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Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Material Selection Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide staff in the selection of library materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

This policy was revised on December 10, 1992 and June 22, 1995 by the Pictou- Antigonish Regional Library Board.

Aims

The Library's aim is to make available to the residents of Pictou and Antigonish Counties recorded ideas of contemporary opinions, both popular and unpopular, in various formats; to provide information and support education, recreation and culture.

Objectives

The Library's objectives are:

- to meet the informational, educational, recreational and cultural needs of the public through a well-organized collection of materials at all age and educational levels, including timely and popular items as well as those of permanent value.
- to provide an accurate, reliable information service including reference, readers= advisory and programming.
- to cooperate with other community groups and agencies involved in meeting community informational and educational needs.

The Library will provide materials representing the widest range of informed opinion on all topics, in accordance with the principles expressed in the Canadian Library Association Statement of Intellectual Freedom. (See Appendix A).

Selection of Materials

Initial responsibility for the selection of materials is shared by all librarians on staff. All staff members and the general public are encouraged to recommend materials for consideration.

Final responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the Chief Librarian who operates within the framework of policies and objectives approved by the Library Board.

Material is selected on the basis of published reviews, bibliographical publications, examination of the actual material, publishers= advertising and the requests of library users.

Library staff try to anticipate demands which might be made by following closely current events and trends that may influence public demand for library materials.

Criteria of Evaluation

Materials are selected according to the needs and demands of the community; considering the present library collection, the budget and access to other library resources. The overall value of the material is the chief criterion of selection. Material is judged on the basis of the work as a whole not by a part taken out of context.

No criteria are absolute and totally satisfactory. During the selection process, rarely is every specific principal applied. An item need not meet all the criteria in order to be acceptable. Each item is judged on its own merit and the purposes and audience for which it is intended.

The presence of an item in the collection does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the library.

As the public served by the library embraces a wide range of ages, educational background, and reading skills, the library will always seek to select materials of varying complexity, with wide-ranging opinions on a variety of subjects.

General Criteria:

The following factors influence selection:

1. availability of Canadian materials on a given subject; material presenting a Canadian viewpoint is preferred.
2. permanent value or timeliness of content.
3. accuracy of information. Materials of doubtful value may be purchased because of their timeliness, then discarded when they have served their purpose.
4. author's reputation and significance as a writer.
5. importance of subject matter to the collection.
6. scarcity of material on the subject.
7. clear presentation and readability.
8. popular demand both existing and anticipated.
9. attention of critics, reviewers and the public. (See Appendix B)
10. appearance of a title in special bibliographies or indexes.
11. availability of material elsewhere in the area.
12. suitability of format for library use, including bindery and design
13. reputation of the publisher
14. price
15. presentation of all sides of controversial issues
16. balance of special group interests with general demand
17. inclusion of special features such as an index, bibliography, maps, illustrations, etc.
18. suitability of subject and presentation for the intended audience.

Children's Collection:

The children's collection focuses on material for children up to thirteen years of age, although the resources of the adult library are also available to children. The collection provides recreational literature and materials to foster both reading skill development and reading for enjoyment. It also seeks to stimulate a life-long interest in continuous learning by providing accurate and interesting factual materials. The library does not attempt to provide curriculum support, but supplementary materials are selected to serve school-related needs.

The library does not act as censor for the community. Library users may reject for themselves or their children materials that they find unsuitable. Responsibility for the reading of minors rests with their parents of legal guardians.

Additional Selection Criteria:

The general selection criteria are followed, including these additional considerations:

1. materials are selected according to the following factors: subject matter, vocabulary, format and the intended audience.
2. older materials that are still useful are regularly replaced.
3. materials may be approved even though they contain words or ideas not universally acceptable, when these words or ideas are necessary to portray realistically a period, environment, character or incident with sincerity and truth.
4. titles that do not meet all literary standards may be chosen to fill emotional needs, to serve as preparation to better reading or to meet heavy user demand such as that created by other media.
5. materials should exhibit non-stereotyped attitudes although new editions of classics and some titles which reflect the beliefs of other times or other cultures may be acceptable.

