



## Library Collection Development

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**Memo To:** All Staff  
**From:** Director of Education

### ACCESSIBILITY:

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### PURPOSE:

To outline the principles, standards, and procedures related to the selection of library materials for both central and school libraries (for brevity, school library is used to refer to library learning commons), and to provide a process for reconsideration of challenged library materials, as well as deselection, i.e., discarding or weeding of library materials. Library materials may include book and other print resources, kits, projected resources such as DVDs, and digital resources including e-books, streaming video, and online databases.

### REFERENCES:

- Waterloo Catholic District School Board Mission Statement
- APB001 School Operating Budgets
- APO006 Purchasing Procedures
- APO022 Library System for Board and School Libraries
- Waterloo Catholic District School Board All Central Libraries [All Central Libraries Catalogue](#).
- Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations <https://iceont.ca/resources/ontario-catholic-school-graduate-expectations/>
- Canadian Copyright Act & its regulations

### FORMS:

- APO010-01F: [Library Materials Request for Reconsideration](#)

### REPORTS:

- N/A

### APPENDICES:

- Appendix A: [Steps to Purchasing Resources for Your Library](#)
- Appendix B: [Weeding Guidelines by Dewey Classification](#)



## COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

Initial versions of the policy focused on the reconsideration of library materials, i.e., the procedures for handling challenged materials. A subsequent revision addressed the criteria for selecting materials, and who selected materials for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) central library and school libraries.

The following policy focuses on the general issues affecting libraries in WCDSB; however, individual school libraries may develop more specific selection criteria (as an example) to meet the unique needs of their students and staff.

Since St. Benedict's library is part of the Idea Exchange, and St. Mary's library is part of the Kitchener Public Library, this AP memo does not cover their selection policies unless specified in agreements on the community libraries.

This policy does not address the selection of core textbooks rather library books, periodicals, projected media, digital resources, and other media selected for the WCDSB and school libraries. Educational software is selected by the Innovation in Education Committee.

### Philosophy of the Library

Beliefs form the underlying values of the Catholic educational community including our libraries. The WCDSB central libraries and school libraries provide a wide variety of materials and resources to support the spiritual principles of holism, lifelong learning, equity, excellence, and reflection which are integrated into the Ontario curriculum.

### Purpose/Objectives

The mission of the libraries within the Board are to support the mission of the WCDSB by acting as a resource for students and staff.

Libraries will accomplish this mission by:

- providing services and information to support the academic, curriculum-related, and spiritual needs of staff and students.
- Helping staff and students become effective users of ideas and information by teaching them how to find, interpret, and evaluate information.
- Fostering a love of reading and promote an enjoyment of literature.

Library collections support the breadth of the curriculum as well as the interests of individual students. In addition, the library supports the needs of faculty to teach the curriculum.

### For Central Libraries:

The main objective of the central libraries is to support the professional learning of teachers, consultants, and support staff as well as to provide "unique" or expensive materials for the use of students. For example, the ESL collection has resources to support new ESL students, and their teachers; The Learning Commons, Catholic Education Centre collects fiction books to support social development, etc. Central Libraries loan their materials to faculty as a supplement to the school collections. To search Central Libraries collections, access the [All Central Libraries Catalogue](#). Generally, these resources are loaned to school staff unless classified as "Reference," i.e., non-circulating. Consultants and other support staff have their own office collections which are often for their personal use.

## **For Individual School Libraries:**

The purpose of school library materials is primarily to support the curriculum needs of students as well as to the development of reading and lifelong literacy through encouraging self-directed reading or reading for pleasure. The school library also supports the teaching role of faculty by collecting limited professional materials, kits, and other media.

School libraries in WCDSB have an agreement to lend resources to other school libraries. For information on the policies and procedures of “inter-branch loans” please refer to APO022 Library System for Board and School Libraries. (St. Benedict and St. Mary’s libraries are not part of the WCDSB’s libraries.)

## **Responsibility for Selection**

All employees of the WCDSB are encouraged to make suggestions for selection of library resources; however, library staff are responsible for undertaking a needs analysis of their collection and managing the selection process within the constraints of the library’s budget.

### **For Central Libraries:**

Materials purchased centrally are selected by subject specialists, i.e., Learning Services’ staff, as well as The Learning Commons staff at the Catholic Education Centre, under supervision of their respective principal or superintendent.

### **For the Individual School Library:**

Responsibility for material selections is primarily the responsibility of the library staff under the authority of the principal of each school. Library staff also actively solicit input from program heads, teachers, and other staff of their school.

Learning Services’ staff support the curriculum through central purchases of resources for school libraries, and by producing recommended lists of resources.

