

POLICY: SELECTION OF SCHOOL LIBRARY LEARNING MATERIALS # 712

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APPROVAL/REVISION
DATE: July 24, 2019

EFFECTIVE
DATE: July 24, 2019

REVIEW
DATE: July 24, 2024

CROSS REFERENCE: Policy: 902 Disposition of Complaints
Form: Recording and Disposition of Complaints

A: **POLICY**

1. 1.1 The Learning Materials selection policy shall assist the principal and the teacher-librarian of each school to acquire learning materials consistent with the explicit educational philosophy, aims and objectives of the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board.
- 1.2 Ultimate responsibility for materials selection lies with the teacher-librarian who functions within the framework of Board policy.
- 1.3 Final authority for the implementation of policy in the selection and acquisition of materials is vested in the principal.

B: **GUIDELINES**

2. **Selection Policy Objectives**

In order to satisfy the demands of the Ministry of Education and the mandate of the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, the Catholic school library functions:

- 2.1 to provide materials that affirm our Catholic Christian values;
- 2.2 to provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum and personal needs of the users, taking into consideration varied interests, abilities, maturity levels, and learning styles;
- 2.3 to provide a background of information which will enable pupils to make intelligent and moral judgments in their daily lives;
- 2.4 to provide materials on various aspects of controversial issues so that users may develop, with Christian guidance, a practice of critical reading and thinking;
- 2.5 to provide Canadian materials which realistically represent our pluralistic society, the growth of Canadian culture, and reflect the contributions made by men and women of all backgrounds to our Canadian heritage;
- 2.6 to provide a balanced collection appropriate for users in a Catholic school system, with material selected for quality rather than prejudice or personal opinion;
- 2.7 to provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, moral principles and ethical standards;
- 2.8 to provide materials which promote the love of reading for reading's sake, develop appreciation and discrimination, satisfy natural curiosity, and contribute to the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual growth of the students according to their present and future needs.

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3. Criteria for Selection

- 3.1 General criteria for selection of learning materials should fulfill the school library's basic objectives:
- 3.1.1 to implement, enrich and support the educational program of a school;
 - 3.1.2 to promote the love and appreciation of books and reading.
- 3.2 An examination of the learning materials should consider:
- 3.2.1 relevance to Christian philosophy of a Catholic School system;
 - 3.2.2 purposes of the material;
 - 3.2.3 reputation and significance of the author and standards of the publisher;
 - 3.2.4 timeliness or permanence of the material;
 - 3.2.5 importance of subject matter to the collection;
 - 3.2.6 authority in handling the subject;
 - 3.2.7 Canadian content, authorship, publication;
 - 3.2.8 gender, racial, stereotyping/bias;
 - 3.2.9 price;
 - 3.2.10 readability and appeal of the material;
 - 3.2.11 literary merit;
 - 3.2.12 quality of illustration;
 - 3.2.13 recommendations in reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids.
- 3.3 Specific criteria for each school community are determined by the nature of the school's instructional program and the needs of the students in the particular community. Development of these criteria is accordingly the responsibility of the individual school, principal, and the teacher-librarian.
- 3.4 The process for selection is the responsibility of each school.

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4. Replacement and Weeding

Selection is an on-going process which should include the removal of inappropriate materials and the replacement of lost and worn materials still of educational value.

5. Controversial Materials

5.1 Materials on controversial subjects such as alternative life styles, violence, racial prejudice, sex, ideologies, profanity, drugs, gender stereotyping, religion, and cults are subjected to a thorough test of literary merit and validity by the teacher-librarian who considers the Catholic student as the prime audience.

5.2 When the material affords a clearer understanding of life, develops appreciation for other people and promotes tolerance, these positive qualities must be weighed against the possible objections to some questionable word or passage in the book. The sensational or over-dramatic are not acceptable, but the inclusion, for example, of some sexual element or profanity may not automatically disqualify the material. This is particularly the case when taste rather than morality is offended.

5.3 To comply with the philosophy of the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, the inclusion of controversial materials is valid to implement the basic element of the philosophy, which is preparation for life.

5.4 Truth, a sense of Christian values, an informed conscience, and the development of personal abilities and appreciations are found in critical presentations of controversial issues, not simply in exposure. Public media present exposure to the events of daily life. The Catholic school should provide the tools for the Christian to cope with issues as a whole person through the atmosphere, programs and materials found in the school. Consequently, the school library should contain a truly balanced collection of materials to foster these aims.

6. Dealing with Challenged Materials

6.1 Despite the care taken in the selection of materials to assure their relevance and value to student and teacher, questions from individual members of the community regarding the suitability of individual titles may arise. In such cases the prime considerations are the fundamental freedom to read, the professional responsibility of the staff and congruence with Catholic philosophy rather than materials themselves.

6.2 In the event of a complaint, personnel involved should:

6.2.1 be courteous, but make no commitment;

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- 6.2.2 inform the principal of any question or complaint in order to facilitate resolution at the school level;
 - 6.2.3 have complainant complete the "Recording and Disposition of Complaints" form, available from the principal and handled according to Policy #902;
 - 6.2.4 determine in consultation with the teacher-librarian whether materials may be sufficiently in question to withdraw immediately pending a decision of the principal. Critical reviews and evaluations of the questioned item should be consulted.
- 6.3 If the problem cannot be resolved in terms of the foregoing procedures, the principal shall direct the problem to the school's superintendent. The superintendent will convene an ad hoc committee comprised of two parents, one principal and one teacher to review the request and prepare a response.