

ATHOL PUBLIC LIBRARY
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The Athol Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association and the commitment to honor the rights of an individual to use the library regardless of age, race, religion, national origin, background, or social or political views.

1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collection development is the responsibility of the library director and library staff in accordance with the collection development policy established by the Board of Library Trustees.

2.- THE SELECTION PROCESS

Collection development decisions are made on the basis of staff judgment and expertise, and by evaluating reviews in library reviewing journals and other library selection tools. The library acquires materials in a variety of formats, including paper and digital. The same work may be acquired in more than one format to meet the various needs and/or preferences of library patrons. Factors used in making decisions include:

- Popular demand
- Contemporary significance or current usefulness or interest
- Authority and competence of presentation
- Importance as an historical record or of permanent value
- Relevance to existing collection
- Physical quality of format and binding
- Presentation of multiple views on controversial issues
- Balance of special group interest with general demand
- Cost in relation to the individual title and to the overall collection
- Availability through other sources, particularly the Interlibrary Loan Network of the Massachusetts Library System

3. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

The collection is carefully chosen for children and young adults of all ages and abilities, with the emphasis on materials which entertain, stimulate the imagination, develop reading ability and enable children to learn about the world around them. Materials are purchased in print and nonprint formats including, but not limited to, books, magazines, audio, video, pictures, puzzles, and games.

Although the collection does contain materials of use in completing school assignments, it is not designed to provide school textbooks or other materials which support only the school curriculum.

Children and young adults are not limited to the special collections selected for them. They are encouraged to make full use of the entire collection to the extent that their interests and capabilities allow. Any limitations placed upon the reading materials of children and young adults is left to the discretion of parents and guardians.

4. WEEDING THE COLLECTION

In order to maintain a collection that is current, reliable, in good condition, well used,

and which relates to the needs and interests of the residents of Athol, materials are withdrawn on a systematic and continuing basis. Materials are discarded when they are judged to be dated, inaccurate, seldom used, in poor condition, or otherwise no longer appropriate.

The criteria used in selection also applies to the process of withdrawing material from the collection. Materials withdrawn from the Athol Public Library will be disposed of in a manner consistent with quality and condition.

5. GIFTS

Gifts are accepted with the understanding that they may or may not be added to the collection. Gift materials, including titles new to the collection, are subject to the same selection standards as materials purchased by the library. The library does not provide evaluation of gifts for tax deduction or other purposes.

6. USE OF MATERIALS

The collection of the Athol Public Library is available to all community residents and registered borrowers. Materials are not marked or identified to show disapproval of contents, no materials are marked to restrict their use by ages, and no materials are sequestered except to protect valuable items from injury or theft.

The selection of material for the adult collection and access to it is not restricted. Responsibility for the use of materials by children and young adults rests with their parents or legal guardians.

7. INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The library recognizes its obligation to provide as wide a spectrum of materials as possible. Selection cannot be restricted by the possibility that certain materials might be considered objectionable by some users on moral, religious, political, or other grounds.

It is essential in a free society to provide access to all library materials. No restrictions are placed on what anyone may read. Well-intentioned individuals or groups may occasionally question the inclusion of an item in the collection because of fear or doubt about the effects of the material on impressionable persons. Although the library understands this concern, it is the library's position that the risk to society is far greater if public access to ideas and information is restricted. Neither an individual, group, or the library itself has a right to decide what others may or may not read.

The library is generally opposed to the removal from its shelves, at the request of any individual or group, of materials which have been chosen according to the materials selection policy, however complaints are handled through the process detailed in *OBJECTIONS* below. In addition, the library will oppose coercion on the part of an individual or group seeking to have materials added to the collection which are contrary to the selection policy.

8. OBJECTIONS

a. All complaints regarding materials already part of the collection must be submitted in writing on the Citizen's Request for Reconsideration Form. No complaint will be considered until this form has been fully answered, signed, and submitted to the library director.

b. All properly submitted complaints will be reviewed by the library director and the Board of Trustees.

The resulting decision shall be final.

Approved by the Board of Trustees 19 February 2002, 21 June 2006, Revised 16 March 2022.