

# Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library at Sinai Akiba Academy

## Collection Development Policy

### **Blumenthal Library's Mission Statement**

- To promote a readership that views the collection as a tool to gather knowledge, explore new experiences, develop their personal tastes, and enjoy reading for pleasure.

### **General Collection Development Guidelines**

- Purpose of the Blumenthal Library Collection
  - The Blumenthal Library Collection is divided into two major sub-collections: a children's collection intended for the students of Sinai Akiba Academy (Sinai Akiba) and the families of Sinai Temple, and an adult collection for the Sinai Akiba parents and members of the Temple.
    - The library's children's collection contains both Jewish and secular content intended for children from birth through the eighth grade in alignment with the library's mission and the Sinai Akiba curriculum.
    - The purpose of the adult collection is to enrich and support Jewish life and values by including titles with either specifically Judaic content or that contain Jewish viewpoints.
    - Together, these collections should reflect the many ages, origins, interests, and experiences of the greater Sinai Akiba and Sinai Temple communities we serve.
- Objective of Selection
  - The items in the collection are to be used both in the pursuit of personal enjoyment and knowledge and for academic achievement and are selected with the above purpose in mind.

### **Selection Making and Responsibility of Selection**

- Resources for Selection Making
  - The responsibility of selection ultimately falls to the school librarians. However, there are several resources that they reference in order to make selection decisions.
    - The librarians work in conjunction with Sinai Akiba faculty and administration to make thoughtful, student-centered choices in their selection of children's books, and are open to suggestions from Sinai Temple staff and membership to select titles for the adult collection.

- Additionally, the librarians will refer to trusted outside sources for title recommendations. These resources may include recommendations and reviews published by:
  - Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL)
  - Jewish Review of Books
  - American Library Association (ALA)
  - American Association of School Libraries (AASL)
  - Young Adult Library Service Association (YALSA)
  - Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)
  - *The Horn Book*
  - *School Library Journal*
  - *New York Times*
- Librarians will also make decisions based on their professional expertise and experience.
- Selection Criteria
  - Materials in a variety of formats must be available for readers of all ages, abilities, and interests.
  - The content of the materials should be of high quality and artistic value, and/or the potential user appeal must be high.
  - Non-fiction content must come from credible sources, and include accurate, reliable, and current information.
  - In the children's collection, all materials must be appropriate for a school setting and have educational, social, or developmental significance, and all materials in the adult collection must be appropriate for a temple setting.
  - Materials should reflect both Jewish beliefs, culture, and values as well as those from a range of cultures, ethnicities, and origins so that members of the community feel represented in the collection and are able to find materials that will aid in understanding the viewpoints, beliefs, and experiences of others.
  - The collections should be balanced in terms of subject areas, formats, and fictional and non-fictional content.
- Selection Making
  - The librarians will make selections that are in the best interest of the school and temple community, and avoid any personal opinions or biases.
  - Additions to the library will remain within budget, be cost effective, durable, and fulfill a specific need within the collection.
  - Lost or destroyed materials will be re-assessed based on the above criteria before purchasing a replacement.
  - Materials may be selected that do not meet the criteria above if the librarians agree that the goals and needs of the collection, the library, Sinai Akiba, and/or Sinai Temple will be met.
  - When lists of proposed purchases are compiled, they will be submitted by the librarian/s to the Head of School for approval prior to purchase. Books questioned by the Head of School for purchase will be reviewed and evaluated

by the Head of School with the librarian/s, the appropriate division head and appropriate grade level faculty member. In the case that unplanned, spontaneous purchases are made apart from the approved list, the librarian will submit those titles to the Head of School along with the list of next proposed purchases.