Young Adult Collection:

The young adult collection is integrated with the adult collection, but is selected with a view to the needs and interests of people aged fourteen to nineteen. Emphasis is placed on fictional materials dealing with the experiences of youth.

The general selection criteria for adult and children's materials are followed.

Young adult readers hold adult library cards.

Additional Criteria for Cassettes and Other Formats:

Audio Visual Materials:

Selection of these materials follows the general selection criteria where applicable. Audio-Visual materials are selected for public use and are not purchased to support the school curriculum.

In addition to the general criteria of selection, particular attention is paid to technical quality, technique, authenticity, effectiveness of presentation and usefulness.

The library upholds the rules and regulations of copyright laws.

Sound Recordings:

The Children's collection includes stories, music and songs on records or cassette tape. Primary emphasis is on collecting books on tape or kits consisting of a book with a cassette reading of the book.

The adult collection consists primarily of popular books on cassette tape as well as language learning materials on cassette or record.

Video Recordings:

The library maintains a collection of video tapes in VHS format. The collection covers a complete range of topics for both children and adults, including non-fiction subjects and feature films.

Government Publications:

The library is a partial depository for both federal and provincial government publications. Selection is based on the importance of the publication, its usefulness, and public interest. Duplicate copies of the most useful publications are purchased when necessary.

Large Print Books:

Each outlet has a collection of popular titles in large print. These are intended primarily for readers who have difficulty seeing regular size print, but are available to all borrowers.

Pamphlets:

Pamphlets, clippings, pictures and maps are collected as supplements to books in order to provide brief and timely information on popular topics. The emphasis is on free and inexpensive materials.

Pamphlets which contain advertising or that distort fact, intrude commercial messages unduly or contain misleading statements are not added to the collection. Pamphlet material should always have the issuing agency clearly identified.

Paperbacks:

Paperbacks are selected following the general selection criteria. The emphasis is on light fiction of all types and popular non-fiction. When available, multiple copies of best sellers and other popular titles are purchased to fill requests.

Periodicals:

Periodicals are purchased or accepted as gifts for one or more of the following reasons:

1. to provide an additional source of recreational reading.
2. to provide current information on topics which have not yet been covered in book

form.

3. to supplement and enhance the total collection.
4. to aid staff in materials selection and to aid professional development

Back issues of local newspapers and selected periodical titles are also collected in microform.

Reference:

Reference collections are available for consultation by the public in each branch library and include a selection of basic information sources such as almanacs, atlases, bibliographies, dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias, handbooks, local history, as well as supplemental sources on a wide variety of subjects. Material in microform or electronic format (e.g. CD-ROM) is provided when suitable.

Scrapbooks:

Scrapbooks are prepared for library use only when there are many clippings and newspaper articles on topics in heavy demand.

Electronic Information:

The library provides information on CD-ROM and other electronic formats when suitable. Internet access is provided when possible. The Board does not monitor and therefore has no control over the information accessed through the Internet.

Textbooks:

Are added to the collection only when they are recognized as a good source of information on a subject and are not included to support the curriculum of specific educational courses. The library cannot undertake to provide full coverage of material at an advanced academic or technical level, though some material of this kind is acquired in the ordinary process of building the collection.

Additional Materials for Specific Subjects:

Languages:

Materials in languages other than English or French are available through Interlibrary Loan and on deposit.

Law:

The emphasis is on Canadian Law materials of interest to the lay public. Outdated materials are replaced regularly.

Local History:

Materials dealing with Pictou and Antigonish Counties are actively sought for the collection.

There is an emphasis on genealogical materials.

Works by local authors are considered for inclusion in accordance with the general selection criteria.

Medicine and Related Fields:

In the selection of materials dealing with the subjects of medicine, health care, drugs and nutrition, special attention is given to the author's credentials and the accuracy of the information. Materials are purchased at levels suitable for the general public. Standard texts are included for reference purposes.

Religion:

Religious books are selected according to the same criteria as other subjects; the collection is both general and popular. Gifts of religious books are judged by the standards outlined in the donations policy. The library does not cater to nor discriminate against any religious group.

