

Revision Date: April 2023

Policy Type: Administration

Approval Level: CEO

Distribution: All Employees

Review Schedule: 5 Years (or as required)

1. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Establish general guidelines for the selection of and access to materials in Markham Public Library collections that reflect the Library's "Mission Statement" and its underlying principles.
- Define responsibility for selection and indicate the delegation of that responsibility.
- Outline a process to handle objections to items presently in the collection.
- Establish criteria for recommendations to select and deselect materials.

This Policy applies to all material formats including print, non-print, audio-visual and electronic materials. It applies to all staff and third parties that undertake the selection or withdrawal of materials for the Library's collections and to staff involved with accepting and evaluating gifts and donations to the collections.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

Markham Public Library (the "Library" or "MPL") is the community's public library providing customers with the opportunity for success. Its resources, staff, programs and spaces enrich the lives of everyone in the City of Markham. The Library engages with the community to read, study, play, explore ideas, express their creativity and connect with each other.

3. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The selection of Library materials is based on the principles outlined in MPL's *Mission Statement*. MPL provides customer-driven and customer-focused collections that satisfy the needs of Markham's diverse community.

Ongoing collection development activities are informed by staff familiarity with existing collections, the needs of Library customers, staff's knowledge of retrospective, current and future trends in informational and recreational materials suitable for public library use.

Except where limited by law, children are entitled to borrowing privileges and open and ready access to materials and facilities provided by the Library. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for monitoring and determining any limits on the use of Library materials by their children.

MPL endeavours to provide equitable access to its collections through a service delivery model which rationalizes the location, scope and focus of collections in relation to service area needs. In addition, items may be delivered to any branch at the customer's request. The Library materials budget is maximized through coordinated and controlled expenditure.

4. DEFINITIONS

Materials – All of the items that comprise Library collections regardless of format.

Collections – The Library's various holdings organized by category, e.g. Fiction Collection, French Collection.

Format – The medium in which information is presented, e.g. book, e-book, etc.

Inter-Library Loan – The service through which Library customers can request-items not owned by MPL be borrowed from other institutions, subject to availability and the Inter-Library Loan policies of the lending institutions.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 Selection Goal

The Library's goal in materials selection is to maintain a balanced and broad collection in various formats to serve the cultural, recreational, educational and informational needs of the community, to assess current unfilled requirements and to anticipate future needs.

5.2 Responsibility for Selection

Responsibility for the selection and de-selection of materials resides with the CEO or designate. In practice, this responsibility is delegated to the appropriate staff below that level.

5.3 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

MPL strives to deliver inclusive service, recognizing and affirming the dignity of those being served regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, physical or mental capabilities, or income. The Library strives to ensure that citizens/customers can enjoy its services free from any attempts by some to impose their own values, customs or beliefs on others.

The Library prioritizes diversity and inclusion in its decision-making, including collection development. The selection of Library materials is driven by the principles defined in the Library's *Mission Statement* as well as those outlined in the Canadian Federation of Library Association's *Statement on Intellectual Freedom* described in part as follows:

“Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.”

No materials are excluded from selection solely because of the "race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offences, marital status, disability, family status, sex, sexual orientation and/or receipt of public assistance" of the creator of the work.

5.4 General Selection Guidelines

The Library selects materials that:

- Are written in Canada's two official languages (English and French) as well as those reflecting the diverse linguistic and/or cultural heritage of the Markham community;
- Represent varying points of view and are of current interest and possible future significance, including materials reflecting current conditions, trends and controversies;
- Inform and enhance an individual's ability to function effectively as a member of society;
- Provide an aesthetic experience, stimulate the imagination and increase an individual's potential creativity;
- Expand an individual's understanding of the world in which they live;
- Entertain and enhance individuals' lives;
- Consist of alternate formats addressing the needs of customers with accessibility needs, such as low literacy, vision loss or hearing loss;
- Are textbooks and curriculum-related works that are introductory in nature, are the sole source of information, or whose content is considered essential to a library collection;
- Are certification guides and resources supporting common careers;

Collection development activities are supported by customer feedback, metrics related to collections and usage rates, review media, bibliographies and reviewing tools, consultation with the publishing industry, authoritative discussions of genres or subject areas, and recommendations from Library customers. Activities are responsibly exercised within the context of available funds.