## **Criteria for Selection/Evaluation**

While the actual materials selected depends on the needs of the individual library collection, student and faculty interests, and the school’s budget, general selection criteria are always considered:

1. Educational significance – Material supportive of the curriculum and appropriate to the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles and social development of students
2. Religious or ethical significance - The subject matter or approach contributes to the Catholic curriculum
3. Reading level, e.g., a book on gravity at the grade 6 level may not be suitable for the grade 3 curriculum
4. Favourable reviews found in standard selection sources; award-winning books reflecting literary and artistic excellence
5. Recommended lists based on preview by subject specialists and library personnel, also lists from the Ministry of Education’s guidelines [versus lists of recommended resources from vendors who are in the business of selling]
6. The reputation of the author, producer, or publisher
7. Materials reflective of multicultural composition of our diverse society
8. Generally free of sex bias, stereotyping, and other forms of bias (unless the materials are employed to teach students about bias, stereotyping, and propaganda).
9. Resources that provide a background to motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behaviour; to comprehend their duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges as a Catholics; and to make

informed judgments in their daily lives. Especially at the secondary level, the selection of library materials on controversial issues will be directed towards maintaining a diverse collection representing various views.

10. Quality Catholic/Christian music and award-winning Christian literature
11. Classic literary works may be selected even if they do not meet this general standard, if otherwise educationally necessary or appropriate.
12. Canadian content (history, geography, law, famous Canadians, spelling, music, movies, literature, literary criticism, etc.
13. Accuracy of information
14. Age or currency of the materials
15. Technical quality of the work, e.g., clarity of illustrations, quality of the binding
16. The physical format and appearance of materials is appropriate for their intended use
17. Access – Table of contents, glossary, and index
18. Value – cost versus need/use or user appeal
19. Multiple copies: The library may purchase multiple copies of popular titles as shown by usage reports.

### **Specific criteria:**

- Sexuality education instruction: Materials will be selected by the Religion and Family Life Consultant to support the curriculum.
- Religion and Faith Formation: Age and faith stage appropriate materials are purchased on the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. An attempt will also be made to provide factual unbiased materials representative of all major religions. If recommendations on specific subjects are required, please contact the Religion and Family Life Consultant for recommendations of titles or sources.
- Obscenity and sexual incidents in materials of literary value: The use of profanity or sexual incidents does not in itself disqualify materials from selection. The decision to include such materials is based on literary merit: “whether the material represents life in its true proportions, in an artistic way, and in a manner which would allow the individual to form sound, ethical judgments.” [Atwater Elementary School District, CA AR6161 Adopted 1991] The materials should be age appropriate, and library and teaching staff should be able to discuss the issues with students. For more information on addressing these issues with students, please contact the Religion and Family Life Consultant.

### **Copyright**

All materials purchased and catalogued by school library staff must be legal under the Canadian Copyright Act and its regulations, as well as extended licensing agreements. Projected media such as DVDs and streaming video purchased by schools for non-curriculum purposes must be purchased with either a site or public performance licenses.

See [Steps to Purchasing Resources for Your Library](#) (Appendix A: APO010-AX) for a brief outline of the steps required to select resources for a library collection.

### **Criteria for Gifts and Donations**

The WCDSB's libraries are grateful for donations, but in order to ensure quality collections, gifts and other unsolicited materials are accepted with the understanding that all donated materials become the property of the WCDSB. Gifted and donated materials may be catalogued, sold, or discarded as the staff of each library finds appropriate. Promotional materials that are distributed free-of-charge may contribute little to the library's collection. The same criteria are used for gifts and unsolicited materials as for selecting new acquisitions. The criteria for discarding or weeding materials are outlined in [Weeding Guidelines by Dewey Classification](#) (Appendix B: APO010-BX).

Here are some general recommendations for quick reference:

#### **Accepted:**

- Resources which are **less than five years old** may be accepted depending on the subject
- Items that support the current curriculum or professional educational needs of teachers may be accepted.

#### **Not accepted:**

- Books, which have been underlined, highlighted, or marked by the previous reader.
- Books which are yellowed, musty, or damaged.
- Sample textbooks, and workbooks/consumables
- Pamphlets and other ephemeral materials
- Academic, university, and extremely theoretical professional materials
- Copies of videos, photocopies of books, and handouts from workshops, which are not legal under copyright. Videos from non-Catholic religious organizations e.g., Church of Scientology
- Old editions if a more recent edition is available
- Multiple copies may not be accepted due to projected lack of user and/or space restrictions
- Advance Reader Copies (ARCs) or preview copies donated free by publishers are not to be catalogued

#### **Archives**

For materials related to the history of the Board, its schools, and parishes, please contact the Board's Privacy & Records Management Officer, who is responsible for archival materials.

