

## Collection Development Policy

### Section I: Philosophy of Collection Development

The Somerset County Library endeavors to provide a wide range of materials to effectively provide for the interest, information, and enlightenment of Somerset County citizens, consistent with the Maryland Freedom to Read Act (COMAR 14.38.02):

- (1) Library materials, services, and resources exist and should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all persons the library serves;
- (2) a library should not exclude material from its catalogue because of the origin, background, or views of a person who created the material; and
- (3) a library should not prohibit or remove material from its catalogue because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval.

This document sets forth the guidelines by which the contents of the Somerset County Library's collection are determined.

The Somerset County Library endorses [the Freedom to Read](#), [the Freedom to View](#) and [the Library Bill of Rights](#) as adopted and amended by the American Library Association Council.

In compliance with these documents, the Library serves Somerset County residents regardless of age, background, interests, abilities, origin, or education, by developing the collection with flexibility, open-mindedness, and responsiveness to the needs of all members of the community.

The Library will “curate and develop collections that provide access to the widest possible array of books and other materials that support learning” (COMAR 14.38.02.03.B.4) for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all county residents, including those which:

- Encourage informal self-education;
- Aid in learning and improving job-related skills;
- Meet the informational needs of the community;
- Supplement formal study;
- Support the recreational needs of the community; and
- Give access to a wide variety of perspectives on matters of current interest.

### Section 2: Responsibility for Selection

The Somerset County Board of Library Trustees delegates to the Library Director the authority to interpret and guide the application of this collection development policy. The Director may authorize other qualified staff members to apply this policy in managing collections. While it is the responsibility of the qualified librarian to select and discard

materials, it is recognized that limitations of budget, space, and individual knowledge may exist. Suggestions from community members, trustees, or authorities on special subjects are welcomed. Final choices of material rest with the Director, based on the needs of the community and the collection.

Employees will not be dismissed, suspended, disciplined, demoted, reassigned, transferred, or otherwise retaliated against for performing their job duties consistent with these standards or for acting in a manner consistent with the library's written policy implementing the State standards for libraries (COMAR 14.38.02.03.D).

### **Section 3: Criteria for Selection**

The following general criteria will be consulted as guidelines in selecting materials for inclusion in the Library's collection:

- Relevance to informational, recreational and educational needs of the community;
- Relationship to existing material in the collection on the same topic;
- Critics' reviews;
- Public demand, including frequency of use of similar material; and
- Requests for inclusion from library patrons.

The Library will not exclude materials from its catalog because of the origin, background, or views of a person who created the material or because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval.

The Library acknowledges a specific interest in Somerset County, Delmarva, and Maryland history and current affairs and endeavors to serve as a repository of such materials.

Selection criteria apply equally to all formats of library materials. Books, newspapers, magazines, visual and audio recordings, and any other types of material are acquired and made accessible as they are judged suitable, meaningful, and relevant to the collection, and as budget and space permit.

Responsibility for the reading done by children rests with their parents and guardians. Previously stated selection criteria apply to all children's materials. The Library Board of Trustees and staff fully support the [Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors](#), as interpreted from the Library Bill of Rights.

### **Section 4: Collection Maintenance**

The Somerset County Library System attempts to provide a flexible, responsive and broad collection of materials for the interests, information and enlightenment of all county residents. New materials will be added on a continuing basis in compliance with the criteria set forth in this document.

Materials will also be withdrawn regularly from the Library collection. The following criteria are consulted when considering materials for withdrawal:

- Outdated and misleading information,
- Duplicate copies in excess of current demand,
- Worn or damaged copies,
- Materials no longer in sufficient demand, and
- Space limitations.

Materials will not be removed because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval.

Replacement of a lost or withdrawn item with an identical title will be determined by the existence of adequate materials in the current collection on the same topic, availability of more current information, or continued demand for the specific title.

When undamaged materials are withdrawn due to lack of use, the Library will first endeavor to make them available to other area agencies or non-profits, to library patrons, or to library-affiliated resellers.

The Library accepts gifts of books and other materials and it reserves the right to evaluate and use or dispose of such gifts in accordance with the criteria stated in this document. No conditions may be imposed relating to the gifts. In gift books, a plate giving the name of the donor and the person remembered will be mounted upon request.