Sexuality:

The library provides materials on sexuality including:

1. accurate anatomical and physiological information for all age and reading levels.
2. information designed to help individuals understand the development of their sexuality.
3. fictional and non-fictional materials discussing the ethical and social issues that relate to sexuality, representing a variety of viewpoints.
4. illustrations that are accurate, clear and relevant to the work as a whole.

Gifts

All donations of materials are accepted with the understanding that the library is free to dispose of them in any way. All donated materials are subject to the same selection standards as purchased materials. Gifts not added to the collection are given to local service clubs for fund raising purposes.

Many otherwise worthwhile items may not be added to the collection because they duplicate items already held or because their binding or general condition is insufficient to withstand heavy library use.

Donations of funds to purchase a book or books are gratefully accepted. The staff and donor decide on a suitable book or books to be purchased with the funds. A commemorative bookplate can be placed in each book, if requested.

Books purchased in this way are not considered as permanent monuments and are subject to

the same criteria as other items in terms of replacement.

Reconsideration of Materials

The library provides in its collection material of varied points of view, some of which may be regarded as controversial for any number of reasons.

The Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Board adheres to the Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom. (See Appendix A)

Library staff are always willing to discuss with library users the adding of materials that have been excluded, or the withdrawing of materials that have been included on the basis of the selection criteria. A user who is not satisfied after discussing the matter with staff can be asked to fill out a Request for Reconsideration of a Book@ form. (See Appendix C)

The Chief Librarian and appropriate members of the book selection staff shall meet with the individual to discuss the material and reasons why it was included in the collection.

If the individual is not satisfied with the decision arising from this meeting, the complaint will be considered by the Library Board.

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Suggestions

Suggestions from the public for the purchase of books or other materials not in the collection are welcome and considered according to the general selection criteria.

Collection Maintenance

Weeding of Materials:

Weeding is the systematic evaluation of the library's collection to identify damaged, out-of-date and seldom used materials for removal from the collection. This is a continuous process.

In general, the same criteria of evaluation apply to weeding as to the selection of new materials. Limited space to house the collection is an important controlling factor.

Items in the following categories may be withdrawn:

1. materials that contain outdated or inaccurate information.
2. superseded editions.
3. worn, badly marked or damaged items.
4. duplicates of titles purchased when the book was in heavy demand, but which are no longer needed in such numbers.

Replacement:

Withdrawn or missing materials are not automatically replaced. Need for replacement is considered in relation to:

1. number of duplicate copies of the title still in the collection.
2. demand for the title or the subject.
3. availability of newer or better material.

Duplication:

Duplication of titles is determined by popularity, importance of the item and funds available. Junior materials are often bought in duplicate in order to meet the needs of children at all outlets.

Mending & Rebinding:

Audio and video tapes are repaired when feasible; books may be replaced or rebound.

Appendix A

Statement of Intellectual Freedom

Every person in Canada has the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's Bill of Rights, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom is essential to the health and development of Canadian society.

Libraries have basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.

1. It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.
2. It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.
3. Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.
4. Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.

Canadian Library Association

Appendix B[@]

Aids to Selection

The following are the journals most frequently referred to for reviews of library materials:

Atlantic Books Today

Computers in Libraries

Feliciter

Forthcoming Books

Free Materials for Schools & Libraries

Kirkus

Library Journal

Publishers Weekly

Quill & Quire

School Library Journal

Unabashed Librarian

Vertical File Index

Video Librarian

YA Hotline

Appendix C

Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library

Request for Reconsideration of a Book

Request presented by Name _____
Address _____
Telephone _____
Author _____
Title _____
Publisher _____

4. To what in the book do you object? (Please be specific, cite pages, etc.)

2. Did you read the entire book? _____
If not, which parts? _____

3. For what age group would you recommend this book? _____

4. Is there anything good about this book? _____

5. Are you aware of the judgement of this book by literacy critics? _____

6. What would you like Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library to do with this book?

7. What book on a similar topic would you recommend? _____

Signature _____
Date _____

Please return to: Chief Librarian, Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library ,P.O. Box 276 New Glasgow, NS B2H 5E3

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

PICTOU-ANTIGONISH REGIONAL LIBRARY

REVISED JUNE 1995

