San Mateo
Public Library

San Mateo Public Library
Collection Development Policy

[Revision Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees, 08/25/2025]

Purpose of the Collection Development Policy

The collection development policy is intended to provide the community and library staff documentation which informs and supports the development of the library collection. This document will provide guidance to San Mateo Public Library staff and inform the public of the principles upon which the library makes decisions regarding the development and maintenance of the collection. While this policy will not replace the judgment of librarians, it serves to assist them in making decisions when choosing from available materials.

Library Mission Statement

San Mateo Public Library builds community by inspiring imagination, discovery and reading. San Mateo is a resilient, innovative, and inclusive community that is knowledgeable and empowered, embracing the future while honoring its history.

Scope of the Main Library

The role of the main library is to serve as an information and resource center where the public has access to an in-depth collection of up-to-date and accurate information. The Library promotes on-site and remote reference, and information services to assist users in locating information on subjects ranging from practical questions to in-depth research. The Library's popular materials collection features current, high-interest materials, both fiction and non-fiction, in a variety of formats for all ages.

Scope of the Branches

The Branch Libraries provide high quality, personalized library services, programs, and books and materials to the neighborhoods adjacent to the Hillsdale and Marina Libraries. The interests and needs of the actual and potential users of the branch are continually evaluated so that each library has a collection reflecting the community that it serves. While each branch serves the basic information needs of its neighborhood, it does not duplicate the in-depth sources or special collections of the Main Library. Budget and space limit the branch collection to materials of high interest to their communities.

Materials Selection

Library materials are chosen to serve the information, education, cultural, and recreational needs of the community. The Library selects materials on a large variety of subjects and in different formats, responding to the wide range of ages, ethnicities, languages, educational backgrounds, interests, and reading skills of library patrons. Materials are available in a variety of formats, quantities, and titles.

Collection development decisions are based on staff judgement and expertise, knowledge of what is already in the collection, and reviews in professional journals. Selection criteria includes but is not limited to past and anticipated public demand; contemporary significance and timeliness; literary or artistic merit; the need for and availability of information or materials

in the subject area; authoritativeness of the author or publisher; favorable reviews in standard selection sources; cost and budgetary constraints; and shelving space available in the library. Selections are made to build and maintain a balanced collection and to include a variety of viewpoints and opinions to meet community needs.

Responsibility for Selection
Ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the City Librarian who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. Actual selection and collection management activities are shared among professional staff that perform this obligation consistent with this policy and established procedures.

Suggestions for Purchase
Library patrons are encouraged to suggest materials for the library to purchase. To do so, patrons should complete a 'Suggest a Purchase' form via the library website. Suggestions from the public will be evaluated by selectors based on the Library's criteria for selection. All suggestions will be considered although not all suggestions may be added to the collection. This includes self-published works by local authors or otherwise.

Donations & Gifts
The Library welcomes the donation of library materials for its collection. The Library reserves the right to determine whether or not donated titles will be added to the collection. Materials that meet the Library's selection criteria may be added to the collection. Donated titles that are not added are routed to the Friends of the Library who raise funds through their book sales. The revenue from the book sales is administered by the Library Foundation which awards grants to the Library for new materials. The Library Board also accepts monetary donations for the Library's collection and to the Memorial Fund for the purchase of library materials in memory of or in honor of designated persons.

The Collections
The Library provides print collections in the form of circulating fiction and nonfiction books, large-print books, reference books, and periodicals; non-print collections composed of CDs, DVDs and audiobooks; and an electronic-resource collection in the form of databases, e-books, streaming music, video and audiobooks, and various other services made available online. Materials in the collection are supplemented through access to the materials of the Peninsula Library System's member libraries and by obtaining materials via interlibrary loan. Collections are developed in three major areas - for children, teens, and adults. The library supports the following international languages – Spanish, Chinese, Farsi and Japanese.

Children's Collections: A robust collection of print and media materials for children, items are provided in multiple formats for a wide range of interests, ages, and reading levels. Although the library strives to provide basic curriculum support, we do not attempt to purchase in sufficient quantity for required reading or other district-wide projects.

