

# Cary Library Collection Development Policy

## General Principles and Purpose

The materials collection, one of Cary Memorial Library's major assets, is developed and managed to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of library patrons of all ages in the Town of Lexington. This policy is meant both to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles upon which selection and retention decisions are made.

The library endorses the principles of intellectual freedom as expressed in the [Library Bill of Rights](#) and contained within the [Freedom to Read](#) and [Freedom to View](#) statements as put forth by the American Library Association. The library provides materials to support each individual's journey, and does not place a value on one customer's needs or preferences over another's.

Library staff members develop and maintain a patron-focused collection by anticipating and responding to local user needs and interests. Conversations with library users about materials in the collection are welcome, and provide valuable feedback about the collection.

The materials budget allocation is based on multiple factors including user demand, cost of materials, durability, publishing trends, changes in the information marketplaces, and overall collection balance. Library staff use reference resources, professional judgment, and experience to select these materials. The library collection includes popular and in-demand materials, such as best-sellers, large print books, audiovisual materials, business resources, world language materials, medical and health guides, school and career information, and titles of interest to children and teenagers. In addition, the library preserves and makes available a collection of texts, newspapers, maps, photographs, and documents pertaining to the history of Lexington, MA.

The library is currently collecting in multiple formats, including:

- Print - hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines, and newspapers
- Audiovisual materials – CDs, DVDs, “Play-aways”
- Microform – microfilm
- Digital – ebooks and audiobooks, streaming media platforms, online databases, digital historical archives, and the library's website and social media accounts
- Special Collections:
  - Lexington Author Collection - Cary Library maintains a special collection of works by Lexington authors. The library strives to include at least one representative work of every Lexington author in our collection. Space,

staff time, and budget restrict our ability to collect more comprehensively. Gifts of titles by Lexington authors are greatly appreciated.

- Library of Things - The Library of Things is a collection of non-traditional library items with the purpose of providing diverse opportunities for learning and engagement. A [Library of Things Collection Development and Circulation Policy](#) as well as [Library of Things Guidelines for Borrowing and Use \[PDF\]](#) are available.
- Local History Collection – Cary Library collects, preserves and makes available to residents, researchers and the general public materials that document the history of Lexington. Priorities for materials selection and retention are: (1) Materials about Lexington's history, families, buildings, events, organizations, individuals, etc.; (2) Materials about communities with geographic or topical connections to Lexington; (3) Materials about other Massachusetts communities; (4) Materials about New England. Cary Library does not accept donations of archival records or personal papers of organizations or individuals, or donations of non-print materials (e.g., photographs, slides, objects, art, and scrapbooks).
- Ruth Nadelman Lynn Historical Collection of Children's Literature - a sampling of books representing the history and development of children's literature and illustration. This is a non-circulating collection housed with adult collections on the library's Main Level. Books in the collection have been chosen based upon their impact on the field of children's literature, the historical value of text or illustrations, and uniqueness rather than monetary value or rarity. These selections and related materials are kept as part of the record of the past. They are historical documents which reflect the attitudes, perspectives and beliefs of different times. The Library does not endorse the views expressed in these books, which may contain content offensive to users.
- World Language Collections – Lexington is a diverse community and the library is committed to growing and maintaining World Language collections that meet the needs and interests of local residents. Because the library staff does not include native speakers of all the languages we collect, community volunteers who are fluent in those languages may be consulted for help in selecting and evaluating World Language materials. [Guidelines for the World Language Collections](#) are available.

The library provides free, open, and equitable access to library collections for all users. The library neither encourages nor discourages any particular viewpoint. Materials will not be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political or social views of the author. Selection of materials by the library does not constitute endorsement of the content or of the views expressed in those materials.

Not all library materials may be suitable for all members of the community. Responsibility for a child's use of library materials, regardless of format or content, lies with the parent or guardian, not with the library.

## Responsibility for Selection

Materials are selected by the library staff, based on the criteria outlined in this policy. Designated staff are responsible for specific areas of the collection. The responsibility for selection and retention ultimately rests with the Library Director, operating within the framework of this policy as voted by the library's Board of Trustees.

