

Purpose: The Medicine Hat Public Library views its information and leisure collections as a valuable community resource. The Library endeavours to meet the diverse needs of the community by creating a balanced and representative collection of materials. The Library's role is to afford all citizens the means through which they may have access to thinking and opinions on all sides of all ideas. This policy provides the philosophy and key objectives respecting the management of the Library's information and leisure collections.

1. Definitions:

- 1.1. Board – the City of Medicine Hat Library Board.
- 1.2. Library – Medicine Hat Public Library.
- 1.3. Chief Librarian – the Chief Librarian or Acting Chief Librarian.
- 1.4. Collection – grouping of library materials.
- 1.5. Library Materials – all information and leisure collections the Library makes available to the public, including but not limited to books, music, and videos (in all formats), video games, magazines, newspapers, graphic novels, and on - or off-site electronic databases, excepting the Internet.

2. Responsibility for Collection Management:

- 2.1. Ultimate responsibility for the selection and deselection of all materials resides with the Chief Librarian who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board. In practice, this authority is delegated to Department Heads who may delegate to other staff members as required.

3. General Principles:

- 3.1. The Library accepts as policy the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries.

Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

Approved by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (formerly Canadian Library Association) on June 27, 1974; amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; and September 27, 2015 (reaffirmed and posted on the Canadian Federation of Library Associations website, text copied from website March 19, 2026).

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.

- 3.2. Library users of all ages have open access to all the Library's collections except those materials restricted by acquisitions agreements (e.g. audio books for the physically and visually impaired). Staff members will endeavour to assist anyone in choosing materials for particular individual needs. However, the staff will not and should not prevent library users from personally choosing and borrowing materials that they desire. Children and young adults will be given equal borrowing rights with adults. Staff members will not assume the parental responsibility for a child's choice and use of library materials.

3.3. The Board supports and participates in resource sharing among libraries within Alberta, working toward the vision of universal barrier-free access for all Albertans to information and ideas.

3.4. The Board will acquire its library resources in the most efficient, economical way possible.

3.4.1. To promote efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the preferred means of purchasing library resources is through the Shortgrass Library System.

3.4.2. Consortium purchasing opportunities through organizations like the Alberta Library and joint purchasing with other libraries or systems, are supported to allow cost-effective purchasing of library resources.

#### 4. Scope of the Collection:

4.1. The Children's Collections are selected to meet the varying needs and abilities of children up to and including the age of twelve (12) and to reflect the interests of the community. These collections are provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all children that the Library serves.

4.2. Young Adult Collections are selected to meet the changing reading levels, interests, and information needs of young people from thirteen (13) to eighteen (18) years of age and to ease the transition from children's to adult literature.

4.3. Adult Collections are selected to meet the information, interests, and leisure needs of all adults that the Library serves. However, the adult collections cannot provide coverage in all areas to the depth of information required for extensive research; the Library recognizes that extensive research is the domain of academic and specialised libraries. Collections at the Library are developed with an awareness of the purposes and resources of other libraries in the geographic area and will not needlessly duplicate materials held in those facilities.

4.4. The Library will participate in circulating collections that are of benefit to its community.

4.5. Interlibrary Loan services are utilized to provide access to materials from libraries outside the Shortgrass Library System, including the collections of libraries throughout Alberta, Canada, and, occasionally, international locations.

#### 5. General Criteria for Materials Selection

5.1. The selection of Library materials is based on the following:

5.1.1. the need for recreational reading, listening, and viewing materials to reflect a diverse community with differing tastes, interests, purposes' and education;

5.1.2. the need to deal in an informative and balanced manner with social, personal, racial, multicultural, religious, and scientific issues;

5.1.3. the need to provide as broad a base as possible of information and literature.

5.2. The criteria below will be considered when selecting material for the Library; however, it is impossible to establish a set of criteria for the indisputable acceptance or rejection of material. Items do not need to meet all the criteria to be acceptable. Materials that do not meet these criteria may be purchased to satisfy demand.

5.2.1. Suitability of physical format for library use

5.2.2. Relation to the existing collection and other material on the subject

5.2.3. Availability of funds and space

5.2.4. Favourable reviews

5.2.5. Popular demand

5.2.6. Balance of viewpoints in the collection

5.2.7. Value as a contribution to issues of continuing or topical interest, i.e. timeliness

- 5.2.8. Currency
- 5.2.9. Local interest
- 5.2.10. Representation of an important movement, genre, and/or culture
- 5.2.11. Originality
- 5.2.12. Accuracy of information
- 5.2.13. Quality of writing
- 5.2.14. Identified area for collection development focus

Specific selection criteria can be found in collection guidelines for departments or individual collection areas.