Special consideration is given to materials with Canadian content that record the Canadian experience or that relate to life in Canada, or the lives and works of Canadians.

The Library does not keep, acquire or purchase material that the Canadian courts have found to be obscene, hate propaganda or seditious.

The Library does not normally purchase materials intended for audiences above the university undergraduate level unless they are the only materials available to meet community demand.

No materials are excluded from selection solely because they may come into the possession of a child.

5.5 Intellectual Freedom – Endorsement of Library Association Statements

In establishing this Policy, the Library endorses the following statements on intellectual freedom:

- Canadian Federation of Library Association's *Statement on Intellectual Freedom* (<https://cfla-fcab.ca/en/guidelines-and-position-papers/statement-on-intellectual-freedom-and-libraries/>);
- Ontario Library Association's *Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual* (https://accessola.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020_OLAIntellectualFreedomStatement.pdf);
- Ontario Library Association's *Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library* (<https://accessola.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/1998-OLAChildrensRightsLibrary.pdf>)
- Urban Libraries Council's *Declaration of Democracy* (<https://www.urbanlibraries.org/initiatives/democracy/declaration-of-democracy#:~:text=The%20declaration%20reads%20as%20follows,unchecked%20and%20racism%20is%20institutionalized.>)

This Policy also supports Section 2(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* which guarantees everyone the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.

5.6 Works by Local Authors

Books for this small special collection are those written by authors from Markham or adjacent communities, or are set in Markham. They may be self-published or small press items and therefore excluded from standard review sources. These will be handled as follows:

- The copy to be considered is donated to the Library in a format that facilitates circulation, ease of use and durability.
- Acceptance of the donated item will be based on its overall accuracy, readability and anticipated interest to a wider audience than simply the author's own family and friends, as determined by Library staff.
- It is understood that such items will also be subject to the terms outlined in Sections 6, 8, and 9 of this Policy.
- The Library will not provide professional reviews, promotion, or marketing of an author's work, whether the item is included or excluded.

5.7 Local History

The Library has an interest in local history and takes a broad view of published works dealing with the history of Markham and adjacent communities. Such works will be considered for inclusion in the collection on a case-by-case basis. However, the Library is not under any obligation to add to its collection everything about the area nor everything that is produced by local authors, printers or publishers if they do not appear to be in the public interest or cannot be obtained at a reasonable cost, as determined and confirmed by the Library. Further, the Library does not collect primary historical documents. These may be referred instead to the Markham Museum.

5.8 Online Services

The Library provides educational, informational and instructional database access for customer use remotely and on the Library's public access computers. MPL reviews and selects these products based on professional journals, online sources, subject-oriented periodicals or sites, and recommendations from other librarians and educators.

5.9 Other Non-book Materials

The Library may also provide selected materials that constitute a "library of things" for circulation or in-library use, subject to various considerations including budgetary and space availability, as well as their overall appropriateness based on the content of this Policy.

6. SELECTION CRITERIA

In making selection decisions, the following factors are considered:

- The values and guidelines outlined in section 5. of this Policy;
- Popular demand for the material;
- Current trends in customer demand regarding content and format;
- Metrics and statistical reports on collections and usage trends;
- Suitability of format for Library use, and for customer convenience and ease of use;
- Suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience;
- Relevance to community customers;
- Insight into the human and social condition;
- Importance as a record of the times;
- Relationship to the existing collection and other materials on the subject;
- Currency and reliability of content;
- Reputation, skill, competence or significance of the originator of the work;

- Attention of critics, reviewers and the public;
- Reputation of the publisher or producer;
- Clarity, accuracy and logic of presentation;
- Interests and composition of the community, including linguistic composition as indicated by demographic data;
- Quality of writing and/or visual art;
- Timeliness or permanence of the work;
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment;
- Representation of various viewpoints in the collection;
- Purchase price and other budgetary considerations;
- Availability of funds and space.

