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| <b>Title</b>   | Selection and Reconsideration of Library Materials                   |             |              |
| <b>Number</b>  | 86/10  | <b>Date</b> | May 14, 1986 |
| <b>Revised</b> | Jan 10, 1996; Feb 14, 1996; Apr 09, 2003; Apr 27, 2009; Oct 16, 2023 |             |              |

**Policy**

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles which guide library staff in selecting and maintaining materials for the collection. The policy is also intended to familiarize library patrons with the principles with which collection decisions are made at Fort Saskatchewan Public Library (FSPL).

**2. Responsibility for Selection**

The responsibility for materials selection rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies approved by the Board. In practice, selection and deselection of materials may be made by appropriately trained staff as designated by the Director. Our staff and members of our community are welcome to suggest items for consideration.

**3. Guiding Principles**

The Library does not keep, acquire or purchase materials that the Canadian courts have found to be obscene, hate propaganda, seditious or otherwise contrary to the Criminal Code and all applicable laws, including the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#).

It is part of the Library's service to its public to resist any attempt by an individual or group within the community to abrogate, censor, or curtail access to information, the freedom to read, view, listen, or participate by demanding removal of, or restrictions to library information sources in any format.

**3.1 Intellectual Freedom**

FSPL supports each individual's right of access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity.

The Library has a responsibility to acquire and provide access to materials that represent a wide diversity of subjects and perspectives, including those which may express controversial or unpopular ideas. Materials are not excluded from library collections based on race, place of birth, origin, ethnic origin, ethnicity, citizenship, age, creed, disability, family structure, sex, and sexual orientation. Not all materials selected, therefore, will be suitable for every individual or group. The presence of materials in the Library's Collections does not constitute an endorsement of their content or viewpoints by the Library Board or Library Employees.

The Library's Selection and Reconsideration of Library Materials policy depends on a number of statements of intellectual freedom, including the Canadian Library Association, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, and the Library Association of Alberta. (Appendix A)

### **3.2 Parental or Legal Guardian Responsibilities**

The Library cannot assume parental responsibility. Parent or legal guardians retain the exclusive right and responsibility of supervising their own children's choices and usage of library materials. FSPL believes in the freedom of the individual, and the right and obligation of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to shape, nurture, interpret and uphold their family's set of values.

Library users of all ages have open access to the Library's collections. Selection for the adult and teen collection is not restricted by the possibility that children may access materials their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may consider inappropriate.

### **3.3 Scope of Collection**

The core of the Library is the strong collections of books and materials in a variety of formats which facilitate the community's need for information and recreation, lifelong learning, and love of reading. This policy provides guidance toward achieving consistency in selection of materials and defines the scope of our collections. The diversity of the community and its interests requires a wide range of subjects and the presentation of multiple points of view varying in treatment from the simple to the complex.

### **3.4 Acquisition Budget and Collection Selection Responsibility**

In planning the annual materials budget, balanced consideration shall be given to the following main areas of collection development:

- Current materials, to keep the collection up-to-date
- Materials to build the collection in those areas in which it is lacking
- Materials of relevance which are not in the Library's holdings.
- In expending the materials budget, adequate and consistent attention shall be given to all major parts of the collection including Adult Fiction, Non-fiction, Children's, and Teen.

## **4. Principles of Selection**

### **4.1 Collection Material Selection**

The presence of any item in the Library does not indicate an endorsement of its content by the Library or staff.

Staff consider the following general criteria in choosing materials:

- present and potential relevance to community interests and needs
- current or historical significance of the author or subject
- positive evaluations in review media
- level of current and anticipated demand
- suitability of subject, style, and format for intended audience level
- accuracy, relevance and currency of content
- Canadian and/or local emphasis
- award winning material
- insight into human and social conditions

- diversity of perspectives
- availability and suitability for library use
- purchase price and other budgetary considerations
- relationship to the library's existing collection and to other local resources

#### **4.2 New Formats**

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to the Library collection. Budget considerations, community needs and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format.

The selection of materials in any new format may result in the Library's decision to retire specific items or materials formats from its collections in order to responsibly accommodate trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

#### **4.3 Vendors and Source of Materials**

Some of the Library's digital content is provided using third-party vendors and/or shared collections with other library systems. The Library subscribes to services in which the third-party vendor, not Library staff, determines the specific titles or materials made available through the service. In these circumstances, the Library is unable to reconsider specific materials that Library users object to but may inform the third-party vendor or other library of user concerns and/or take these concerns into consideration in determining whether to continue using the vendor.

#### **4.4 Interlibrary Loan**

Items that are not held at Fort Saskatchewan Public Library may be requested from other library systems by using our Interlibrary Loan Services.

#### **4.5 Controversial Materials**

The Library serves as a resource where diverse viewpoints and forms of expression can be accessed freely. Some materials may be controversial and any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials cannot be influenced by any anticipated approval or disapproval of its intellectual content by any segment of the community.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents, and no library materials will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.

