

St. Margaret's Episcopal School
Material Selection Policy
For the Library Media Center

I. Philosophy

The philosophy of the St. Margaret's Episcopal School library media center is to provide a wide variety of materials and resources necessary to accomplish the goals and the objectives of the school. This philosophy further acknowledges the uniqueness of each student by providing materials for various levels of learning. The goals of the library media center will focus upon working with students and staff, striving to provide materials to support the curriculum and encouraging the independent study and personal reading of students.

Our administration supports the principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the Constitution of the United States and expressed in the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association (Addendum A) and the Students' Right to Read statement of the National Council of Teachers of English. (Attached).

II. Goals

The St. Margaret's Episcopal School library media center has the following responsibilities:

1. To provide a comprehensive collection of instructional materials selected in compliance with basic written selection principles and to provide maximum accessibility to these materials.
2. To provide materials that will support the curriculum, individual needs, interests, abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and maturity levels of the students served.
3. To provide materials for teachers and students that will encourage growth in knowledge, and that will develop literacy, cultural, and aesthetic appreciation, and ethical standards.
4. To provide materials that reflect the ideas and beliefs of religious, social, political, historical and ethnic groups and their contribution to the American and world culture, thereby enabling students to develop and intellectual integrity in forming judgments.
5. To provide materials and opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, research, and lifelong learning skills.

6. To provide the community with a set of guidelines for understanding the process of selection of all materials and a procedure for complaints and challenges relative to library medial materials.

III. Purposes

1. To provide a statement of philosophy and goals for the guidance of those involved in the procedures for selection.
2. To define the role of those who share in the responsibility for the selection of materials.
3. To outline the procedures for application of the criteria.
4. To set forth criteria for selection, evaluation, and reevaluation.
5. To provide a procedure for the consideration of objections to use of particular materials.
6. To clarify for the community the philosophy and procedures outlined in this materials selection.

IV. Responsibility for Selection

The selection process may involve the input of many people, including library media specialists, teachers, support staff, administrators, students, and Board of Trustees. The final responsibility for coordination and recommending the selection and purchase of materials rests with the library media specialists of St. Margaret's Episcopal School.

V. Procedures for Selection

School staff, students, and community members are encouraged to submit recommendations for purchase.

The library media specialists will consult professionally recognized selection sources in order to evaluate and select materials in relationship to curricular and personal needs of the school community. Preview of materials is encouraged. Selection sources are available upon request from the library media specialist. (See Addendum B)

VI. Scope of the Collection

Materials shall

1. meet the curriculum goals and objectives of St Margaret's Episcopal School;

2. meet the needs of specific subject areas for teachers and students;
3. promote a lifetime interest in reading;
4. provide for student differences in age, ability, reading level, learning style, and emotional and social development;
5. be selected in formats that meet the needs of all students.

VII. Criteria for Selection

A. General Statement

The success of the library media program in meeting the needs of the students and teachers depends to a great extent upon the quantity, scope, and quality of the materials available in the collection. The foremost consideration of any item is whether it contributes to the fulfillment of the curriculum and meets the needs of the students and teachers of that particular school.

It is the obligation of the library media center to provide a diversity of points of view so that users may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical analysis.

Each item shall be considered individually. Materials should be selected for their strengths, based on criteria that are most applicable for that particular format and subject.

B. Criteria for evaluating Nonfiction

The following criteria should be given consideration:

1. authoritativeness/reputation of the author and/or publisher;
2. timeliness, permanence, and relevance of the item to the curriculum;
3. accurate content;
4. logical organization and presentation of information;
5. level of reading difficulty/vocabulary/use of illustration to clarify text;
6. readability and popular appeal;

7. impartiality/nonjudgmental point of view/freedom from bias or presentation of various points of view;
8. avoidance of stereotyped images of any group or individual;
9. selected materials shall reflect the variety in individual physical and emotional development as well as address differences in student learning styles;
10. value commensurate with cost and/or need;
11. appropriate format.

C. Criteria for Evaluating Fiction

Fiction has an important role as an education medium: it supports that curriculum and encourages and develops the reading interests of students. The treatment of significant historical, social, and personal issues in fiction can contribute to the understanding of human problems and human relations.

The criteria established for the selection of fiction are complementary to the criteria established for the selection of nonfiction. The following criteria should be given consideration.

1. readability and effectiveness in sustaining the reader's interest;
2. a plot that is believable within its own framework;
3. convincing characterization;
4. effective use of language;
5. presentation of human emotions, values and ideas;
6. originality, literary merit, and aesthetic value.

D. Criteria for Evaluating Materials in Controversial Subject Areas

Materials on controversial issues should represent various points of view and a sincere effort should be made to select equally representative materials.

Materials on controversial topics may be included if they meet the above criteria, if they are relevant to the curriculum, and if they are consistent with philosophy of each school in St. Margaret's Episcopal School. The work, including controversial language and/or illustrations, must be judged as a whole according to its intended purpose.

VIII. Reevaluation of the Collection

The selection process begins with the evaluation of materials before purchase and is completed with the evaluation of materials before discarding them. Weeding of the school library media center collection materials that are factually inaccurate or instructionally useless is as important as excluding them. How rigorously and how often a collection is weeded depends on consideration of curriculum requirements and use needs unique to the library media center. The weeding of print and non-print materials will be an ongoing process in collection development, as carried out by the library media specialists.

Some suggestion criteria for weeding out undesirable materials are as follows:

1. Currency: If the subject matter is outdated, factually inaccurate, or no longer relevant to the educational program or no longer meets the criteria established for selection; if illustrations are outmoded or perpetuate sexual, racial, or cultural stereotypes.
2. Technical Quality: In non-print materials, if visuals are poor or faded; if sound reproductions are faulty or inferior.
3. Dispensability: If it is a duplicate copy or duplicate materials no longer needed in the collection.
4. Physical Condition: If it is worn, torn, soiled; if pages or parts are missing.
5. Record of Use: If the item has not circulated in five years.

IX. Gift Policy

The Administration of St. Margaret's Episcopal School welcomes contributions in the form of gifts and memorials as long as they meet the same criteria as those applied to the selection of other materials.

Materials contributed shall be integrated into the library media center collection at the discretion of the library media specialist. Gifts of money will be used for the purchase of educational materials. The library media specialist will select the specific items.

The Administration shall accept monetary gifts and memorials with proper resolutions recognizing the donors for their generosity. Every effort shall be made to place labels of recognition in these materials.

The library media center personnel may accept commercially sponsored materials, provided that they meet the same criteria as those applied to the selection of other materials.

X. Procedures for Handling Challenged Materials

The Administration of St. Margaret's Episcopal School recognizes the rights of individuals and groups within the community to challenge materials included in the library media collections.

In the interest of handling all complaints fairly and expeditiously, the following procedures will be used:

1. Most difficulties can and should be resolved informally by the library media specialist and by the principal of the school involved. The materials should be read, viewed, listened to by all parties. Every effort should be made to resolve the matter amicably and expediently.
2. If all parties cannot reach agreement, the complainant would be requested to complete the reconsideration form and submit it to the principal of the school involved within ten days. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
3. Upon the receipt of the written complaint, the involved principal shall inform the Director of library media services and the Headmaster.
4. Within five school days of receipt of the formal complaint, an ad hoc committee will be appointed by the grade level principal to evaluate the materials. Members of the committee may include
 - a. The grade level principle;
 - b. The grade level library media specialist;
 - c. The Director of library media services;
 - d. Two teachers from the grade level
5. Members of the committee must include in their preparation the reading of "Instructions to Evaluating Committee" included in the Addendum C at the end of this packet.

6. Prior to the first committee meeting, individual members shall read, view, listen to the challenged materials in their entirety and examine reviews of those materials.
7. The committee should meet within ten school days of its appointment to reconsider the materials and, if possible, consult with the person or committee who made the original selection and clarify the procedures followed.
8. At a subsequent meeting, the complainant and other interested persons may be given the opportunity to share their views and explain the information including on the reconsideration form. At this meeting, the committee shall make its decision based on simple majority in either open or closed session. This decision shall be one of the following:
 - a. The material is compatible with the philosophy and criteria of this policy and should not be restricted or removed.
 - b. The material is not compatible with the philosophy and criteria of this policy and should be restricted or removed.
 - c. The material should be limited to conditions specified by this committee.
9. The grade level principal shall forward the committee's decision to the Headmaster and notify the complainant in writing.
10. If any person is not satisfied with this decision, that person may appeal the decision to the Headmaster within ten days. The Headmaster will render a decision within ten working days.
11. Material that has undergone a challenge may not be re-challenged within three school years of the recommendation of the reconsideration committee.

This policy was approved by the St. Margaret's Episcopal School Administration in December, 2003.