I. Mission Statement

The Mission of Avon Lake Public Library is to connect the community to the world of knowledge, information, entertainment and experience through life-long learning.

(New mission statement approved by the Board of Trustees, 13 September 2012)

II. Policy Statement

The purpose of the Avon Lake Public Library Materials Selection Policy is to guide library staff and inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

A policy cannot replace the educated judgment of Library staff, but stating goals and criteria will assist them in choosing from a vast array of available materials.

The Library’s major goals in materials selection are:

- the advancement of knowledge;
- the education and enlightenment of the people of the community; and,
- the provision of recreational reading, viewing and listening.

Basic to the policy is the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association, which states, in part:

“As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community. In no case should library materials be excluded because of the race or nationality or the social, political or religious views of the authors. Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.”

III. General Criteria for the Selection of Materials

A. In order to afford citizens an understanding of the world in which they live, the Library will provide materials that present widely diverse points of view, including those which may be controversial or unorthodox.
B. The Library will provide materials of excellence and lasting value. Ephemeral, topical materials of current interest will also be added. An attractive, useful collection will be maintained through a continual discarding (i.e., weeding) and replacement process.

C. The Library will include in its collection appropriate titles listed in bibliographies of notable books, library materials and electronic resources.

D. The selection of materials is influenced by the following factors:

1. Relevance to community interests and needs.
2. Current and historical significance.
3. Attention by critics, reviewers and the general public.
4. Number and nature of requests from the public.
5. The need of additional or duplicate materials in the existing collection.
6. The physical limitations of the building.
7. Budgetary considerations.
8. General commercial availability of library materials.
9. Suitability of formats of the material for library purposes.

E. Non-book materials, including electronic resources, will be added and incorporated into the collection as needed.

F. The Library staff and trustees recognize the changing nature of the Internet and provide access to Internet resources within this understanding. The Library staff selects electronic resources, some of which may change in format or content after selection. When selection involves the provision of access to a remote source, e.g., an Internet-accessible database or a website, it is possible that content of the resource may not conform to the Library’s selection criteria at any given time. The Library staff will review the content of such resources on a regular basis to assess their continued value in terms of interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community.

G. The Library will not acquire textbooks or other curriculum-related materials except as such materials also serve the general public.

H. The Library will use other available avenues, e.g., interlibrary loan, appropriate referral and redirection, etc., to serve the individual whose needs are either outside the scope of the Library’s collection or are remote from the acknowledged collective needs of the community the Library primarily serves.

IV. Responsibility for Selection

The Director delegates the authority and responsibility for materials selection and management to the appropriate department managers. However, ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Library Trustees. Any book, library material or electronic resource so selected shall be held to be selected by the Board.
V. Use of the Library’s Materials

A. The Library recognizes that many library materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of readers/viewers/listeners.

B. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no book or other item will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft. Selection of any material should not be construed as an endorsement by the Library of the views contained therein.

C. The Library staff does not serve in loco parentis. Decisions concerning children’s use of specific library materials and/or electronic resources are the responsibility of their own parents or guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of minor children.

D. The Board of Library Trustees believes that censorship is a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject for her/himself books, library materials or electronic resources of which she/he does not approve, she/he cannot extend this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others to read, view or listen.

E. The Board of Library Trustees defends the principles of intellectual freedom, and declares that whenever censorship is involved, no book, library material or electronic resource shall be removed from the Library save under the orders of a court of competent jurisdiction.

VI. Collection Maintenance Guidelines

A. Weeding - The weeding of the Library’s collection is a form of selection, in reverse. Weeding is a thorough and conscientious effort to achieve a well-balanced collection suitable to the clientele served and should be a continuous, consistent process. Factors to consider in weeding are:

1. Materials worn out through use.
2. Ephemeral materials which are no longer timely.
3. Materials no longer considered accurate or factual.
4. Materials which have had little recent use and are of questionable value.
5. Excess copies of titles no longer in demand.
6. Materials no longer used frequently enough to justify their space in the collection or the staff time to maintain them.
7. Retention of local materials and materials by Ohio authors.