### **Procedures**

The process of reviewing the needs of the library, selecting resources, verifying the bibliographic information, pricing the items, purchasing and receiving them is complex and time-consuming. For each subject area, library staff must review the collection for age and use and set priorities for acquisitions. The process of analyzing a library collection has been made much easier by the use of reports created by the library system. For example, staff are able to determine what resources their library has on a topic compared to other libraries, the age of these resources, and how frequently they are used. Board-wide guidelines have been compiled on discarding materials as referenced in [Library System of Board and School Libraries](#) (APO022).

Library staff are also encouraged to keep track of requests, especially where resources are inadequate; survey the resource lists in newer curriculum documents and talk to teachers about their current and future assignments.

Principals are required to discuss the school library budget early in the fall term, so that library staff may begin to evaluate the resources required in a thoughtful, and deliberate manner rather than react to last minute funding. See [School Operating Budgets](#) (APB001).

The purchase of library materials must be compliant with Purchasing Procedures (APO006). Library materials, usually selected by library staff or subject specialists, are purchased using the WCDSB's purchase order system. Library staff have a jobber price a list of resources, and then, that list is attached to the purchase order. Orders under \$3000 may be purchased using a P-card. School library resources may also be purchased from monies earned by fundraising.

#### **Central Ordering - Special Procedures**

Learning Services' staff often purchase resources for all schools, which are centrally catalogued and distributed to the school libraries. Often, these materials are purchased through grants from the Ministry of Education.

## **Book Clubs**

The Learning Commons, Catholic Education Centre encourages school libraries to offer book clubs for students in order to promote literacy. The book club may be part of The Forest of Reading, OLA's Literacy Program. These titles are selected by a committee of public librarians and teacher-librarians representing Catholic and public schools. In the past, sections of books dealing with aspects of sex have been questioned as has a book on the Palestinian Israeli conflict. The age-appropriateness of the title is sometimes the issue rather than the topics addressed in the book. As students must read only 5 of the 10 titles in each program to be eligible to vote, it is possible to encourage students to read titles which best match their reading interests and comfort level. School libraries may choose other book clubs such as Canada Reads or establish their own book club.

If a book is deemed to be contentious due to the subject or recommended grade level, the book will then be forwarded to the Religion and Family Life Consultant for review and returned to the Library Advisory Committee within the month.

Central staff will continue to explore and discuss ways of alerting school staff of books with "mature themes" through notes on the Library Learning Commons Team drive, notes in the cataloguing record, etc. The Learning Commons, Catholic Education Centre recommends that elementary school libraries include a Young Adult section (YA) for books which are loaned to students in grades 7 and 8, but not the primary or junior grades. It is recommended to shelve graphic novels with a mature theme in the YA section.

When specific titles are "required" reading for students, e.g., in reading programs, classroom novel studies, etc., the titles must be read by the teacher or library staff first.

## **Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Despite the care taken to select appropriate and worthwhile materials, occasional objections to library materials may be made by parents, students, or staff of the WCDSB. Some of the materials may be objectionable because of individual perceptions of profanity, social, economic, and political ideas, religious viewpoints, or the kind of information provided. When such objections occur, it is important to protect the principles of freedom of information and the responsibility of library and other staff to select materials, while enabling the reader to express their opinions. The review of questioned materials will be handled objectively following the process outlined below.

### **Guiding Principles**

Any parent, student, or staff of the WCDSB may raise a concern about the learning resources in departmental and school library.

- No parent has the right to determine the materials accessed by students, other than their own children.
- The school board supports the principles of access to freedom of information.
- Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
- The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the material for its intended educational use.
- A decision to sustain a challenge is not necessarily a reflection on the original selection or its intended use.

In the case of complaint, the following procedures will be followed:

### **Informal Reconsideration**

- Most complaints can be resolved informally at the site level.
- All complaints to staff shall be reported to the principal of the school or department. The principal will discuss the concern with the relevant staff members.

- The principal will contact the individual and attempt to resolve the complaint informally by explaining the selection process, and the item's intended educational usefulness.
- If a formal request for reconsideration has not been received within 10 working days, the issue will be considered closed.
- A brief summary of the nature of the complaint and the decision made is kept on file at the school.