The Library System cannot accept responsibility for assigning value to donations of materials for tax purposes. Such valuation must be done by a book dealer at the donor's expense if an official tax statement is required.

## **Section 5: Reconsideration**

A patron's selection of library materials for personal use is a purely individual matter. The Library strives to provide materials representative of the broad spectrum of views inherent in a democratic society. While a person may reject materials on an individual basis, no one may exercise censorship to restrict access to those same materials by others. Library materials will not be removed from the collection because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval..

A patron expressing disagreement with the inclusion or exclusion of a specific title in the Library's collection will receive a courteous hearing from the library director and/or Board. A copy of the Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form (Appendix B) will be offered and explained to the patron. This form should be completed and returned to the Library Director. The Director will respond to a written request within thirty business days. If the action taken by the Director is not satisfactory, the patron may request formation of a Reconsideration Committee, per Appendix C.

**Approved by the Somerset County Library Board of Trustees, 2/11/2026**

## Appendix A: Resolution, MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Resolution 1981-32

June 24, 1981

Re: Public Libraries

Book Selection Policy

WHEREAS, The freedom to read is essential to our democracy;

And

WHEREAS, Public libraries have a responsibility to make available to the public books and other material offering the widest diversity of knowledge and ideas, views and expressions, so that citizens may choose freely from among a broad range of conflicting ideas; and

WHEREAS, It is in the public interest for libraries to reaffirm this principle in policies and procedures for the selection of library material and for dealing with complaints and requests for the removal of material by individuals or groups; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education endorses the Freedom to Read principle and requires boards of library trustees of each public library system to adopt policies that will affirm and guide the effective implementation of this principle, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board directs the Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries to provide assistance to libraries and to report the result to the Board by June, 1982.

## Appendix B: Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources

The Somerset County Library System welcomes input from library users regarding the community's library resources. The Board of Trustees has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to library staff and the Director.

Completion of this form is the first step in our process for evaluating a resource and considering your request. If you wish to request reconsideration, please return the completed form to Library Director, Somerset County Library, 11767 Beechwood Street, Princess Anne, Maryland 21853.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent self?  Organization?  (please specify)

Resource on which you are commenting:

Book  DVD  Display  Magazine  Library Program  Audio

Newspaper  Electronic information  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

1. What brought this resource to your attention?

2. Have you examined the entire resource?

3. What concerns you about the resource? (use other side or additional pages if necessary)



## Appendix C: Guidelines for Reconsideration Committee

UNDER THE BEST PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, reconsideration policies ask those charged with reviewing a challenged book to set aside their personal beliefs and evaluate the work in light of the objective standards outlined in the library's materials selection policy.

- Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. The freedom to read is essential to our democracy.
- Bear in mind that Maryland State Standards for Libraries prohibit the exclusion of materials because of the origin, background, or views of a person who created the material or because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval.
- Read all materials referred to you including the full text of the material in question and read available reviews.
- Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the materials as a whole.
- The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and selection policies.
- Review library mission statement, policies, and professional guides.
- Challenged materials should not be removed from the collection while under reconsideration.
- In order to prevent a tie, the library director should recruit an odd number of members for the committee.
- While it may be prudent to state what area/role a committee member represents in the makeup of the committee (ie, teacher, librarian, community member, administration, parent, etc), the personal identification should remain anonymous to protect the objectivity of the deliberation.
- While there may be a need for public comments to be heard, the reconsideration committee meeting should be closed. Public Comments can be directed to the director or governing body.
- The committee's recommendation is to be an objective evaluation of the material within the scope of a library's collection policy.
- The report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, should be presented to the governing body with a recommendation to retain the material in its original location, to relocate the material to another location, or to remove the material.
- Establish a procedure for communicating the committee's recommendation to the governing body and to the person who made the formal reconsideration request. For example, the committee communicates its decision to the director, who then communicates the decision to the person who make the challenge as well as to the library's governing board.

## Reconsideration Committee Report

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Has every member of the committee read the material entirely? If not, why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Resources consulted: (include policies, articles, reviews etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reconsideration committee recommends:

\_\_\_\_\_

Justification and comments: (include majority and minority positions)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of Reconsideration Committee Members: