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I. Mission and Legal Foundation

The mission of the Cecil County Public Library is to Champion Reading, Build Knowledge, Inspire Curiosity, and Connect Community. Under Maryland law, public libraries are charged with stimulating awareness and understanding of critical social issues and assisting individuals in reaching their highest potential for self-development (Md. Code Ann., Education Article 23-102 (2025)). In support of our mission, and pursuant to Maryland's Freedom to Read Act (COMAR 14.38.02.01), Cecil County Public Library acknowledges that all Marylanders have the freedom to read. Materials are selected for the library collection in a variety of formats which meet the educational, informational, entertainment and cultural needs of all the diverse communities we serve. Through its collection, the Library provides an environment in which individuals may explore a broad range of ideas essential to a democratic society.

II. Purpose and Scope

The Cecil County Public Library's Materials Selection Policy serves as a guide to staff and informs the public of the principles on which selections are made. The policy cannot substitute for the judgment of librarians, but stating goals and indicating boundaries will assist them in choosing from a vast array of materials within the constraints of funds available. Materials are purchased to meet current demand and the collection is assessed regularly to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of the community.

III. Definitions

"Materials," as the word occurs in the policy, has the widest possible meaning encompassing print, audio-visual and electronic formats.

"Selection" refers to the decision-making process that must be made either to add a given item to the collection or to retain one already in the collection.

"Library" refers to the Board of Library Trustees, Executive Director, and staff of the Cecil County Public Library.

IV. Authority and Responsibility for Selection

Final responsibility for selections lies with the Board of Library Trustees. However, the Board delegates to the Executive Director the authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selections. The Executive Director may authorize other staff to make selections within their areas of specialization. Suggestions from the community are welcomed and encouraged and are given serious consideration within the established criteria for selection.

V. Objectives of Collection Development

The primary objective of selection is to collect materials for contemporary use in sufficient quantity to meet reasonable demand. The Library recognizes a duty to make available materials for enlightenment and entertainment, even though such materials may not have enduring value.

VI. Selection Criteria

Materials are selected on the basis of quality of content and community interest to represent a wide range of information, views and ideas. Materials are evaluated on an individual basis as a whole rather than on the basis of a particular section or isolated passage. Every item, including gifts, is evaluated for inclusion in the collection using the following criteria. An item need not meet all of these criteria to be selected.

- a. Demonstrated or anticipated patron demand
- b. Relevance to community needs and the Library's mission
- c. Critical reviews and evaluations of material
- d. Comprehensiveness, accuracy and timeliness of content
- e. The authority, reputation, popularity or significance of the author, artist or publisher
- f. Accessibility of information for intended audience
- g. Clarity and accuracy of presentation
- h. Quality of production
- i. The degree to which the item accomplishes its purpose
- j. Relation to existing collection
- k. Importance as a record of the times for present and future use
- l. Relative importance in comparison with other books on the subject
- m. Price, availability, and budgetary constraints

VII. Guiding Principles

1. The Library recognizes the variety of interests of the community and purchases materials to serve the broad range of needs and interests with due regard to minority, ethnic and other special interests. Selection implies neither approval nor disapproval of the contents by the Library.
2. The Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some readers. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the overall content of the collections and the varying interests of all readers.

3. Choice of library materials and resources for personal use is an individual matter. Any patron is free to reject materials for their own use but may not restrict or interfere with other patrons' freedom to read, listen to, or view materials.
4. As the Library serves a community embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds and reading abilities, it will seek to select materials of varying complexity.
5. The Library recognizes the responsibility of parents or legal guardians to guide and direct the reading, viewing and listening choices of their minor children. Selection for adults will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.
6. The Library acknowledges a particular interest in local history and will seek to acquire books and information about Cecil County.
7. The Library recognizes the wealth of resources available to Cecil County patrons through other libraries, agencies, and consortia, including inter-library loan provided by the State Library Resource Center; and therefore, may not duplicate materials that can be borrowed from these organizations.

VIII. Collection Maintenance and Withdrawal

Materials within the Library's collection are continuously evaluated to ensure accuracy, relevance, condition, and responsiveness to community needs. Items may be withdrawn when they contain outdated or inaccurate information, are superseded by a newer edition, become worn or damaged, or no longer meet demonstrated demand. Materials may be acquired, replaced, or maintained in multiple formats, including print, audio, video, and digital. As formats evolve, the Library may determine that one format is more appropriate than another based on accessibility, usability, and community need.

IX. Reconsideration of Library Materials

All materials in the Library's collection are selected in accordance with this Policy. Pursuant to Maryland's Freedom to Read Act, the Library will not exclude material from its catalog because of the origin, background, or views of a person who created the material; nor prohibit or remove material from its catalog because of partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that a diverse collection may generate questions or concerns. However, materials will not be removed solely at the request of individuals who disagree with their content.

To ensure concerns are addressed thoughtfully and consistently, the Library maintains a formal procedure for requesting reconsideration of materials in the collection. Pursuant to Maryland's Freedom to Read Act, any and all materials under review will remain available for use by the public and library staff until the review process has concluded. Items previously reviewed are not eligible for reconsideration.

X. Access to and Use of Library Materials

1. The Library will constantly endeavor to facilitate access to the entire collection so that any library resource may be used by any patron with the greatest possible ease.
2. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents. No item will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.
3. The use of rare and scarce items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.
4. The Library recognizes the need for identified collections of materials and resources in a variety of formats to meet the diversified needs, interests and levels of maturity found within the children and teen populations.
5. To protect the rights and privileges of library users, it is necessary to place restrictions on those who deliberately or inadvertently misuse public property. Charges apply to materials that are 30 days overdue, lost, or damaged. Legal action may be taken against individuals who steal or damage library materials.

XI. Protection of Library Employees

Pursuant to Maryland's Freedom to Read Act, a library board of trustees or other governing body of a library may not dismiss, suspend, discipline, demote, reassign, transfer, or otherwise retaliate against an employee 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.

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