

# Diocesan Standards for Library Collection Development

P1410

## Introduction

Areas of Application  
The Library/Media Centers of all the Catholic elementary and secondary schools of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend follow the Collection Development Policy of the diocesan schools. This policy applies to the collections of materials in the Library/Media Centers.

## Philosophy

The Library/Media Centers contribute to the education of Catholic School students by providing books, periodicals, video, audio-visual and multimedia materials which correlate with course curricula and also expand the classroom learning experience. These centers include current communications technology that also open students to the realities of the world about them, challenging them to enlarge their view of life.

The various print and non-print media provided enhance the education process and promote the values of Christian life promulgated by the Catholic school. In Catholic schools, one fundamental purpose is the development of an ethic for living and working based on Christ's Gospel.

## Responsibilities and Procedures for Selection

### Authority

The diocesan Catholic Schools Office requires that the local School Principal has responsibility for approving the enhancement of the collection through updating or replacement of books and materials, print and non-print media. The Principal may delegate the selection of materials and supervision of media to the Librarian/Media Specialist.

### Budget Sources and Distribution

The corresponding budgetary discretion for acquisitions is delegated by the Principal to the Librarian. The school library should be included as a line item in the annual school budget. A suggested guideline for budgeting is the annual dollar amount proposed by the state department of education per enrolled student.

### Process

The main responsibility for the actual selection of materials generally lies with the Librarian. He/she encourages the administration, faculty, parents and students to suggest choices of books and materials to support the school's curriculum and to contribute to the learning goals of teachers and students.

The librarian usually makes the final decision to order based on his/her expertise and knowledge amassed by reading reviews and keeping up with relevant professional literature, and knowledge of the trends of patron use and plans for future development.

The Librarian uses reputable review sources found in professional journals. H. W. Wilson's *The Children's Catalog* and *The High School Catalog* are also recommended references. Reviews for religious books also can be found in the *Catholic Library World* and *Our Sunday Visitor*. Reading lists are available through the International Reading Association and the American Library Association.

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Reviews should generally be sought for each selection. A software review committee can assist in the best selection of computer programs that benefit the library/media center. Useful resources for media literacy can be found in the NCEA publication, *Catholic Connections to Media Literacy*, and through the Software Publishers Association.

III.

A. Criteria and Priorities for Selection of Print and Non-print Resources  
 Relationship to the School's program

1. Philosophy and goals of the School
  - Is the book or medium sensitive to the beliefs of the Catholic Church?
  - Is it consistent with the stated educational goals and beliefs?
  - Does it support them?
  - Do the materials correlate with and enrich the current curriculum?
  - Is it free of racist or sexist prejudice?
  - Is it accurate and free of distortion?
  - Does it provide a balanced perspective?

2. Books which include discriminatory remarks or attitudes toward ethnic groups, races and religions will be excluded except when these ideas are clearly shown to be historical, or when the work as a whole presents an overriding tone of tolerance and fairness.

3. The library will not include materials that advocate or encourage immoral, anti-social or dangerous behavior.

4. User Characteristics
  - Is the selection appropriate for the age, emotional level, ability level, learning style, and social development of those for whom it is intended?
  - Is the selection well-written?
  - Is the material current?
  - Is the material appealing and timely?
  - Does it respond to stated requests from faculty and/or students?
  - Does it support the teachings of the Catholic Church? (Questions related to social or moral issues should be referred to the pastor or chaplain.)

B.

1. Type and Format Considerations  
 Physical Format  
 Books

- a.
  - Does the book have a strong binding?
  - Is the print clear and easy to read?
  - Is the book free of mistakes and typographical errors?
  - Is the paper sturdy and wherever possible acid-free?
  - Does the non-fiction book have an index for quick reference?
  - Are the illustrations clear and do they contribute to the quality of the book?

b. Audio-Visual Material

- Does the audio-visual material appear sturdy enough for repeated use?
- Are the audio-visual material's sound and visual qualities clear and easy to understand?

- c. Paperbacks
  - What type of paperbacks are acceptable:
    - Content: leisure reading? contemporary and/or classical fiction? non-fiction?
    - Physical quality: paper quality? print quality?
    - Will the paperbacks be processed and to what degree?
    - How many duplicate copies will be added to the collection?
- d. Electronic Media
  - Does the librarian evaluate content on the same basis as for other media?
  - Does it conform to policies in place that limit access to certain materials? (for example, a user policy for use of the Internet)
  - Does it conform to guidelines for ethical use?
  - Does it conform to copyright laws?
  - Is the material appropriate, current, and timely?

IV.

Special Considerations

- A. Gifts
  - The school retains the right to dispose of all materials given as a gift to the library.
  - The librarian will ascertain the value of the material to the Catholic school program and library usage and will make a determination as to its acceptability for the library based on the above selection criteria.

If a book or media, though unobjectionable, is not considered appropriate for the collection, it might be sent to a classroom, sold in a used book sale benefiting the library, or passed along to another, more appropriate library.

Donors may receive a letter of thanks with a listing of the items given. Librarians will prepare a statement to that effect on school letterhead. A statement for tax purposes for gifts currently valued at \$250 or more will be given.

B. Weeding

Check for duplication of holdings. Review inventory for continued appropriateness to the school program according to selection criteria.

C. Resource sharing

Examine all alternatives for availability of networking with other schools and libraries. Continue to communicate needs and materials for sharing.

V.

Policy on Challenged Materials in the Library/Media Center

All challenges will be given full consideration and attention. Concerns may be registered by students, teachers, school board members, parents or guardians. The procedure for registering a concern will follow this format:

Listen to the challenger's description of the complaint and ask if the person has read or viewed the entire work and wishes to fill out an Objection to Content form. (attached)

If the challenger chooses not to fill out the form, make note of the objection, but take no formal action. If the form is filled out, it must be done completely, then signed. This sets a series of actions in motion:

- The principal and/or pastor is promptly told of the complaint.

New local school board members are given a copy of the Library Collection Development policy and procedure.  
Diocesan School Board.  
Principals to the Superintendent of Schools. Policies are periodically reviewed by the  
Changes or amendments are recommended by local librarians through the School  
This policy and procedure are periodically reviewed to be certain that it is current

VI. Procedure for Review and Revision of Collection Development Policy and Procedure

A decision to sustain a reconsideration shall not necessarily be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the person involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended use. No material shall be removed solely because of the ideas expressed therein.

NOTE:

If the committee feels the item should be withdrawn (a simple majority vote may be taken), then it is removed from the collection. This is a committee decision; at no time does the authority for this decision rest solely with the librarian, the principal, or the pastor.

The actual meeting should be conducted so that the person objecting knows that the committee is dedicated to providing the best possible materials for the library, and is interested in a positive productive discussion. If the committee and the challenger conclude that the material is not objectionable, a statement supporting the inclusion of the material in the collection should be written. If the objector does not concur with the decision, the objector may request that his or her children not have access to the material in question.

After all members of the committee, as well as the principal and/or pastor, have read the challenged material in full, the committee meets to discuss the material formally. Up to this time, access to the questioned material is not restricted, and full communication should continue with the objector.

Before the committee meeting, the librarian should collect and verify positive recommendations and reviews of the item in question.  
A file is kept of all memoranda written to the committee members, as well as a copy of the original challenge, so that an accurate record exists of the steps taken.  
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An advisory committee is formed for the purpose of reviewing the challenged material. This committee may consist of two teachers, an administrator, a parent and the librarian. On a high school level, it may also include a student. The diocesan Associate Superintendent is kept informed of the challenge. The librarian chairs the committee.