Collection Development Policy

Brandywine Community Library
Policy Updated: 3/27/25

The Brandywine Community Library maintains that the freedom to read is essential. It follows that freedom of choice in materials selection is an essential prerequisite of democratic library service.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The Brandywine Community Library supports the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the Freedom to View Statement. The library will, to the extent possible, make available books on all sides of controversial issues in government, current events, education and other phases of life. However, only books meeting the basic selection criteria listed below will be considered for the collection.

The library's collection may contain materials on controversial issues that some individual users or interest groups may find offensive. The library Director and Board of Trustees will consider requests for reconsideration if presented in writing. Please contact the library for the Reconsideration Form.

As stated in the Library Bill of Rights, "The right to read will not be denied because of origin, age, background or views." Children will not be denied access to materials because of age or grade level. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor children's reading.

It is the task of the librarian, operating within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees, to build a collection of resources appropriate for its users. The library serves four municipalities: the Borough of Topton and the townships of Longswamp, District, and Rockland. This is the same area served by the Brandywine Heights Area School District. The library serves adults and children. Frequent users at this time include preschoolers, school age children (K-12), teens, parents of these children, employees and residents of the Lutheran Home, and other adults in the community seeking recreational reading materials and information. The collection provides resources to support their needs.

Selection

In selecting materials to be added to the collection, attention is given to books of special interest to the community, particularly in the area of local history. The library will select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets, as closely as possible, the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library's selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Since the library operates with limited funds, it must emphasize standard materials and strive for a balanced collection, with the needs of the general reader foremost in mind.

Necessary to the collection are:

- Reference materials to support adult interest and needs
- Reference materials to supplement the school curricula, including homeschoolers' needs
- Adult nonfiction of a general, not academic or scholarly nature
- Children's nonfiction to supplement school curricula, homeschoolers' needs, and childhood interests
- Adult classics
- Children's classics
- Popular fiction, including current best sellers
- Popular children's fiction, including "read-along" packages, and audio books
- Large print materials for the visually impaired, both children and adult- fiction and nonfiction
- DVDs - children's and adult classics and quality educational videos, as primary collection goal; popular videos, not necessarily considered classics, as budget allows. Circulation figures will be used as a gauge.
- Periodicals for children and adults

Criteria for materials acquisition include:

- Need and value to the collection
- Recognized competence of the author
- Literary merit/artistic quality
- Timelessness of materials
- Format and physical durability
- Potential user appeal
- Interest, relevance, and significance of subject matter
- Patron request

The librarian is guided in selection by consulting reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared aids, Booklist. The library is open to patrons' suggestions of books for purchase, keeping in mind selection criteria.

The library strives to be impartial in book selection. No particular opinions or special interests are favored. The library upholds the following in materials dealing with religion and ideologies:

Factual, unbiased materials which represent all major religions should be included in the collection. The library neither caters to nor discriminates against any religious group.

The library makes available factual material on ideologies or philosophies which exert a strong force in government, current events, politics, education, and other phases of life.

Patron requests for new titles are considered and can be submitted at the desk or via the website. Patrons will be verified in the library system as having Brandywine Community Library as their home library.

Gifts

Space limitations require very careful material selection.

Donations are welcome. It is the policy of the library to accept print and non-print donations with the understanding that they will be subject to established selection criteria and the "Guidelines for Donations of Materials" as established by the library. Books not found suitable for the shelves (poor condition, age, or unnecessary duplicates) will be sold at the ongoing book sale and proceeds used for the benefit of the library. Gifts can be purchased for the library by a patron, or donated from a patron's personal library. All gifts become property of the Brandywine Community Library upon receipt.

Weeding

In order to maintain the quality of the collection, obsolete and unused materials are removed from the collection on a regular basis. Infrequently used materials are retained if they are last copies and if they contribute to the excellence and balance of the collection. The advice of qualified individuals is sought when appropriate. The final decision rests with the librarian.

The process of weeding the library collection involves time, skill in collection development, expertise in maintaining a balanced collection, and a thorough knowledge of books and their reference value. The "CREW Method" ("CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries") will be used as a guideline for weeding.

Criteria for weeding:

- Obsolescence
- Physical condition
- Number of copies
- Coverage of the subject by other materials
- Value to the total collection
- Insufficient use
- Insufficient space
- Availability in Berks County libraries

Procedures for Complaints or Request for Consideration of Materials

The Library Board considers all materials selected under this policy to be protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. The Board of Trustees recognizes the right of individuals to question materials in the library collection. If a patron claims that a particular item is not constitutionally protected, the burden of proof rests with the patron.

Patrons who object to the presence or absence of any library material may request a review by completing the Request for Reconsideration form. The patron will be able to obtain a Request for Reconsideration form at the circulation desk or by emailing bcl@brandywinelibrary.org. The requestor must be a Brandywine Community Library cardholder. The patron seeking reconsideration must read, view, or listen to the entirety of the work before requesting reconsideration of library material. Patrons must clearly state the reasons for exclusion or removal on the form. This request may not be submitted anonymously. Patrons may only submit one Request for Reconsideration per calendar year, and may only request the reconsideration of one item per submission. Additionally, once the Board of Trustees has made a decision regarding a contested item, they will not accept any other Requests for Reconsideration for that item within three years from the date of the decision. The Library Director will communicate the Library's receipt of the patron's Request for Reconsideration within 5 business days and will advise that a written recommendation will be communicated within 45 days. The completed 'Request for Reconsideration' form will be reviewed by the library director and library board of trustees. After reviewing the Request for Reconsideration and the item in question, the Board of Trustees will vote to determine the actions, if any that are to be taken. This decision is final. A written response from the board of trustees with reasons for the decision will be given to the patron. Items subject to question will not be removed from the collection or otherwise censored during the Request for Reconsideration process. Requests for Reconsideration for eMaterials that are made available through District shared resources, such as but not limited to eMaterials in the Libby/Overdrive collection, will be handled as directed by the District Services, Programming, and Resource Development Policy.

Groups of people may not submit requests for consideration en masse or anonymously.

Reference Policy

Reference will be maintained at a basic plus level, at the minimum, as budget allows. The reference policy outlines reference commitment and service.

Collection Development Plan and Assessment

A Collection development plan and assessment will be used to detail collection strengths and needs. The overall goals for most areas of the collection are to move areas to a collection level of 1b (minimal level, even coverage).