



OWWL LIBRARY SYSTEM

SELECTION AND RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS POLICY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The OWWL Library System (the System) supports the intellectual freedom of all library users by supporting their freedom to access materials, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

The System also supports the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement and Library Bill of Rights when acquiring and managing collections.

OBJECTIVE

The System's collections are developed and managed to meet the majority of the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the System's service area. The System's staff builds and maintains a patron-oriented collection by anticipating and responding to needs and expectations.

Collection decisions are made in conjunction with the strategic initiatives of the System and member libraries.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

System staff contributes to the development of patron and member library-oriented collections by:

- Interacting with patrons and member libraries with understanding, respect, and responsiveness;
- Handling all requests equitably;
- Working in partnership with one another to understand and respond to community needs;
- Understanding and responding to rapidly changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes;
- Recognizing that materials of varying complexities and formats are necessary to satisfy diverse needs of library users;
- Balancing individual needs and broader community needs in determining the best allocation of collection budget for acquiring or providing access to materials and information;
- Seeking continuous improvement through ongoing measurement; and

- Reviewing the collection on a regular basis to identify areas of community interest that may need to be strengthened.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will guide the selection of materials for System collections:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs;
- Suitability of physical form for library use;
- Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience;
- Cost;
- Importance as a document of the times;
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject;
- Attention by critics and reviewers;
- Potential user appeal;
- Requests by library patrons; and
- Requests by member libraries.

SELECTION OF CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

A balanced collection attempts to represent all sides of controversial issues as far as availability of materials, space, and budget allow. Selection is based upon the criteria stated in this policy. The race, religion, nationality, or political views of an author or creator; offensive language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content of an item; or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group in the community does not cause an item automatically to be included or excluded from the library's collection.

SYSTEM COLLECTIONS AND ACQUISITIONS

System collections include, but are not limited to, the OverDrive collection, the professional collection, and Book Discussion Kits.

A designated System staff member, in collaboration with member libraries and other System staff, will oversee collection development activities, including acquisition and weeding. The Executive Director will maintain overall responsibility for the System's collections.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE AND WEEDING

The System continually withdraws items from its collections basing its decisions on a number of factors, including publication date, frequency of circulation, community interest, and availability of updated materials. Items dealing with local history are an exception, as are certain classics and award-winning children's books. Fiction that was once popular but no longer in demand and non-fiction books that are no longer useful are withdrawn from the collection.

RECONSIDERATION OF SYSTEM MATERIALS

Materials made available by the System present a diversity of viewpoints, enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy. The System also selects a wide variety of library materials that satisfy the diverse interests of our community. The System upholds the right of the individual to secure these resources, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to some. The System's varied collection is available to all; however, it is not expected that all of the collection will appeal to everyone.

Patrons who wish to request the withdrawal or reclassification of materials currently owned by the System are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Executive Director. A formal request may be made using the form below. All formal reconsiderations requests will be evaluated based on the criteria in this policy by the Executive Director, and the Audit Committee of the System Board. A final determination will be developed and kept on file for a minimum of two years. A title will not be reviewed more than once in this two-year period.

RECONSIDERATION OF SYSTEM MATERIALS FORM

This Request for Reconsideration is governed by the System's Selection and Reconsideration of Materials Policy and current procedures for Selection and Cataloging.

To initiate a Reconsideration of a Library Resource (limit one work per form), please fill out the form and follow the instructions below:

Name:

Address:

Library Card Number:

Title of Work:

Author or Producer:

Basis of Concern (select all that apply):

- Does not meet current Selection Criteria
 - Improperly Cataloged (please note specific issue)
 - Does not fall within needs of community
-

Please include any comments you would like the System to consider:

Date:

Signature:

INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCESS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF SYSTEM MATERIALS FORM

Formal reconsideration requests for System collections may only be filed by individuals who reside within the System's four county service area. Requests may not be submitted anonymously or on behalf of organizations or groups. Only fully completed Reconsideration of System Materials Forms will be reviewed.

All Reconsideration forms, correspondence, and comments must follow the System's Code of Conduct Policy to ensure appropriate communication.

Please be aware of the following prior to submitting a Reconsideration of System Materials Form:

- The System does not hold the authority to oversee collection development policies, practices, or decisions at Member Libraries. A reconsideration of materials request for an item in a Member Library collection must follow the local practices or policies of that individual library.
- The System does not hold the authority to oversee collection development policies, decisions, or filtering practices at School Libraries participating in the Public Library Connect service through OverDrive. This partnership simply allows students to access the System's OverDrive collection through their already established SORA account.
- The System does not hold the authority to oversee collection development policies, practices, or decisions of partner Library Systems connected to OWWL Library System's OverDrive collection.

Please submit the above form by emailing it to the Executive Director at [director @ owwl.org](mailto:director@owwl.org).

Your submission will be reviewed by the Executive Director within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt.

You will receive a response in writing that indicates either:

- a) your request for Reconsideration has been evaluated and no change is required;
- OR
- b) your request has been evaluated by the System and the Selection or Cataloging of the item will be changed, which shall be briefly described in the reply.

If the System determines that no action is needed, and you disagree, you may appeal this determination within fourteen (14) calendar days by submitting a copy of your original Request, and the Director's reply, together with statement saying "I request an appeal" to the Board of Trustees by either email to [director @ owwl.org](mailto:director@owwl.org), or USPS to 2557 State Route 21, Canandaigua, NY 14424.

The Board of Trustees is an all-volunteer organization that meets no fewer than 6 times per year. Therefore, any appeal regarding a Request for Reconsideration will be finalized within sixty (60)

days. Any material under review will remain in circulation until such time as the System determines it must be removed.

All Requests for Reconsideration will be evaluated per the System's Plan of Service, policies, resolutions, and the following excerpts from the American Library Association's Code of Ethics¹:

- *We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.*
- *We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.*
- *We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.*
- *We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.*

The Board of Trustees' determination is final.

*Amended: January 8, 2025; August 14, 2024; August 9, 2023; April 12, 2023
Adopted: April 13, 2022*

¹ American Library Association, Professional Ethics, Code of Ethics, <https://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>