- 5.3. If there is considerable topical interest in a subject and a manifest public desire to judge an item first-hand, an item that does not meet the normal criteria may, at the discretion of the Chief Librarian or designate, be included.
- 5.4. The Library is sympathetic to the needs of students, but it is not the primary responsibility of the Library to provide curriculum-centred materials in the collection. Textbooks and other curriculum-related materials are not acquired unless they also serve the general public.

## 6. General Criteria for Materials Deselection

- 6.1. The following criteria will be used when considering material for removal from the collection:
  - 6.1.1. The worth of the item in comparison to new works in the same subject areas
  - 6.1.2. The usefulness of the item to the public
  - 6.1.3. The amount of available space
  - 6.1.4. The item's currency and accuracy
  - 6.1.5. The physical condition of the item
  - 6.1.6. The availability of funds for purchasing replacement material
- 6.2. Discarded materials can be offered for sale in a Library book sale, recycled, or given to community groups for use or resale. Items that are no longer whole, falling apart, or in very poor condition will not be offered for sale or to other groups and will be disposed of.

## 7. Controlled Items

- 7.1. The use of rare or scholarly material of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve it from harm.
- 7.2. The Library reserves the right to designate items for reference use only, for placement on non-public shelves rather than on open shelves, for short-term loan, or for short-term in-library use only.
- 7.3 The Library may make collections available without circulation controls if it is economical and appropriate to do so.

## 8. Controversial Issues

- 8.1. The Library is a community resource where many points of view and modes of expression can be examined without hindrance. People have the right to reject for themselves material of which they do not approve, but they do not have the right to restrict the freedom of others. Individuals have the right to express opposition to ideas, language, or other content; however, the Library will not remove items that have been purchased in compliance with the principles of this policy. Selection of material cannot be influenced by anticipated approval or disapproval of its content by members of the community.
- 8.2. The presence of an item in the collection does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the Library but is an affirmation of the principle of intellectual freedom as embodied in the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom.

- 8.3. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no catalogued material will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.
- 8.4. In the event of an objection or complaint by a Library user, the following are the steps of resolution:
  - 8.4.1. The user is requested to put their complaint in writing, using the attached form. Following a personal review of the item and a check of outside review sources, the Head of Department will hold a formal discussion with the user and/or send a letter to respond to the user's concerns.
  - 8.4.2. If the user is not satisfied, the written complaint is reviewed and discussed jointly by the Head of Department and the Chief Librarian. A decision is made reflecting the principles of this Policy, and a written explanation for the decision is sent to the user.
  - 8.4.3. If the user is still not satisfied, they may appeal in writing to the Board. The Board will consider whether the selection criteria were appropriately applied and/or whether some aspects of the policy are inappropriate or outdated and should be reviewed. The Board's decision is final.

## 9. Suggestions for Purchase

- 9.1. The Library encourages and invites suggestions from the public for the purchase or addition of specific items not in the Library's collections. These suggestions will be referred to the selector responsible for that collection area. Suggested items will then be considered according to the selection policy and guidelines. Receipt of suggestions does not imply automatic acceptance of the item for the Library's collections.
- 9.2. If a suggested item is not purchased, the Library may be able to obtain it through interlibrary loan for the person who suggested the item for purchase, should that person be interested in borrowing the item.

## 10. Resource Sharing

- 10.1 The Library will work within the guidelines laid out in the Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries published by Alberta Municipal Affairs, and will participate in a multi-type provincial resource sharing network.
- 10.2 The Library will participate in inter-library loan of all library resources within the Shortgrass Library System. All circulating print material may be loaned to libraries throughout Alberta and Canada; loans of other library resources may be restricted.
- 10.3 The Library will work with other libraries in Alberta, the Public Library Services Branch, and Shortgrass Regional Library System to access electronic resources through subscriptions, licensing, or direct purchasing
- 10.4 In accordance with the Libraries Act, the Library will not charge a fee for acquiring items from other libraries. However, any charge to the Library from a lending library will be passed on to the borrower.

***ATTACH REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION FORM TO POLICY***