Teen Collection: A collection of books and magazines for teens, with awareness of the variety of interests, backgrounds, reading skills, and development levels within this age group. This book collection is predominantly fiction selected for recreational reading. The nonfiction titles in the collection are on subjects that meet the developmental needs of teens as well as titles of contemporary interest to this age group.

Adult Collections: Fiction and non-fiction collections including books, CDs, DVDs, periodicals, and online materials, with an emphasis on popular works, basic reference, and homework support.

Special Collections: All materials available at the Main Library.

a. **The Leon S. Benson Holocaust Studies Collection:** This collection is dedicated as a living memorial for Leon S. Benson and all the survivors and victims of the atrocities of the Holocaust.
b. **Biotechnology Learning Center:** The Biotechnology Learning Center at the Main Library provides access to print and online biotechnology resources.
c. **California Collection:** This reference collection includes works of fiction and non-fiction about the history of California and its localities, with an emphasis on San Mateo County.
d. **Franklin Templeton Investments Business Resource Center:** The San Mateo Public Library has the largest public library collection of business materials, in print and digital formats, on the Peninsula.
e. **The San Mateo County Genealogical Society Collection:** The San Mateo County Genealogical Society supports the study of family history on the San Francisco Peninsula and beyond through its collections, educational programs, and research services.

Digital Collections: The Library provides a variety of electronic resources for all age groups that are accessible via the Library's webpage.

Collection Management

Collection maintenance and evaluation is important to ensure the materials, both print and digital, in the Library are balanced and responsive to community needs. The Library strives to maintain an up-to-date, useful collection. Statistical tools such as circulation reports help librarians to determine how the collection is being used, and community demographic information will be used to help keep abreast of changing community needs. During the process of evaluation, the librarian will have the opportunity to identify subjects where materials are needed, missing titles that should be replaced, older editions of titles which should be updated, and subjects, authors, and titles that are no longer in demand in the community. Titles and items are withdrawn from the collection through periodic and systematic review by librarians. Materials may be withdrawn because they are worn, obsolete, or seldom used; superseded by a newer edition or better work on the subject; or physically damaged or in poor condition.

Maintenance of the library's collection through constant re-evaluation by the library staff ensures its usefulness and relevancy to the community. This evaluation depends heavily on the staff's professional expertise in assessing the needs of the community and the content of the collection. Those materials determined to no longer be of value are withdrawn from the collection. Withdrawn items may be disposed of through book sales, giveaways, or recycling.

Intellectual Freedom & Access to Library Materials

San Mateo Public Library fully endorses the principles documented in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association. San Mateo Public Library does not censor library materials of any nature for any member of the community. Library staff and patrons may not impose their views, values, and biases upon one another. Further, California State Law, AB 1825 passed in 2024, requires the following statements to be included in public library collection development policies:

1. The collection meets the broad and diverse interests of the community and respects both the library's autonomy and their specific community needs.

2. The public library serves as a center for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas.

3. Library materials should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people, and should present diverse points of view in the collection as a whole.

4. The right of the public to receive access to a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences is acknowledged.

The Library's collection is the reflection of its diverse community, and inclusion in the library's collection does not reflect endorsement of any specific contents or belief. Library materials are not identified or marked to show approval or disapproval based on its content. The library upholds the right of the individual to secure information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. Parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to make decisions about the materials suitable for their own children. The Library does not regulate what a child reads, views, or checks out.

Request for Reconsideration
Members of the San Mateo community wishing to recommend the removal of a particular item (physical or digital format) in the library collection may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form, which will be reviewed by the Library Director and the staff in relation to the library's mission statement and the selection criteria of this collection development policy.

Those seeking reconsideration must be a San Mateo Public Library cardholder residing within the City of San Mateo or Hillsborough. A title will be reviewed only once within a three-year period unless the content has undergone major revisions, and the title will remain on the shelf during the reconsideration process. After evaluating journal reviews and other materials submitted by the patron as well as the staff, a response will be made by the City Librarian within 30 days of receiving the formal objection.

Policy Review and Revision Statement
This collection development policy will be reviewed and updated if necessary every five years.