## Selection Guidelines

Materials selection is a critical and interpretive process. Reviews are the principal tool used in the selection of library materials and electronic resources. Staff members selecting library materials and electronic resources also consult bibliographic publications, publisher and vendor advertising and demonstrations, popular demand, and requests by library users. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are evaluated using guidelines including:

- Public demand and anticipated demand
- Attention of critics and reviewers, award winners, or inclusion in bibliographies
- Clarity, accuracy, and technical quality of presentation
- Reputation or qualifications of the author, creator, or publisher
- Contribution to the diversity of the collection
- Suitability and durability of format
- Cost and availability of materials through municipal procurement process
- Condition of material (in the case of donations)
- Availability of catalog records (for World Language materials)
- Treatment of subject for intended audience (particularly in youth collections)
- Availability from other Minuteman Libraries or through Inter Library Loan

Additional guidelines for the evaluation of electronic resources also include:

- Comparison of content with other available formats
- Cost
- Customer assistance requirements
- Ease of access
- Hardware requirements
- Licensing requirements

- Networking capabilities
- Staff training

## Resource Sharing with Other Libraries

Cary Library is a member of the Minuteman Library Network, whose community of 36 public and 5 academic libraries offers additional depth and variety of collections to which Cary Library users have access. Selection of materials for the Cary Library collection is done with an eye to the special strengths and the immediate availability of these other library collections. In the case of expensive electronic collections, group cooperative purchasing allows economically feasible access to these products for all member libraries and their users.

## Patron Requests

The library welcomes suggestions from the community via our [Purchase Suggestion form](#). All suggestions for purchase are evaluated using the same selection criteria as for other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. Those not purchased are acquired for library users by interlibrary loan wherever possible.

## Donated Materials

The library does not accept materials that are not outright gifts. Our [Materials Donation Policy](#) states that materials donated to the library are received with the understanding that they are subject to the same selection, evaluation and disposal criteria as material acquired for purchase. In most cases, the library cannot guarantee the permanence of an item donated to the collection. Items not added to library collections may be sold, transferred to other libraries, donated to other nonprofit organizations, or recycled. Items of extreme value or historic significance are handled on an individual basis.

## Monetary Donations in support of Library Collections

The library welcomes monetary donations in support of library collections. Donors may specify that their gifts be used to purchase materials for specific areas of the collection. Library staff will select individual titles in accordance with the library's Collection Development policy. Monetary donations in support of library collections may be made through the [Cary Library Foundation](#).

## Collection Maintenance

Systematic de-selection of materials from the collection is a necessary adjunct to selection. Before being withdrawn, items are considered in accordance with the following guidelines (listed in alphabetical order):

- Damage to item
- Duplicate copies
- Lack of use
- Obsolescence
- Space needs
- Updated editions available

## Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Cary Library recognizes the freedom to read and the right to materials that promote open inquiry, critical thinking, and diversity in thought and expression. The Cary Library also respects the right for Lexington residents to request reconsideration of library materials using the process outlined in our Collection Development Policy. The right to challenge books and materials is protected by the First Amendment as is the right to live in a society free of censorship. Because the Cary Library serves everyone, differing viewpoints and a diversity of perspectives are to be expected. Living in a free society affords us access to information unimpeded by others' beliefs or viewpoints.

Residents of Lexington who have a concern about an item in the library's collection may request reconsideration of that item by completing the [Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form](#). Completed requests are evaluated by the appropriate professional library staff. Incomplete requests will not be considered, nor will requests submitted by non-residents.

The Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form, and the Library's written response to it, become part of the public record. If the resident who initiated the Request for Reconsideration disagrees with the Library's decision, they may appeal that decision to the Executive Board of the Library Board of Trustees. The Executive Board's decision regarding the item is final.

Reconsideration of **digital content** in the Minuteman Library Network collection may be made via the [Minuteman Library Network's Request for Reconsideration form](#).

*Policy approved by the Library Board of Trustees — 10/17/12, updated 12/10/25*