7. NEW FORMATS

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to Library collections. Budget considerations, community needs and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format.

The selection of material in any new format may result in the Library's decision to retire specific items or material formats from its collections in order to responsibly accommodate trends in customer demands and/or changes in technology.

8. DESELECTION AND COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

Collection materials are regularly assessed for their condition, accuracy, currency and usage, within the context of the Library collection, and relevance to Library customers. The deselection of materials from any collection is a formal process conducted by knowledgeable staff, according to written guidelines, as a necessary means to maintain collection vitality, size and scope.

Criteria for deselection include materials that have become outdated, where interest or demand has waned, duplicates, worn or damaged copies, frequency of circulation, community interest and the availability of newer and more up-to-date materials.

An item that is the subject of a libel action of which the Library becomes aware will be removed from the collection until the action is finally resolved when, depending on the outcome of the action, it will be returned to the collection or permanently withdrawn.

9. NO ENDORSEMENT OF CONTENT

Selection of an item for a Library collection does not constitute endorsement by the Library of either the content, creator or viewpoint expressed in that item.

10. ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

For customer-information purposes and the guidance of borrowers, films owned by Markham Public Library are labelled, where available, with viewer classification codes provided by the Canadian Home Video Association and/or the Classification & Rating Administration (CARA) in the United States.

The Library may control use of any collection material in order to protect items deemed susceptible to theft or damage by customers, or to ensure the widest possible use of materials by Library customers.

MPL does not mark selected materials in order to indicate approval or disapproval of item contents or attempt to expurgate information contained in selected items.

11. GIFTS AND DONATIONS

The Library welcomes gifts of materials from individuals or groups. The same criteria and guidelines that apply to the selection of all Library materials are used to evaluate gifts. It is understood that gifts are freely given without conditions attached, unless specifically negotiated beforehand, and that all donations will be used or disposed of as the Library deems appropriate. Tax receipts are not issued for donations of materials.

12. CUSTOMER REQUESTS

Customers may place formal requests for the purchase of collection materials by submitting a *Suggest a Purchase* request on MPL's website. All suggested purchases are reviewed by staff who then utilize the same selection criteria that are applied to all materials purchased by the Library.

13. RESOURCE SHARING / INTER-LIBRARY LOAN (ILLO) SERVICE

Items that fall outside the Library's selection criteria or that are "out of print" or temporarily unavailable can be requested by MPL customers from other library systems by using regular Inter-Library Loan services. Fees for the service occasionally apply. Application for Inter-Library Loan service can be made at any local branch of the Library.

14. RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

The Library believes that a vital society encourages its community members to actively participate in an open exchange of ideas and opinions. The Library consequently strives to provide the widest possible range of resources within its collections.

The content or manner of expressing ideas in material that is purposely selected to fill the needs of some Library customers, may, on occasion, be considered to be offensive by other customers. The Library recognizes the right of any individual or group to reject MPL material for personal use, but does not accord to any individual or group the right to restrict the freedom of others to make use of that same material.

Library customers who object to collection items are asked to complete a written request for the reconsideration of the item(s). Request forms are available for this purpose at all Library branches.

Decisions made about challenged materials will be communicated to the originators of the requests following completion of a formal staff review. The final decision concerning Library materials rests with the Chief Executive Officer.

15. RESPONSIBILITIES

CEO / Directors shall:

- Ensure that they and their employees are acquainted with and comply with this Policy and related policies.

Managers / Supervisors shall:

- Enforce this Policy.

Employees / Volunteers:

- Comply with this Policy.

Library Administration shall:

- Develop and distribute this Policy;
- Update this Policy per the Review Schedule.