



Collection Development Policy

I. Objective of the Collection Development Policy

The objective of the Collection Development Policy is to guide Collection Management librarians in the selection and organization of materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which decisions are made.

The Spartanburg County Public Libraries (SCPL) system strives to provide and maintain within its financial ability a general collection of materials in a wide variety of formats which will cover a broad range of knowledge and which will include both basic works of permanent value and timely materials on current issues for the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of the children, teens and adults of the community.

Due to limitations of space and budget, the Library's collection will not satisfy all requests for materials. Specialized materials which are beyond the scope of the collection may be obtained through interlibrary loans.

II. Responsibility for Selection

The selection of library materials is the responsibility of Collection Development librarians under the supervision of the Director of Collection Management. Selection is based primarily on reviews in reputable journals, as well as the professional judgment of the librarians. Recommendations may come from non-traditional sources. The Collection Development librarian should evaluate the source and may seek guidance from the Director of Collection Management.

The ultimate responsibility for the selection of materials, however, rests with the County Librarian, who operates within the policies established by the Board of Trustees.

III. General Principles

This Collection Development policy is guided by two long-standing principles of librarianship stated in The Library Bill of Rights:

- "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation."
- "Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."

The Library staff, the County Librarian, and the Board of Trustees do not necessarily endorse every idea, opinion, or presentation that is contained in the materials which are selected. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents. No item will be placed on closed shelves except for the purpose of protecting it from damage or theft.

The Library expects parental involvement in how their child uses the Library, including interacting with the collections. The Library asks parents and legal guardians to be responsible for supervising a child's choice of reading material or other library material.

Although materials are carefully selected, the Library recognizes that some materials may lead to differences of opinion regarding suitability. SCPL has a form, "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" a copy of which is available at all library locations or on the Library's website, www.spartanburglibraries.org. Patrons are limited to one active request at a time. Patrons should complete this form and return it to the Library. It will be reviewed by Library staff and submitted to the County Librarian with a recommendation for action. The SCPL Collection Development Policy will be used as a basis for the review. The County Librarian will respond to the person requesting the review. If necessary, the request for reconsideration will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees' Executive Committee.

Educational institutions and groups, including homeschool associations, are expected to assume chief responsibility for supporting the curriculum needs of their students.

IV. Selection Guides

Professional selection guides may include:

- Library Journal
- School Library Journal
- Horn Book
- Kirkus Reviews
- Choice
- Publisher's Weekly
- Booklist
- Video Librarian

V. Selection Criteria

The following general criteria apply to all Spartanburg County Library collections:

- High standards of quality in content, expression and physical attributes (creation, binding, printing, paper quality).
- At least one favorable review in a professional selection guide (listed above) is generally required before an item is purchased.
- Significant reputation of the author, editor, producer or illustrator.
- Established reputation of publisher in the industry.
- Content that is timely, popular, accurate, and representative of various viewpoints.

- Contemporary or historical significance, potential usefulness, appeal or cultural value of the title
- Reasonable cost with regard to budget restrictions.
- In most cases, the SCPL will not purchase self-published material unless it is reviewed in an established source. Exceptions may be made for material of local interest.
- Suggestions for purchase of particular items, as well as donations, by members of the community are welcome but are subject to the same selection criteria.
- Abridgements are purchased on a case-by-case basis.
- SCPL cannot maintain all digital formats or online offerings indefinitely. As formats and content delivery systems change, the library will evaluate digital offerings based on the popularity of format, cost of maintenance, fee structures, and availability.

VI. Donations of Materials

The Library accepts donations of books and other materials. Donated materials may be added to the collection based on selection criteria. Items not added to the collection may be sold by the Friends of the Library, given to other institutions, or discarded. Materials gifted or donated become property of the library with no conditions on their use or withdrawal from the collection. Library staff reserve the right to decline donations.

The Library also accepts donations of materials in support of our Attics to Archives program, which seeks to preserve Spartanburg's local history. Information regarding this program is available on the Library's website, www.spartanburglibraries.org.

Materials donated to the Library qualify as tax-deductible charitable donations, but IRS regulations prohibit the Library, as an interested party, from assigning a dollar value to the donation. Please consult current IRS regulations for more information.

VII. Gifts and Memorials

The Library gratefully accepts monetary gifts to purchase materials. Please contact Library Administration for further information.

Donations of materials to serve as memorials must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials.

VIII. Organizing the Collection

The goal and purpose of cataloging at SCPL is to serve the public by allowing library patrons and staff to access materials easily, quickly, and efficiently. Bibliographic formats and standards, controlled vocabularies, and classification schemes are all tools used in pursuit of that goal. Adherence to standards ensures that materials remain accessible, even when systems, staff,

and patrons change. The essential standards and schemes currently used in SCPL cataloging are RDA (Resource Description and Access), the Dewey Decimal Classification system, AACR2 (Anglo-American Cataloging Rules), Library of Congress Adult Subject Headings, and SuDoc (Superintendent of Documents classification) for government documents.

Every effort is made to determine the appropriate location of materials within the Library to reach the intended audience. Collection Development librarians use reviews from the selection guides and information from publishers to help make initial decisions on placement of materials. Once books are received by the Library, staff may look through materials to determine age-appropriate locations as well as consider previous placement decisions. Ideally, new materials are placed with similar materials already in the collection. But when judgment is required in the interpretation or application of cataloging standards and policy, Cataloging librarians will work closely with other staff, seeking input when necessary to ensure the best service to patrons.

IX. Maintenance of the Collection

Decisions must be made continuously on how to handle worn materials—whether to mend, bind, replace or discard them. Weeding, the permanent removal of materials from the library's collection, is an integral part of collection development. In order to maintain a useful, accurate, and up-to-date collection, weeding will be conducted on a regular schedule. Collection Development librarians responsible for purchasing in specific subject areas are also responsible for weeding those areas.

One or more of the following criteria should be considered in weeding the collection:

- Circulation data
- Poor physical condition; not suitable for rebinding
- Duplicate copies of a title no longer in demand
- Obsolete content
- Space limitations

While the same general criteria for weeding apply to both SCPL Headquarters and branch libraries, limited space at branches may require more frequent and aggressive weeding in certain subject areas. Collection Development librarians and Branch librarians should maintain good communication during the weeding process, with the Collection Development librarian taking into consideration the judgment of the Branch librarian as decisions are made.

Policy Revision

Library administration may revise and clarify this policy. Any substantive changes will require the approval of the Libraries' Board of Trustees.

Administrative update November 25, 2025