

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY WEEDING GUIDE

Collection maintenance and weeding are important components of a school library’s collection management system. The collection should be reviewed on a consistent basis for accuracy, currency, usage, range, and subject area gaps. Collection maintenance involves care of materials, accurate and efficient shelving, cleaning, checking digital materials for broken links and sufficient coverage and usage, and evaluating all resources for accuracy, currency, and relevancy.

Weeding (or the deselection of material) is an important part of the collection maintenance process. In addition to evaluating materials for accuracy, currency, and relevancy, the following should also be considered: space limitations, edition, format, physical condition, and the number of copies available. Weeding should not be used as a tool for the removal of controversial materials.

School libraries should have policies to guide material selection, collection maintenance, and weeding. This ensures an efficient and procedural way to manage the collection and also ensures that students and staff have the most accurate, current, and relevant resources available to them. The policies should include guidance on the repair, replacement, and removal of materials, including who is responsible for maintenance, inventory, and weeding and the correct procedure for removal.

Example from the American Library Association:

Annually, the school librarian will conduct an inventory of the school library collection and equipment. The inventory can be used to determine losses and remove damaged or worn materials which can then be considered for replacement. The inventory can also be used to deselect and remove materials that are no longer relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students. Additionally, school librarians should develop a collection maintenance plan that includes systematic inspection of materials that would result in weeding outdated, damaged, or irrelevant materials from the collection.

“It does not matter how many books you
may have, but whether they are good or not.”

- *Epistolae Morale Lucius Annaeus SENECA 3 B.C.-65 A.D*

INFORMAL WEEDING

An ongoing process that often occurs as materials are checked-in or checked-out.

FORMAL WEEDING

A planned process that is not superseded by informal weeding. A rotation schedule can be established allowing for systematic weeding over time.

DEWEY AGE RANGES

These are suggested copyright markers to consider. Utilize other criteria as well as these guidelines.

2-10 Years	5-10 Years	10 Years	10-15 Years	Flexible
000 200	300 500 600 Encyclopedia Periodicals Professional	100 400	700 900 Fiction Graphic Novels Story Collections	800 Biography Reference

CONSIDER KEEPING

- Classics, award winners *f*
- Local History *f*
- Annuals & School Publications *f*
- Titles on current reading lists *f*
- Out of print titles that are still useful *f*
- Biographical Sources

PRE-WEEDING STEPS

1. Identify Stakeholders: Remember you serve two patrons - teachers and students.
2. Shelf Read: Walk through and double check that shelves are in order and that there are no missing or lost books.
3. Pull Damaged Items: 1st books to go are books that are visibly damaged or have been repaired numerous times.
4. Create Weeding Schedule: Schedule time for weeding around projects and programs. Don't weed the animal section when students are working on an Endangered Species project.

PROCEDURE FOR FORMAL WEEDING

1. Design a plan that includes a schedule and a goal for the weeding process. *f*
2. Schedule weeding during an uninterrupted time. *f*
3. Have post-its, carts and boxes available. *f*
4. Look at each book and apply your criteria. *f*
5. If pulling the book, note the reason and place on a cart for mending or in a box for disposal. *f*
6. Remove records from circulation system.

CREW (HOW TO WEED)

C = Continuous

R = Review

E = Evaluation

W = Weeding

MUSTIE (WHAT TO WEED)

M = Misleading (factually inaccurate)

U = Ugly (beyond fixing)

S = Superseded (newer edition)

T = Trivial (no merit)

I = Irrelevant (not needed by the school library)

E = Elsewhere (material is easily obtainable online or from other libraries)

WEEDING CHECKLIST(if the book fits more than one criteria, consider weeding it)

	Outdated Information		Multiple Copies
	Older Copies		Visibly Damaged
	Lack of Circulation		Oversaturation of the Topic
	Biased or Portray Stereotypes		Inappropriate Reading Level
	Does Not Support Current Curriculum		Outdated or Unattractive Format/Design/Graphics

WEEDING OTHER COLLECTIONS (track teacher/student usage)

- Magazine and Newspapers: General interest magazines are rarely used three years after publication date. Is it worth storing them? Do you have the space?
- CDs/DVDs: The condition of the CD or DVD will help weed the collection quickly. If the disc skips, then weed it.
- Ebooks: Use the basic principles of the print collection weeding criteria when weeding the Ebooks. If they are not being checked out, then do not renew for the following year.
- Databases (purchased by the school/library): Even though databases are not taking up physical space, they still need to be evaluated. If they are not being used, then do not renew for the following year.

RESOURCES

- <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/weeding>
- <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/documents/weedingbrochure.pdf>
- [https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OA/OEER/Library%20Services/Section%204/Weeding%20Overview%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OA/OEER/Library%20Services/Section%204/Weeding%20Overview%20(1).pdf)
- <https://wke.lt/w/s/Dv1bfx>