WEEDING THE COLLECTION

DEFINITION
Weeding is the removal of materials (books, periodicals, encyclopedias, videos etc.) from a library collection in a planned and systematic way. The deselecting process is an ongoing part of collection development, a deliberate and thoughtful activity that will keep the library current and vital.

TO WEED OR NOT TO WEED: POLICY AND CRITERIA
The selection policy for the TDSB considers weeding an important part of sound collection development. Individual school Teacher-Librarians should consider the following criteria in developing a plan for weeding.

• Copyright: older books require closer examination for content
• Content: should be relevant to the school needs and provincial curriculum
• Physical Condition: Is it worth repairing?
• Circulation: How long since it was last checked out?
• Current: Is newer material/information available?

INFORMAL WEEDING
An ongoing process where torn, tattered or defaced materials are deselected as they are returned to the school library.

FORMAL WEEDING
A planned rotational process that sees each section of the library targeted on a regular basis.

PROCEDURE
• Develop a timeline with a definite goal for evaluating the entire collection
• Inform staff and administration of your plan and criteria used
• The library may be closed with Principal’s approval during the initial weeding process (1 to 2 days)
• Have carts, recycling bins, boxes, dusters, hand wipes and post-it notes available
• Each book should be evaluated individually
• Delete barcodes from the system by scanning onto Notepad (call Horizon Help Desk)

CONSIDER KEEPING
• Award winners and classics
• Student authored books
• Local histories
• School yearbooks and publications
• Titles in curriculum units
• Out of print titles that are still useful and relevant

COPYRIGHT
These are only suggested copyright markers to use as a guideline along with the other criteria suggested.

Dewey Classification
000 3-10 years 500 10 years
100 10 years 600 5-10 years
200 2-10 years 700 5-15 years
300 5-10 years 800 flexible
400 10 years 900 10 years

Biographies flexible
Fiction flexible – check for appropriateness
Encyclopedia 5-7 years
Reference evaluate on an individual basis
Atlas 5-10 years
Periodicals 3 years
Almanacs 3 years in reference, 3 years in circulation
Filmstrip unless compelling or in high use, deselect
Videos 15 years
CD ROM dependent on material
MUSTY*  

M Misleading can occur more rapidly in technology that mythology. Look for:  
• Obsolete information  
• Racial, cultural or sexual stereotyping

U Ugly refers to the physical condition of the book.  
• Antiquated appearance  
• Worn out, frayed, dirty, moldy  
• Unable to repair

S Superseded there may be newer copies available.  
• Duplicate copies  
• Almanacs, encyclopedias superseded by newer editions

T Trivial look for relevance for the collection. Check for poor writing, inaccurate information and appropriate interest and reading levels for students

Y Your collection has no use for the book.¹

₁ *American Library Association

BENEFITS OF WEEDING

• Creates an up-to-date collection  
• Ensures that all parts of the collection have been evaluated for equity issues and stereotyping  
• Makes gap analysis easier  
• Directs further collection development  
• Provides a cleaner and more attractive collection  
• Makes it easier to search and find relevant material  
• Makes it easier to maintain the library  
• Highlights and makes accessible new and exciting resources

Adapted from brochure produced by the California Department of Education

WEEDING THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

A vital part of the selection process

Why weed?

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

-Epistolarae Morale  
Lucius Annaeus SENECA  
3 BC – 65 AD