



Library Collections Policy

1. Purpose of Library Collections

The Geneva Public Library (“the Library”) develops collections to promote literacy, support education, encourage lifelong learning, and to meet the diverse cultural, informational, and recreational interests of the community.

The Library purchases both popular items and materials that meet specific community needs, such as materials in Spanish, large print format, workforce training, and local history. The Library strives to develop collections for all members of the community, including children, teens, and adults. Materials for all age groups may be borrowed by any patron, but some collections, such as local history, are only available for use in the Library.

Careful consideration is given by Library employees when selecting each new item. Factors considered include: expected frequency of use; popularity of the author or title; professional and reader reviews; accuracy and relevance of information; price; and an item’s availability at other libraries in the OWWL Library System. Special consideration is given to those books which deal with topics about which very little else is available.

A wide variety of materials and formats is considered for the collection, such as hardcover and paperback editions of books, periodicals, audio and video recordings, toys and games, and online and electronic media devices.

2. Collections for Children

Collections for children include materials designed to serve the educational benefits, interests, and needs of all children, as well as parents and caregivers. Quality, accuracy, relevance, appropriateness for the intended audience, good design and format, and illustration are important criteria in the evaluation of children’s materials.

3. Collections for Teens

Collections for teens and young adults seek to provide a wide range of materials to

meet and stimulate the interest of teenagers in reading and in the world around them. Collections for teens are separately identified to provide a transition between the collections for children and adults.

4. Local Author & Local History Collection

The Library actively maintains a Local History and Local Authors collection, which contain works from authors from Geneva, or documentation of the history and culture of Geneva and the Finger Lakes region. The collections will primarily consist of books and other published items, the papers and manuscripts of regionally significant writers, and local genealogical resources. Books and other items that are very rare, expensive, unique, or in delicate condition will be considered for transfer to Historic Geneva or housed at the Library in a more secure setting with more limited access.

To the extent possible, based on condition, rarity, and value, items in the collections will be available for circulation and/or viewing in publicly accessible areas of the Library.

4.1 Additions to the Local History and Local Author Collections

The Library reserves sole discretion in deciding what materials will be accepted and housed in its Local History and Local Author collections. Selection criteria will include, but may not be limited to:

- How the material fits into the existing collection;
- What kind of information the material offers;
- Relevance to non-duplication of materials;
- Cost to preserve and store;
- Security requirements; and
- Available copies at Historic Geneva and other archives.

All materials donated to the Library intended for addition to the Local Author or Local History Collections should be accompanied by the Library's Deed of Gift form. All material donations become subject to the Library's [Records Retention and Removal](#) policy. Items without Deed of Gift documentation waive the rights of previous ownership and are subject to the Library's policies.

4.2 Discarding Local History and Local Author Collections

The Library reserves the right to periodically reevaluate materials in the Local History and Local Author collections, and discard certain items from the collections in a manner consistent with professionally accepted standards and in conjunction with advice from Historic Geneva and other trusted agencies.

The Library may decide to discard an item if any of the following conditions are present:

- The item is not relevant to the Library's mission and purpose;
- The item would be more appropriately housed in a different archival repository;
- The item has deteriorated beyond its usefulness;
- The item is void of inherent exhibition, research, or educational value;
- The item is a duplicate of materials already in collections;
- The item is made of hazardous materials or is actively decomposing in a manner that directly affects the condition of other items and/or the health and safety of the employees and/or patrons;
- The Library is unable to continue to provide care and storage for the object in keeping with professionally accepted standards;
- The item is subject to legal and ethical standards requiring its removal.

Where appropriate, preference will be given to Historic Geneva or other local institutions.

5. Suggestions for Additions to the Collection

To ensure acquisitions are consistent with Library usage, patron suggestions are always considered. Patrons can request that specific items be purchased by filling out the [Suggested Purchase Form](#) online or by speaking with a Library employee.

