

Amesbury Public Library

Materials Selection Policy

I. Philosophy and Goals:

The mission of the Amesbury 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 Amesbury. 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.

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. DVDs, compact disks, electronic data, and microfilm are examples of some formats being purchased.

The Amesbury Public Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in the "Library Bill of Rights" (see Appendix A), 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. For information about usage, please refer to our Borrower Rights and Responsibilities Policy.

II. Selection Process:

Members of the staff select library materials after consulting professional review sources. 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.

III. Standards of Selection:

When selecting non-fiction material, the staff librarians consider the author's competency, the information presented, and the potential usefulness to the Library's collection. Library staff attempts to meet the patrons' demands and to ensure that material is selected 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. Finally, staff members look to see that the author presents his or her material accurately, clearly, and in a readable manner.

The Library maintains an extensive collection of directories, loose-leaf services, updated laws, and print and online periodicals. The Library continuously 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 Amesbury are particularly sought for the collection. Histories, local newspapers, vital records, town reports, pamphlets about Amesbury, books by local authors, and books about this area are collected. The library will consider whether or not the material under consideration is appropriate for either the general collection or the library's local history 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.

Paperbacks selected for the Adult Paperback Collection are added to meet the demand for popular, easily portable, inexpensive reading material. Because paperbacks are inexpensive, relative to hardcover 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 are frequently weeded.

Gift books in good condition are welcomed by the Library, without guarantee that they will be added to the circulating collection. Once accepted, the donated materials will be checked to see if they are in good condition, and if they meet the Library's standards of selection. If donated items are not added to the library's collection, the Library reserves the right to either donate them to the Friends of the Amesbury Library for potential sale at their Used Book Shoppe, or to otherwise dispose of them.

The Library welcomes suggestions for the purchase of materials. Suggestions will be subject to the same standards of selection as other considered materials.

Due to the varied demands made upon the Library's resources, the number of duplicate copies bought for reserves will be limited.

IV. Young Adult Materials:

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/guardians.

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 are also included.

V. Children's Materials:

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 Library strives to provide children with the library 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/guardians 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 Amesbury 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.

VI. Objections to Library Materials:

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 Appendix B). 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. Any remaining objections will be addressed by the Board of Library Trustees.

APPENDIX A: Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

APPENDIX B: Statement of Concern about Library Materials

The Amesbury Public Library Board of Trustees has authorized the use of this form. The person who has a concern about material in the library's collection may fill it out and return it to the Director of the Library who will evaluate the original reasons for the purchase of the material. The Library Director will then respond to the person making the objection. If there are any remaining objections, they may be brought to the attention of the Board of Library Trustees. The material in question will remain in the library collection until completion of the review process.

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/Producer: _____

What brought this title to your attention?

Please comment on the resource as a whole as well as being specific on those matters which concern you. (Use other side if needed.)

Optional: What resource(s) do you suggest to provide additional attention on this topic?