
Smiths Falls Public Library



Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Number: **OP-12**

Policy Title: **Materials Selection**

Policy Approval Date: **October 2011**

Last Review Date: **June 23, 2026**

Introduction

The collections shall be balanced and represent diverse points of view and may include materials that some members of the public consider to be controversial in nature.

To support the mission of the Smiths Falls Public Library, materials are selected in order to anticipate and meet the needs of the citizens the Library serves.

The purpose of the Smiths Falls Public Library Materials Selection Policy is to guide staff in the acquisition of material that is of current interest and/or of lasting value to existing and potential library users. The Policy is also intended to familiarize library users with the principles upon which selection decisions are made for Smiths Falls Public Library collections.

The library provides a collection of books and materials:

- a) in a variety of formats
- b) for all ages
- c) that is responsive to the needs and interest of the community
- d) that reflects the diversity of the community

The Materials Selection Policy applies to all formats including print, audio-visual and electronic materials.

Responsibility for Selection Activities

While overall responsibility for library collections rests with the Library Board, the responsibility for selection of materials is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer of the Library who in turn may delegate the responsibility to qualified staff.

Access to Collections

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for children's reading and viewing of the collection, not the staff of the Smiths Falls Public Library. Selection of materials for the adult collection is not restricted by the possibility that children may obtain, read or view such materials. The Smiths Falls Public Library believes in the intellectual freedom of the individual and the right of parents and legal guardians to develop, interpret and enforce their own code of ethics upon their minor children.

Selection Criteria

Using the above guidelines, Smiths Falls Public Library staff consider:

- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
- Present and potential relevance to community users
- Importance as a record of the times
- Relationship to the existing collection
- Reputation, skill, competence and purpose of the originator of the work
- Reputation of the publisher
- Attention of critics, reviewers and the public
- Public demand
- Canadian content
- Indigenous content
- Quality of writing, production, and illustration
- Purchase price and other budgetary considerations
- Publication date (normally within the current or previous calendar year with the exception of replacement copies)

Items need not meet all criteria to be acceptable. The presence of a book, periodical or other material in the Library does not indicate an endorsement of its content.

The library will not knowingly add titles that are wholly AI-generated and will only knowingly add titles that are partially AI-generated in exceptional circumstances (eg. an award-winning title or a title of significant local interest).

The Smiths Falls Public Library Board has adopted the following statement on Intellectual Freedom:

Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries:

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations recognizes and values the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the guarantor of the fundamental freedoms in Canada of conscience and religion; of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; of peaceful assembly; and of association.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which include the interlocking freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In accordance with these principles, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms that all persons in Canada have a fundamental right, subject only to the Constitution and the law, to have access to the full range of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly. Only the courts may abridge free expression rights in Canada.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations holds that libraries are a key institution in Canada for rendering expressive content accessible and affordable to all. Libraries are essential gateways for all persons living in Canada to advance themselves through literacy, lifelong learning, social engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them.

Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Library employees, volunteers and employers as well as library governing entities have a core responsibility to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in the performance of their respective library roles.

[Adopted: August 26, 2016]

New Formats

Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to Smiths Public Library collections. Budget considerations, community needs and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format.

The selection of material in any new format may result in the library's decision to retire specific items or material formats from its collections in order to responsibly accommodate trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

Collection Maintenance

The Library maintains a policy of ongoing deselection based upon the elimination of unnecessary items, outdated materials, materials no longer of interest or in demand, duplicates, worn or damaged copies. Frequency of circulation, community or regional interest and availability of newer and more up-to-date materials are of prime consideration as is available space for new physical materials.

Gifts and Donations

The Library sometimes accepts gifts of materials from individuals or groups. The same criteria and guidelines that apply to the selection of all library materials are used to evaluate gifts. It is understood that gifts are freely given without conditions attached and that all donations will be used or disposed of as the Library deems appropriate.

Requests to Purchase

The staff will proactively solicit advice from, as well as anticipate the needs and interests of, the community. Suggested titles are subject to the same selection criteria as all other titles.

Interlibrary Loan Services

Items that fall outside the selection criteria of the Smiths Falls Public Library or that are-out-of-print or temporarily unavailable can be requested by library customers from other library systems by using interlibrary loan services.

Reconsideration of materials

Individuals who object to materials in the collection may express their concern to the Chief Executive Officer in writing. It should be noted that titles will not be withdrawn simply because a community member does not agree with the content of a title or because a community member believes a title is inappropriate for children. The final decision concerning Library materials rests with the Chief Executive Officer who may seek input from staff and the board.