The Library complies with all laws enacted at the federal, provincial or municipal level. Materials which are legally considered obscene, propaganda, or promote hatred are not collected, and the Library will follow the *Criminal Code* (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46) in all instances. Books banned by religious organizations, school districts, or other nonauthoritative groups may be included in the Collection. While staff are always willing to discuss the make-up of the collection, the library is obliged to withdraw only that material judged illegal by the higher courts in Canada.

#### **4.6 Exclusion of Materials**

The Library collection provides materials for self-study but is not primarily designed for academic study. Materials needed for formal courses of study by elementary and secondary schools and postsecondary institutions of learning may not be available.

Textbooks shall be purchased only when they provide the best coverage of a subject and are also useful to the general public.

#### **4.7 Deselection Guidelines**

Deselecting, or weeding, is the removal of items from the collection done in a planned and systematic way. It is as important to collection development as selection. Items which are weeded from the collection are either sold, donated to a charity, or recycled.

As part of the on-going collection evaluation, material which meets certain criteria can be weeded from the collection. The result is an attractive collection which meets the needs of the community and is well used.

The usual reasons for withdrawing an item are:

- The materials are no longer useful in the light of the goals and objectives of the Library
- The materials contents are out-of-date and therefore potentially misleading
- The materials are no longer of interest to the community
- The materials are damaged or worn-out; and
- Room is needed for new materials coming into the collection.

Weeding the collection is an integral part of collection development and should be done at least once a year.

Weeding is the responsibility of the Library Director or designated staff.

Materials should be weeded according to the following criteria:

- If the information they contain is outdated or superseded such as encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs, yearbooks.
- If they have not circulated in the last 5 years and they are not a work of reference; considered a classic; considered of local interest.
- If they are duplicates and use does not justify keeping more than one copy.
- If they are in poor physical condition.

Local content, local authors, and local history is not subject to weeding guidelines.

### **5. Procedure for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

FSPL recognizes the right of any resident or property owner of the City of Fort Saskatchewan to question the inclusion of specific materials in the collection. In cases where a written complaint is lodged, the Library is committed to take the complaint with due consideration while ensuring that the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom are upheld. A challenger may only have one item in the challenge process at a time. If an identical or substantially similar reconsideration of an item has occurred within the past year, FSPL reserves the right to decline an additional review.

In the event of objection or complaint by a library customer to any material contained in the Library, the steps for resolution are as follows:

i) The customer is provided with a copy of the Collection Development Policy and requested to put his or her objections in writing using the Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form (Schedule A).

ii) The written complaint will be forwarded to the Director who will read, review or listen to the material, discuss the complaint with the appropriate staff and check with professional review sources. Once the review process is completed, the challenger is provided with a written explanation for the decision. The decision will be rendered within three weeks of the date of receipt of the complaint and will reflect the principles outlined in the Selection and Reconsideration of Library Materials policy.

iii) If the matter is unresolved following the response, the challenger must appeal in writing within 14 days. The Library Director will call a meeting of:

- a) the Library Director
- b) a professional librarian who is not an employee of FSPL
- c) and the Library Board to address an appeal.

The final decision on any challenge rests with the Library Director, and subsequently, the Library Board.

The Library Director will be responsible for informing the Library Board of all challenges and for reporting both the challenge itself and its resolution to the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Challenge Survey.

## **Appendix A: Intellectual Freedom Statements**

Available on the Library website at <https://fspl.ca/about/documents-and-policies/>

Canadian Library Association's [Statement on Intellectual Freedom](#)

[LAA Statement of Intellectual Freedom](#)

[The Book and Periodical Council Statement on Freedom of Expression and the Freedom to Read](#)

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (see especially Article 19)

Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA-FCAB) [Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#)

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) [Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom](#)

### **Approval**

**Signature**

*Norma J Leader*

Norma Leader  
Board Chair



# FORT SASKATCHEWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
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| <b>Schedule</b> | A  |

## Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

FSPL regards an individual's right of access to information, through the public library, as an important element of a democratic society. All requests for reconsideration of material must be made in writing, electronic versions will not be considered.

FSPL upholds the right of individuals to access resources, although the content may be controversial. While FSPL's varied collections are available to all, it is not expected that everything offered will appeal to everyone.

|   |                 |                   |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| Author  |                 |                   |
| Title   |                 |                   |
| Hardcover _____   | Paperback _____ | Other media _____ |
| Publisher (if known)  |                 |                   |
| Request initiated by  |                 |                   |
| *must be a resident or property owner in the City of Fort Saskatchewan. |                 |                   |
| Address   | City            |                   |
| Postal Code   | Telephone       |                   |

Complainant represents:

Themselves \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Group \_\_\_\_\_

Please confirm that you have read the following:

FSPL Selection and Reconsideration of Library Materials Policy \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

LAA Statement on Intellectual Freedom \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

1. To what in the material do you object? (please be specific)

2. What do you feel might be the result of reading, viewing or listening to this material?

3. For what age group would you recommend this material?

4. Is there anything good about this material?

5. Did you read, view or listen to the entire item?

Which parts?

6. Are you aware of the reviews of this material provided by media critics?

7. What do you believe is the theme of this material?

8. What would you like the library to do about this material?

9. In its place, what item of equal literary or artistic quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?