6. Collection Maintenance, Replacement, and Discard

Library employees regularly review items in the collection to ensure that they continue to meet patrons' needs. Materials that are worn, obsolete, unused, old editions, or unnecessarily duplicated are removed. It is the responsibility of employees to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed, or lost. Items are not automatically replaced. Decisions are based on need, demand, space constraints, and budget.

Discarded items may be distributed to other libraries, gifted to the Foundation for the Geneva Public Library, donated, or recycled. Concerns about the discarding of Library materials should be addressed to the Executive Director.

7. Freedom to Read, See, and Hear

The Library believes that it is essential in a free society that all citizens have access to Library materials and that no restrictions are placed on what anyone may read, see, or hear in a public library's collections, including those that are digital.

The Library agrees with the principles articulated in the American Library Association's [Freedom to View](#); [Library Bill of Rights](#); [Free Access to Library Materials for Minors](#); [Freedom to Read](#); and [Statement on Labeling](#).

Well-intentioned persons or groups occasionally question the appropriateness of specific items in library collections, or the effects some materials may have on impressionable persons. Suggestions are sometimes made regarding the restriction, removal, or labeling of certain library materials. The Library understands and appreciates these suggestions and concerns but believes the risk of not providing free access to information and ideas is greater than the risk of providing it. The Library, therefore, enunciates the following principles:

7.1 Controversial Materials

In an effort to provide patrons with diverse sources of information and the widest possible range of ideas and viewpoints, the Library acquires materials that may be controversial because of profanity, social, economic, or political ideas, religious viewpoints, the background of the author, the kinds of information provided, or other reasons. Acquisition or use of any item does not imply Library approval or endorsement of the contents.

7.2 Ages

The age of a patron will not be the sole determining factor in the circulation of Library materials. If parents wish to limit their children's access to certain materials, that is their responsibility and not the Library's.

7.3 Labeling

It is sometimes suggested that a label be affixed to library materials indicating a political or social point of view or indicating that such an item is questionable or controversial. Such labeling suggests that people are incapable of making up their own minds about controversial subjects. The Library does not subscribe to this practice.

7.4 Review of Library Selections

The Library is willing to review its selection of items in its collections on a case by case basis. Individuals who question the appropriateness of specific items may initiate such a review by submitting their concerns to the Executive Director in writing using the Materials Complaint form (*Appendix A*). This form may only be used once per item per individual. The review process includes a full reading, listening, or viewing of the item by the Executive Director and by the individual requesting the review. The Executive

Director will meet with the individual, then report his or her findings to the Library Board of Trustees (“the Board”). No item is to be removed or restricted because of a complaint until after the Board has examined the individual’s request and the findings of the Executive Director.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees: December 20, 2007

Amended by the Board of Trustees: 5/3/2008, 8/26/2009, 9/28/2011, 3/27/2013, 3/30/2016, 3/29/2017, 3/28/2018, 5/30/2018, 3/27/2019, 11/18/2020, 11/17/2021, 11/30/2022, 10/25/2023

Reviewed by the Policy Review Committee: 10/16/2023

Appendix A Materials Complaint Form

The Geneva Public Library Board of Trustees has delegated the responsibility of selection and evaluation of library materials to the staff of the Geneva Public Library, and has an established procedure to address patron concerns about those materials. Completion of this form is the first step in this procedure.

Please tell us about the library material you believe was selected for our collection in error.

Author: _____

Title: _____

Publication Date: _____ **Format (Book, DVD, CD, etc.):** _____

1. What brought this material to your attention?

2. What concerns you about this material? Please be as specific as possible.

3. Have you examined the material in its entirety? Yes No
If **No**, what parts have you examined?

4. Do you see any value in the material?

5. What would you like the library to do about this material?

If you wish to remain anonymous, please do not fill in the following section. Instead, submit the form as directed below. Please note that anonymous complaints cannot receive a follow-up response from the Executive Director.

Name: _____

Organization you represent (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please submit your completed form in a sealed envelope addressed to:

Geneva Public Library
c/o ExecutiveDirector
244 Main St.
Geneva, NY 14456