

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A. Objectives

The purpose of the Thorp Public Library is to provide all individuals in the community with carefully selected books and other materials to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time.

Because of the volume of publishing, as well as the limitations of budget and space, the library must have a selection policy with which to meet community interests and needs. The library will always seek to select materials of varying complexity and format because of the potential to serve a public which embraces a wide range of ages, educational background, interests, sensory preferences, and reading skills.

The materials selection policy is used by the library staff in the selection of materials and also serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection.

The *Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read Statement* have been endorsed by the Thorp Public Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of the policy.

The materials selection policy, like all other policies, will be reviewed and/or revised as the need arises.

B. Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the library director who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the Thorp Public Library Board of Trustees. This responsibility may be shared with other members of the library staff; however, because the director must be available to answer to the library board and the general public for actual selections made, the director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

C. Criteria for Selection

The main points considered in the selection of materials are:

- a. budgetary considerations
- b. physical limitations of the library building
- c. suitability of the format and construction
- d. fit with existing library holdings and/or need for added materials in subject areas
- e. availability of material through interlibrary loan
- f. community interest and need

Also taken into consideration are reviews; as they are a major source of information about new materials. The primary sources of reviews are; ALA Booklist, New York Times Book Review and Library Journal. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand.

Consideration is also given to requests from library patrons and books discussed on public media when it is believed that the materials suggested will be of use in the collection.

Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy.

D. Potential Problems or Complaints

The Thorp Public Library attempts to meet the needs of the total community, recognizing that some materials may be controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. It is the responsibility of the individual library user to choose those materials which suit his or her tastes and needs. Although users are free to reject for themselves materials of which they do not approve, they may not restrict the freedom of others to read what they desire.

The library will challenge censorship of any materials in order to provide complete and accurate information on all sides of an issue, and to foster a climate of intellectual freedom for area residents.

The responsibility for the materials chosen by children and young people from the library rests with their parents or guardians. Inclusion of materials in the collection will not be inhibited by the possibility that such materials may be accessible to children and young people. Parents and guardians are encouraged to help their children select books and to guide those selections.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

E. Complaint Procedure

The Thorp Public Library tries to maintain a balanced collection that reflects varying viewpoints. It is realized that some items may be objectionable to those with opposing viewpoints. To handle complaints, the following procedure is established.

- 1) The objector fills out a citizen's request for reconsideration of library materials form. This form is available at the library and must be signed by the objector. The material in question will remain on library shelf throughout proceedings.
- 2) The librarian will then review the material and discuss it with the objector at an appointed time.
- 3) If the objector is not satisfied and wishes to pursue the matter further, the complaint will then go to the Library Board, who will make the decision.

Approved by the Thorp Library Board - November 12, 2008