duplicate copies, lack of demand, obsolete or erroneous information, or in poor condition. At the Library, weeding is performed as a regular, ongoing process by qualified staff and the Library Director for the purpose of keeping all collections current and useful. Weeded materials in good condition may be sold, donated, or disposed of in any way the Library deems appropriate. Generally, standard titles of permanent value and materials of local significance are spared weeding even if they may meet criteria for weeding.

If an item is lost or damaged, it may not necessarily be replaced depending upon the number of duplicate copies or similar materials in the collection, existence of adequate coverage of the subject, and demand for the specific author, title or subject. It is sometimes preferable to purchase current materials rather than replace older ones. Patrons may keep paid-for damaged items.

### **Gifts and Donations**

The Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials for the collection and applies to them the same standards of selection that govern purchases. Gift materials are accepted with the understanding that those that meet the Library's selection criteria may be retained and those that do not may go into the Library book sale or be redistributed to other non-profit organizations.

The Thomaston Public Library does not assess the value of donated materials.

The Library welcomes funds to be used for the purchase of materials and the wishes of the donor, as well as our regular selection standards, will be considered in selecting materials with monetary gifts. Gift plates with appropriate information will be included if the donor so desires. These items are still subject to the library's weeding procedures.

### **Controversial Materials**

The Library recognizes that some materials may not be considered appropriate by all patrons.

Selections will not be made based upon anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the overall library patron community.

Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing habits of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. The Library maintains several age-appropriate collections for children and teens. Some materials in the juvenile collection might not be considered appropriate by adults for children. Only each child and their parent or caregiver can decide what material is suitable for that child.

Some materials in the Teen collection might not be considered appropriate by adults for teenagers. While some books could be too mature for one teen, other teens may be ready for them. Only each teen and/or with their parent or caregiver can decide what material is suitable for that teen to read.

Selection of adult material will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children, nor of teen material to younger children. The removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive is prohibited.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft. With the exception of certain valuable, fragile, and/or irreplaceable materials, the library's collection will be on open shelves arranged to provide a maximum of self-service and browsing.

The decision by an author, publisher, or other content creator to withdraw their work from the market and stop selling or publishing it will not be considered sufficient reason alone for the Library to withdraw it from the collection.

The Library recognizes not all users will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Therefore, some materials selected for the collections may seem controversial and even distasteful to some Library users. It is the right of the individual not to read, view or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of any Library user or users to deny access to Library materials to others. The freedom to choose from a broad range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged.

### **Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy**

The Thomaston Public Library Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of hearing from the public regarding material selection. The Library Director and staff likewise value suggestions made by Thomaston, CT residents. The completion of the *Request for Reconsideration* form does not guarantee removal from the collection but does ensure the attention of Library Staff to user opinion, interests, and concerns. The library limits consideration of requests to reconsider materials, material displays or programs to residents of Thomaston, CT.

Library materials, displays and programs shall only be excluded for legitimate professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the *Collection Development and Maintenance Policy*, the *Material Display Policy*, and *Programming Policy*. Any librarian or staff member of a public library who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

Please see our *Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy* and form for further information on this process. This policy can be accessed on the Thomaston Public Library's website or in print form at the Library.

Approved by the Town of Thomaston Library Board of Trustees, October 7, 2025.