

Collection Development Policy

Darien Library is a free, non-sectarian public library whose aim is to provide a useful collection of materials representing different points of view for the information, enrichment, and entertainment of its users.



It is the primary objective of the Library to provide accessible materials for people of all ages, making available carefully selected materials of purpose and quality that will meet the needs and interests of the Darien community. Consideration of all interests, timely responses to user needs, and a wide range of viewpoints are hallmarks of a valuable and successful collection.

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines by which the Library develops and manages its collections.

Objectives

- 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 based on community needs and interests
- 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 advance equity, diversity, and inclusion through our resources
- To preserve and encourage the free expression of ideas essential to an informed citizenry

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Darien Library is committed to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We recognize and embrace the strengths of our differences, and celebrate the different experiences and viewpoints that make up our global community. To ensure a collection that is reflective of these ideals, we are flexible and conscientious in our selection and evaluation of materials. We affirm that this work is a continuous process and a crucial part to our overall mission.

Scope of the Collection

The Library provides materials and services that reflect the diverse informational, educational, and recreational needs of its users. 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 – such as hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines, and newspapers
- Non-print – such as audio and visual formats
- Digital resources – such as online databases, digital and audiobooks, recordings, images, and digital historical archives
- Equipment – such as new technology and specialized hardware

Youth Selection Guidelines

The Children's Library offers developmentally appropriate materials that meet the informational and recreational needs of children ages birth through twelve. In addition, the Children's Library collects materials on child-rearing for parents and caregivers.

The Children's Library maintains a collection that is 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 librarians consult professional review sources before purchase. The children's librarians also rely on the recommendations of readers, including children, educators, parents, and caregivers.

Major factors that influence the selection of children's materials (which include print book, digital books, audiobooks, DVDs, and video games) are:

- Content
- Authority
- Literacy merit, artistic quality, originality, and creativity
- Accuracy, objectivity, clarity, logic, and effectiveness of material
- Relevance to the needs of the community
- Current interest in subject matter
- Local interest in subject or author
- Popular demand
- Limitations on space and funds

Some materials in the Children's Collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children. Only each child and their parent or caregiver can decide what material is suitable for that child to read.

The Teen Services Collection offers developmentally appropriate materials that meet the informational and recreational needs of preteens and teenagers ages twelve to eighteen. Teen Services maintains a collection that is 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 teen librarian consults professional review sources before purchase, but also relies on the recommendations of readers, including teens, educators, parents, and caregivers. Some materials in the Teen Services Collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all teenagers. While some books could be too mature for one teen, other teens may be ready for them. Only each teen and their parent or caregiver can decide what material is suitable for that teen to read.

Adult Selection Guidelines

All or some of the following criteria are considered when adding new items to the collection:

- Accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, durability, and ease of use
- Cultural significance and critical acclaim
- Current or historical significance of author or subject
- Diversity of viewpoints and experiences
- Literary merit
- Price, format, and availability
- Public appeal or local interest
- Relevance to the present and potential needs of the community

- Periodicals are added to the collection on the basis of relevance, price, and community interest.
- Technology is selected based upon usefulness, interest, and the broadness of its implications and importance.
- Audiovisual material is added to the Library's collection with consideration to patron demand and budget constraints.
- The Library does not purchase textbooks or other materials to support educational curriculums.

All criteria need not be met for purchase consideration.

Digital Materials and 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. 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 users are governed by the vendor's specific terms of service, including patron residency and minimum age requirements. Some material available in a broader digital collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children. Only each child and their parent or caregiver can decide what material is suitable for that child to read or view. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to ensure appropriate access to broader digital collections. The fact that children possibly may access materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate does not impact the selection of databases and digital platforms.

Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility for materials chosen and resource access rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of this policy. Designated selectors and material specialists work collaboratively to ensure a robust, relevant, and inclusive overall collection. All staff members are encouraged to participate in the selection of Library resources.

Collection Maintenance

In order to provide the best service to our community, the collection is regularly evaluated. 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 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 audiovisual materials. Requests are considered using the same selection criteria outlined in this policy. In the particular case of digital materials (e.g. ebooks), cost will 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

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 and Intellectual Freedom

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 opinions and perspectives, which can apply to important, complex, and controversial questions, including unpopular and unorthodox viewpoints. Language, 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.

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.

Darien Library welcomes residents' expression of opinion concerning materials purchased. Anyone who wishes to request that a specific item be reconsidered for inclusion in the collection is asked to complete a Request for Reconsideration Form, which is available upon request by contacting the Library Director. Once received, the Library Director will review the item in its entirety and within the framework of this policy. When a decision has been made regarding the retention or removal of the material, the Director will inform the individual in writing. Appeals may be requested by submitting a written request to the Library's Board of Trustees. All Board decisions are final. Materials under review remain in the collection during the reconsideration process.

In the interest of protecting the individual's right to have access to materials, the Library supports the following documents:

- First Amendment of the Constitution
- Library Bill of Rights Adopted June 19, 1939. Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 23, 1980; January 29, 2019; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.
- The Freedom to Read Statement – Adopted June 25, 1953; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

Appendix A

The Local History and Genealogy collection of the 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 these 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.

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.

Adopted by the Darien Library Board of Trustees on August 29, 2022.