

PLAINEDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

POLICY CONCERNING THE WEEDING OF THE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Adopted by the Board of Trustees May 18, 2005

"Weeding" is the process by which librarians evaluate the merits of each item in the collection, discard or transfer to storage those materials which are no longer of use or value. Weeding is an integral part of maintaining the purpose and quality of the Library's resources.

Weeding is the reverse of selection and should be done with as much care. There are certain criteria which should be taken into account when considering an item for discard or transfer to storage.

1. Last date of circulation. This can be determined by the computer to ascertain the last date that the book was listed "on shelf" as well as the number of times the book has circulated.
2. Physical condition. If the book is in poor condition (dirty, pages ripped or missing or generally falling apart, etc.) then it should be discarded. If it is something that should be in the collection and is the last copy, a check will be done on the title to see whether it can be replaced before discarding.
3. Timeliness of the material. In certain subjects, such as science and technology, the material becomes dated in 3 to 5 years.
4. Reliability. Viewpoints change over time for some subject areas resulting in inaccurate information.
5. Foreign language books. The ethnic mix of the community may have changed requiring the Library to obtain books in different foreign languages, while discarding other foreign books.
6. Fad literature. These would include the latest diets, pop psychology.
7. Duplicates. Over time, the Library may not need more than one copy of a book. This is especially true of fiction best sellers.

8. Types of materials. Certain types of materials, such as almanacs, yearbooks, directories and travel guides become outdated sooner.

When weeding, the librarian should take into account the holdings of other libraries in Nassau County.

There are also guidelines concerning what types of materials should not be weeded from the collection, or weeded with careful thought as to overall value to the collection. These include:

1. Materials of research value, especially in the humanities and social sciences.
2. Out-of-print titles.
3. Local materials such as histories of the local area.
4. Any books whose absence would destroy the balance of the collection in a particular subject area.
5. Rare items.
6. Any books that are listed in core bibliographies such as the "Public Library Catalog," "Fiction Catalog," or "Poetry Index."

Most importantly, it should be remembered that the community's needs should determine the collection as far as what is added and what is subtracted.