### Formal Reconsideration

- If the informal reconsideration process has been followed, and the complainant is dissatisfied, the person may request a formal reconsideration of the material. See APO010-01F: [Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials](#). The complainant will be sent a copy of the selection policy as well as the reconsideration form.
- The ad hoc reconsideration committee will consist of the following staff members selected by the Director of Education or designate:
  - The Director or designate
  - One principal
  - Two library staff including a member of the Library Advisory Committee
  - Two classroom teachers
  - One priest
  - Religion and Family Life Consultant
- The composition of the reconsideration committee will vary depending on the challenged resource and its intended grade level.
- The members of the committee will receive basic training in the philosophy of selection, evaluation, and reconsideration of library materials prior to the first committee meeting.
- Prior to the first committee meeting after the formal complaint has been filed; the individual committee members will read and review the materials in question.
- Within ten days of being notified, the reconsideration committee will meet to discuss the complaint:
  - Determine its professional acceptance by reading reviews of the resource
  - Weigh its values and questioned aspects, and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or frames out of context
  - Discuss the challenged item in the context of the educational program of the WCDSB
  - Prepare a written report
- The committee will notify the Director of Education of their decision in writing including majority and minority opinions. This report, along with a description of any action taken, will be kept on file.
- In turn, the Director will notify the complainant in writing of the final decision.

### Deselection

As noted in [Library System for Board and School Libraries](#) (APO022) on the maintenance of the library system, at minimum every two years, library staff will systematically review and discard ("weed") materials from each library collection based on condition and relevance to the collection. Specific guidelines by subject are listed in [Weeding Guidelines by Dewey Classification](#) (Appendix B: APO010-BX). Library materials are best evaluated and discarded both on an ongoing basis as well as before undertaking inventory of specific sub-collections. Libraries are more inviting to staff and students, and it is easier to find interesting and relevant materials in collections, which are weeded regularly and consistently.

### General Considerations for Keeping/Discarding resources

**Condition:** If a book is in poor physical condition, and cannot easily and/or economically be repaired, consider discarding it, and replacing it, if it is a highly circulated resource.

**Age:** Regularly evaluate items which are over twenty years old except local history materials. The binding, illustrations, text density, and approach taken in older resources are different than in newer versions. Resources in some subject areas rapidly become misleading and inaccurate. See Currency/Accuracy.

**Frequency of Use:** If an item has not been circulated in three years, it should be re-evaluated. Is it still relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students? Are there better resources available in print or online? If the item is still useful, try promoting it to staff or students. Sometimes, it may get more use if reclassified to another area of the library collection.

**Multiple Copies:** To determine the number of copies required, look at the title's peak yearly circulation. If multiple copies are no longer needed, consider distributing them to classroom collections or offering them to other school libraries.

**Currency/Accuracy:** The relevancy of resources in a school library depends both on the subject as well as changes to the provincial curriculum. Resources for science, technology and geography must be kept current to be valid. Topics may either no longer be included in the revised curriculum or are now taught at another grade level, affecting the usefulness of older library resources. The currency of fiction series may change depending on the current "stars" in the children's entertainment world, so it is important to consider whether given fiction titles and/or series continue to appeal to readers.

These general considerations are addressed in more detail using the 'famous' MUSTY acronym at the beginning of [Weeding Guidelines by Dewey Classification](#) (Appendix B: APO010-BX).

## Removal of Items from the Library Database

Once the items to be discarded have been removed from the shelves:

- The holdings lines for the items must be deleted from the library database.
- The items themselves should be stamped 'Discarded' or 'Withdrawn.' These stamps are available from The Learning Commons, Catholic Education Centre, stamp vendors, and library vendors.
- If items will remain in the school (i.e., are being given to classroom teachers), consider covering or marking over the library barcodes to ensure that the items are not inadvertently returned to the library learning commons.

## Dispersal of Discarded Items

Because of the perception that all library books are 'good,' i.e., valuable, discarding library resources may be controversial. Guidelines for weeding resources coupled with suggestions for their dispersal to the interested parties will reduce concerns. Options for dealing with discarded library materials fall into two main categories: recycling and reusing by giving or selling the discarded items to others.

### Recycle Items

Recycle items which are in poor condition, factually inaccurate, and/or exhibit inappropriate attitudes. Books may be boxed and placed in the area for shredding pickup. The shredding company recycles shredded books.

### Give or Sell Items to Others

Discarded materials may be distributed by the library technician in consultation with the principal. Here are some suggestions for donating:

- Multiple copies: to other school libraries, or take them to library swaps where library staff exchange resources
- Books written at too high a level: to a secondary school library
- Books to teachers for their classroom collections. Consider age and currency/accuracy before donating to a classroom collection. Will students be given accurate information?
- Favourite books to individual students, who have borrowed them many times
- Books to school events such as "white elephant sales" and fundraisers, i.e., selling them for a nominal amount. Consider the impact if the books are subsequently donated to a second-hand shop.
- Books to charities. Consider the value of the books versus the costs of handling, and distribution/shipping.