

# **Irondale Public Library Collection Development Policy**

## **I. Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the Irondale Public Library to encourage lifelong learning among people of all ages; to provide community residents free access to reliable information; and to make available a place for informational, cultural, and recreational enrichment by providing access to collections and services that meet a diverse array of needs and interests.

## **II. Purpose of the Collection Development Policy**

The collection development policy establishes guidelines for the selection and evaluation of library materials.

## **III. Objectives of the Collection Development Policy**

The Irondale Public Library aims to meet the informational, recreational, educational and cultural needs of its community by offering a wide selection of library materials in a variety of formats and reading levels. The library attempts to provide a wide range of viewpoints based on quality, cost, and availability of the materials to purchase. The library staff builds and maintains a patron-oriented collection by anticipating and responding to needs and expectations.

## **IV. Scope of the Collection**

The Library provides materials and services that reflect the various education, information, and recreational needs of its users. A broad range of material formats is selected to accommodate the variety of learning styles and preferences. Formats include:

- Print materials
- Non-print materials
- Digital resources
- Equipment

While the Library serves the basic reference needs of the community, budget and space limitations preclude the Library from duplicating the collections that exist elsewhere in the Public Libraries in Jefferson County (Jefferson County Library Cooperative). These collections can be accessed through cooperative networking within the Jefferson County Library Cooperative, interlibrary loan, and direct referral. All member libraries of the Jefferson County Library Cooperative are designed to provide access on an equal basis to the collections of the

entire Jefferson County Library system. Emphasis is placed on shared access across libraries.

## **V. Responsibility of Selection**

Selection refers to the process of identifying and evaluating specific items to add to the Library collection.

Professional librarians are responsible for selecting materials that meet the criteria established in the Collection Development Policy.

Final responsibility and authority for selection rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework established by this policy, which has been approved by the Irondale Public Library Board.

## **VI. Selection Criteria**

All or some of the following criteria may be considered when adding new items to the collection:

- Anticipation of and response to the needs and interests of the community
- Timeliness, format durability, and ease of use
- Critical acclaim
- Current cultural or historical significance of author or subject
- Literary or artistic merit
- Variety of viewpoints
- Price and availability
- Public appeal or local interest
- Budgetary considerations
- Physical limitations of the building
- Sustained interest
- Reviews and/or awards

**Inclusion in the collection does not imply Library endorsement or agreement with the contents.**

Circulation of materials is considered when purchasing new items and high demand items.

Patron suggestions are encouraged, but subject to the same selection criteria as other materials and are not automatically added to the collection.

The Library may select or license products that will provide patrons access to materials without actual Library ownership. These collections may be dictated by vendors and patron-driven acquisition, however, the overall scope of these collections should adhere to the Collection

## **VII. Complaints and Censorship**

In support of its mission, the Irondale Public Library fully endorses the principles stated in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, as well as those documented in the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement of the American Library Association, recognizing that Alabama state law dictates parental access to the registration and circulation records of minor children.

Collection development decisions are based on the merit of the work as it relates to the Library's mission and its ability to meet the needs and interests of the community; decisions are not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval of the material. The inclusion of an item in the Library collection in no way represents an endorsement of its contents.

Each individual should determine what is most appropriate for their needs and define what material or information is consistent with their personal or family values. An individual can apply those values to their personal selection of Library materials. While that individual is free to personally reject materials of which they do not approve, they may not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

Responsibility for materials selected, read or viewed by children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians, not with Library staff. Selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that materials may be accessible to minors. Materials are not labeled to show approval or disapproval or to indicate certain philosophies. No items are sequestered except to protect from damage or theft.

Should a member of the community question the placement of an item in the Library collection, the Library director or staff may meet with the individual to discuss the concern. If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the individual may fill out and return a written and signed Request for Reconsideration form.

### Criteria for review of Request for Reconsideration

- Only requests from Irondale residents with valid (not expired) library cards will be considered.
- The Request for Reconsideration form must be completed in full.
- The individual must read or view the entire work for the request to be considered.
- If particular language or point of view are the substance of the complaint, the materials will not be reviewed for exclusion.

- If a particular title has been evaluated in the previous 12 months, any subsequent Requests for Reconsideration for the same title will not be considered.
- No more than three titles may be submitted per household in a 12-month period.

In the absence of a fully completed form there is no formal complaint and no further action shall be taken.

Upon receiving a fully completed Request for Reconsideration form, the Library director shall establish a staff review committee to investigate the complaint. The questioned material will be reviewed, and assessed as a complete work, and the individual will receive a written response to his/her concern. The person may appeal to the Library Board of Trustees who will consider the decision based on whether or not the particular title conforms to the collection development policy and offer a final decision.

### **VIII. Gifts**

When the Library receives a monetary donation for the purchase of materials, selection is made in accordance with this collection development policy.

All gifts of materials are subject to the previously stated criteria for selection. The Library reserves the right to refuse any donation deemed inappropriate due to condition, duplication of existing materials, lack of authoritative review, outdated copyright, or lack of space.

Upon receipt, all donations become property of Irondale Public Library. The Library does not return, nor does it track the status of, donations. The Library shall not accept donations with special conditions or restrictions imposed by the donor.

Items added to the collection that do not circulate regularly will be subject to removal as part of regular collection maintenance.

Items not added to the collections are generally added to the Library book sale to support the Library. Upon request, the Library will provide the donor a receipt, but will not appraise the value of donated items.

### **IX. Local Authors and Self-Published Books**

A self-published book is a book that has not been published by a traditional or independent publishing house, but rather is published by a company that has been paid by the author. By the Library's definition, a local author is any writer who lives in the Irondale/Birmingham vicinity or any author who writes about the Irondale/Birmingham vicinity.

Irondale Public Library is willing to consider the addition of self-published and locally published works to the Library's collection. These books must also meet the criteria for selection. The

Library wishes to support local and self-published authors while maintaining the standards of our permanent collections.

Authors can bring their works to the Library's attention by filling out a submission form, which can be found on the Library's website ([irondalelibrary.org](http://irondalelibrary.org)).

Books donated by local authors are subject to the same terms listed in the gifts and donations section in this collection development policy.

## **X. Collection Maintenance**

Staff shall review items in the collection on an ongoing basis to ensure that the Library continues to meet patrons' needs. Worn, damaged, and outdated materials shall be removed from the collection on a regular basis. Materials may also be withdrawn if unused or superseded by a new edition or a more authoritative work on the same subject. Other criteria that may be applied include space considerations, collection balance, the changing demands of users, or the replacement of materials with other formats. Withdrawn materials will be disposed of in the manner deemed most appropriate for that item, including Library book sale, distribution to other libraries or community service organizations, or recycling.

## **XI. Revision of Policy**

This collection development policy will be periodically evaluated and revised.

Approved by the library board February 28, 2024