B. Disposal of Library Materials - Materials discarded from the Library are in unusable condition, present obsolete information, or have been weeded from the collection for reasons outlined in VI. A.
1. Certain materials are discarded from time to time, which may be of use to another library, e.g., duplicates purchased to fill a demand which no longer exists. Any recognized social or civic organization may have these materials by request with permission of the Director. In general, the Library will not transport or mail discarded material to any location for another organization.

2. When replaced by new editions, encyclopedias may be placed into the circulating collection until superseded, at which time they will be sold, if possible.

3. Any reference material, which is replaced by a later edition, may be added to the circulating collection or transferred to another library or sold.

4. Withdrawn materials may be included in the on-going book sale of the Friends of Avon Lake Public Library, with proceeds used by the Friends to enhance Library services and programming.

5. If a patron damages library material beyond repair and pays for its replacement, the patron may have the damaged item, if she/he so requests. The decision to replace the damaged material is weighed with regard to several factors: number of duplicate copies; extent of coverage of the subject area; other similar material in the collection; patron demand; and budgetary considerations.

C. **Patron and Staff Recommendations** - The Library welcomes suggestions for purchase of library materials or for the inclusion of links to specific Internet sites. Decision for purchase or inclusion is made by the selecting staff person according to the Materials Selection Policy.

D. **Challenged Materials** – A patron critical of materials in the Library’s collection can record their complaint on a “Citizen’s Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” form. This form must be signed by the individual challenging the item. The item will be reviewed by the Director, as per the selection criteria; an appropriate reply will be sent to the individual. If the challenger is not satisfied, she/he may request that the item be reviewed by the Board of Library Trustees, whose decision is then final.

**VII. Donations**

A. Donated material is accepted with the understanding that any donated item is evaluated according to the Materials Selection Policy. The cost of processing, the availability of space, the suitability of the format and the physical condition of the item are factors in the selection process. The Library accepts donated materials only with the understanding that they are used or disposed of as the Library determines is appropriate. No donated item can be accepted with restrictive conditions unless the conditions are specifically approved by the Director. (See also, Gifts.)

B. The Library will not provide evaluations of donated items for tax purposes.
VIII. Gifts

A. A gift for the Library collection may consist of materials or of funds for the purchase of materials. Funds may be given for acquiring materials recommended by Library staff or for the purchase of specific items suggested by the donor. The Library encourages gifts not earmarked for specific items in order to permit the most flexible use of the donation for the enrichment of the collection.

B. Gifts are accepted subject to the following limitations:

1. The Library retains unconditional ownership of the gift.
2. The Library makes the final decision on its own use or other disposition of the gift.
3. The Library reserves the right to decide on the conditions of display, housing and access to the materials.
4. The Library does not commit itself to accepting all donations of materials.

C. Donors of funds to the Library are encouraged to direct their donations to the “Avon Lake Public Library Endowment Fund” held by the Community Foundation of Lorain County. Gifts in any amount are welcome. Gifts to the Endowment Fund are sent on to the Community Foundation by the Director, with the proper acknowledgements, as per the wishes of the donor.

The Library has two options for the public display of specific donations to the Avon Lake Public Library Endowment Fund:
1. Donor Tree (south lobby): A gift of $100, $250 or $500 purchases a copper, silver or gold leaf respectively, with a brief sentiment, on the Donor Tree.
2. Enchanted Fairy Garden windows (Children’s department): A gift of $100 entitles the donor to a 4-line sentiment on the roster in support of the “Enchanted Fairy Garden” glass mural.\(^1\)

IX. Memorial Books

The Library welcomes gifts of books and other library items as memorials. In order to be accepted, materials must conform to the criteria established for the selection of purchased materials. In general, works of fiction and popular non-fiction are not encouraged. The preference should be for materials that will remain in the collection for a number of years. Specific titles or particular subject fields enjoyed by the person honored or memorialized may be requested.

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\(^1\) The “Enchanted Fairy Garden” mural is comprised of eight, 3’x3’ acid-etched and sandblasted glass panels. The mural was created by local glass artist and Avon Lake resident, Nancy Adler Kearns. It depicts four fairies and a garden gate against a lush landscape. The mural was dedicated in January 2003, and serves as a memorial to many loved ones in the Avon Lake community.