

Collection Development & Maintenance Policy



Darien Library, in keeping with our mission to provide education, entertainment, and community building for all, aims to provide materials for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents and other Library patrons.

In developing and adopting this policy, the Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of the Library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas for the residents of Darien and other patrons of the Library.

This policy establishes the guidelines by which the Library develops and manages its collections.

Objectives

In developing and maintaining its collections, the primary objectives of Darien Library are:

- To provide resources and materials which inform, educate, entertain, and enrich our community
- To include works of enduring value as well as timely materials on current issues
- To select materials responsive to the needs and interests of the community
- To supplement resources through the use of electronic access and interlibrary loan
- To help people learn new skills and improve literacy
- To increase social awareness and community involvement
- To represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole
- To preserve and encourage the free expression of ideas essential to an informed citizenry

Access, Inclusion, and Anti-Discrimination

Darien Library is committed to the principles of access, inclusion, and anti-discrimination. We recognize and embrace the strengths of our differences and celebrate the varied experiences and viewpoints that make up local and global communities. To ensure a collection that is reflective of these ideals, we are flexible

and conscientious in our selection and evaluation of materials. This work is a continuous process and a crucial part to our overall mission.

All library materials are evaluated and made available in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Section 46a-64 of the CT State General Statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Purpose & Scope of the Collection

The Library provides materials and services that reflect the diverse informational, educational, and recreational needs of its patrons. In so doing, the Library provides access to content through print, multimedia, and digital resources. The Library recognizes that content and medium should be suitably matched, and that patrons have different learning styles and preferences for how they receive information. Therefore, Darien Library provides materials in a variety of formats, including but not limited to:

- Print materials - such as fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, and newspapers
- Non-print physical materials - such as CDs and DVDs
- Digital resources - such as online databases, e-Books and e-Audiobooks, recordings, images, and digital historical archives
- Equipment - such as technology and specialized hardware

Responsibility for Selecting Library Materials

The librarians responsible for the selection of materials are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides Darien residents and other Library patrons with access to the widest array of library and educational materials. Librarians responsible for the selection of materials follow a procedure to review library and educational materials using professionally accepted standards, including material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age appropriate or grade-level material, continued demand of material, as well as the specific Selection Criteria detailed below. These designated selectors and material specialists work collaboratively to ensure a robust, relevant, and inclusive overall collection. Ultimate responsibility for materials chosen and resource access rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of this policy. All staff members are encouraged to participate in the selection of Library resources.

Youth Libraries Selection Criteria

In addition to the adult collections, Darien Library maintains separate collections specifically for children and teens. The Children's Library offers developmentally appropriate materials that meet the informational and recreational needs of children ages birth through 12. In addition, the Children's Library collects materials on child-rearing for parents and caregivers. The Tween and Teen collections offer developmentally appropriate materials that meet the information and recreational needs of preteens and teenagers ages 12 to 18. We refer to the Children's Library and the Tween and Teen collections herein together as the "Youth Libraries."

The Youth Libraries maintain collections that we believe are relevant, of appropriate size and quality, and that represents a diversity of views and expressions. To ensure that all parts of the collection are appropriate and well-chosen, the children's and teen librarians consult professional review sources before purchase. The children's and teen librarians also rely on the recommendations of readers, including youth, educators, parents, and caregivers.

Some materials in the Youth Libraries might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children or teens, as the case may be. Only each child or teen and their parent or guardian can decide what materials is suitable for that child or teen to read.

Library Collections Selection Criteria

All or some of the following criteria are considered when adding new items to the Library's collections:

- Accuracy and authority
- Timeliness, cultural significance, and critical acclaim
- Cultural or historical significance of author or subject
- Literacy merit, artistic quality, originality, and creativity
- Accessibility, durability, and ease of use
- Price, format, and availability
- Public appeal or local interest
- Relevance to the present and potential needs of the community
- The Library does not purchase textbooks or other materials to support educational curriculums.

All criteria need not be met for purchase consideration.

Digital Collections & Databases

Electronic materials play an important role in the Library's collection. These materials include databases, e-Books, e-Audiobooks, and downloadable and streaming media. Additional criteria used in selecting digital resources include ease of use, uniqueness of content, technology requirements, vendor reputation and customer service, availability for remote access, and cost. Certain digital collections the Library makes accessible to patrons are governed by the vendor's specific terms of service, including patron residency and minimum age requirements.