## **Weeding**

- **Overview**
  - The librarians collect data on all materials existing in, added to, or removed from the collection. This data is reviewed at the end of the school year, during which time the librarians will plan to weed (remove) items from the collection, focusing on one or more sections or subsections of the collection that contain a number of materials that meet the criteria below. Weeding may also occur on a case-by-case basis at any point during the year.
  - Any weeded material will be removed from the catalog and from circulation and clearly marked as withdrawn.
  - After an item has been weeded, the librarians will decide where to place that item next. This may include:
    - Offering the item to teachers for their classroom collections if the content has educational value.
    - Making the item available for purchase at the annual Book Sale.
    - Donating the item to charity.
- **Weeding Criteria**
  - Items will be weeded from the collection if:
    - The content is inaccurate, outdated, offensive, unreliable, or inappropriate for the school and temple community.
    - The physical condition is poor, unattractive, or beyond the librarians' ability to repair or rebind.
    - The title has not been used or circulated in five years or more.
    - (For the children's collection) The content is no longer relevant to Sinai Akiba curriculum.
    - There are duplicate copies of the same title when one copy can continue to meet circulation needs.

## **Donations**

All donations will be subject to the same criteria listed in the above Collection Development Policy. Accepting donations of used materials will be at the discretion of the librarians.

## **Challenges**

- **Overview**

- First and foremost, the Blumenthal Library strictly adheres to the Library Bill of Rights, created by the American Library Association (and available at <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>), which dictates the rights of the library and its users and emphasizes freedom of choice.
  - Although the librarians encourage students to make choices that are age and reading level appropriate, no one rule exists for reading materials for children of a particular age. Reading recommendations are potentially based on the student's abilities, interests, needs, or by the particular circumstance.
  - Except for our policy that lower school students may not check out books from the young adult section, the librarians will not restrict access to specific topics or titles to a class, grade, or individual. If families wish their student to focus on certain topics or book formats, the librarians are happy to provide that student with suggestions for their reading, but will not explicitly instruct a student to check out a particular title if that is not the student's wish. If the librarians have a question or concern about a book selection that a student has made, that student's parents or guardians will be contacted.
- Submitting a Request for Reconsideration (Removal of a book from the collection)
    - First, we ask that any adult submitting such a request first read (or watch or listen if the title is a DVD or audiobook) the title in question in its entirety **before** their request is submitted.
    - Once the title has been read, the request should be submitted via email to the head librarian (currently Martha McMahon at [mmcmahon@sinaiakibal.org](mailto:mmcmahon@sinaiakibal.org)) for review. The email should include:
      - The name of the person submitting the request and the best way to contact them
      - If the person submitting is representing themselves or a group of people
      - The title and author/producer of the title in question
      - The reason this title was brought to the submitter's attention
      - Confirmation that the title was read/viewed in its entirety
      - What concerns the submitter has about the title
- Reconsideration Process
    - Once a request is received, the librarian/s will confirm with the submitter that the reconsideration process has begun.
      - Those submitting a request should keep in mind that considering the schedules of those involved and the necessity for everyone to also read the book in its entirety before meeting and deciding what to do with the title, the review process may take weeks to complete. The librarians will endeavor to keep the submitter informed of the progress of the reconsideration process.

- Titles under review will not be removed from the collection or have restricted patron access until the reconsideration process is complete and only if a unanimous removal decision has been reached.
- In addition to the library staff, the Head of School, one additional administration staff and one teacher associated with the content/grade level of the book in question will review the title for reconsideration as a group.
- Once a decision has been reached, the original submitter will be contacted with the result and an explanation behind the decision.
- If, once the process has been completed and a title has been deemed unworthy of the Blumenthal Library collection, it will be weeded. Otherwise it will remain on the shelf and in circulation.

### **References**

- "School Library Policies." *School Libraries*. California Department of Education, 23 Aug. 2016. Web. 30 Aug. 2016.
- "Strategies and Tips for Dealing with Challenges to Library Materials." *Banned & Challenged Books*. American Library Association, 26 Mar. 2013. Web. 30 Aug. 2016.
- "Workbook for Selection Policy Writing." *Banned & Challenged Books*. American Library Association, 26 Mar. 2013. Web. 30 Aug. 2016.

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