Digital materials and databases are also included in the Youth Libraries as set forth in this policy. The selection of digital materials and databases for the adult collections are not impacted by the possibility that children and teens may obtain materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate. The Library recognizes parents and legal guardians as the parties responsible for the reading and viewing habits of their children and teens.

Collection Maintenance

In order to provide the best service to our community, the collection is regularly evaluated using professionally accepted standards, which include, without limitation, the material's relevance; physical condition; availability of duplicates or copies; availability of more recent, age-appropriate, or grade-level appropriate materials; and the continued demand of the material. To keep the collection fresh and relevant, the Library maintains a schedule of evaluation, applicable to both print and digital resources.

Withdrawal from the collection is based on the following criteria:

- Items are worn, stained, or damaged beyond repair
- Items are out of date, contain inaccurate data, or are not historically significant
- New, more current, or more comprehensive resources are available
- A more desirable or accessible format is available
- Duplication
- Low circulation

Items removed from the collection will be donated or disposed of properly at the discretion of the Head of Materials Management. Items withdrawn for reasons of condition, loss, or damage will be considered for replacement.

Patron Suggestions

Darien Library welcomes purchase requests and recommendations for books and non-print materials. Requests are considered using the same selection criteria outlined in this policy. In the particular case of digital materials (e.g. e-Books), cost will often be a significant factor in the purchase decision. Should the Library decide not to purchase the suggested material, we will attempt to obtain the item via InterLibrary Loan for current Darien residents, Friends of the Library, and those who work in town.

Gifts & Donations

With the exception of additions to the Local History and Genealogy Collection (see Appendix A), the Library does not accept donations of books, magazines, encyclopedias, or other media.

Controversial Materials

The inclusion of an item in the collection does not imply the Library's endorsement of the author, publisher, or subject matter. The Library provides materials representing a wide variety of subjects, opinions, and perspectives, which can apply to important, complex, and controversial questions, including unpopular and unorthodox viewpoints. Language, imagery, situations, or subjects that may be offensive to some community members do not disqualify material, the value of which is determined in its entirety and measured against the selection guidelines described in this policy by the Library in its sole discretion.

As set forth herein, the Library recognizes parents and legal guardians as the parties responsible for the reading and viewing habits of their children. The selection of materials for the adult collection is not impacted by the possibility that children may obtain materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate.

Intellectual Freedom & Censorship

Darien Library supports intellectual freedom and endorses the American Library Association's ("ALA") Freedom to Read Statement, the ALA's Freedom to View Statement, the ALA's Library Bill of Rights, and the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America.

Review & Reconsideration Policy

The Library has an established process by which individuals with a vested interest may challenge any library or other educational material, displays, or programs. The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider materials, displays, or programs to residents of Darien. Please refer to the **Library Material Review & Reconsideration Policy** for more information.

Local History and Genealogy Collection

The Local History and Genealogy collection of Darien Library provides a wealth of historical and genealogical resources focused on Darien, Fairfield County, and Connecticut. In addition, the collection offers genealogy research guides and reference works. The Library is committed to its important role in preserving the history of the Town of Darien and making those materials accessible to patrons from many backgrounds. The Library is also committed to providing high-quality materials to genealogical researchers. The majority of this collection does not circulate, and its primary purpose is to inform and educate. As such, the policy governing its growth and maintenance is carefully tailored to meet those specific needs.

Gifts and donations are important supplements to the Local History and Genealogy Collection. The Library will accept gifts on a case-by-case basis of local (Darien) family histories, local histories for all towns in Connecticut, and material otherwise related to Darien.

Local History and Genealogy Selection Guidelines

The following criteria are considered when adding materials to the Local History and Genealogy collection:

- Geographic relevance
- Families of local interest
- Accuracy and ease of use
- Price, availability, and condition
- Digital access

Collection Maintenance

Historical and genealogical resources are rarely removed. Research guides and reference works are updated as new materials become available. Because of the unique nature of the materials, the collection is predominantly non-circulating.

This policy was approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 27, 2025.

The Board of Trustees shall review and update this policy, at minimum, every five years.