



FN-04: Intellectual Freedom

Passed:

Amended: March 26, 2018

Review: New Term of the Board

Intent

Recognizing that the board has a fundamental responsibility for upholding the principles of, as well as advocating for, intellectual freedom, this policy ensures the rights of individuals to access information.

Regulations

The Board adopts:

- a) The Canadian Library Association's Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom, approved by the CLA Executive Council ~ June 27, 1974; Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; September 27, 2015.
- b) The Ontario Library Association Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual and
- c) The Ontario Library Association Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library.
Included as Documents A, B, C.

Procedures

It is the responsibility of the Board, and those who work in the library, to:

- a) Ensure that all library users have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly.
- b) Guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable.
- c) Make available all of the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.
- d) Resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities, while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

The Board directs the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that the principles of intellectual freedom are integrated into all organizational policies, procedures and practices.

Related Documents:

Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

The Canadian Library Association recognizes and values the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the guarantor of the fundamental freedoms in Canada of conscience and religion; of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; of peaceful assembly; and of association.

The Canadian Library Association supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which include the interlocking freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In accordance with these principles, the Canadian Library Association affirms that all persons in Canada have a fundamental right, subject only to the Constitution and the law, to have access to the full range of



knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly. Only the courts may abridge free expression rights in Canada.

The Canadian Library Association affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Library Association holds that libraries are a key institution in Canada for rendering expressive content accessible and affordable to all. Libraries are essential gateways for all persons living in Canada to advance themselves through literacy, lifelong learning, social engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them.

Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Library employees, volunteers and employers as well as library governing entities have a core responsibility to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in the performance of their respective library roles.

Approved by Executive Council ~ June 27, 1974
Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; September 27, 2015

Ontario Library Association Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual

In affirming its commitment to the fundamental rights of intellectual freedom, the freedom to read and freedom of the press, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Library Association declares its acceptance of the following propositions:

1. That the provision of library service to the public is based upon the right of the citizen, under the protection of the law, to judge individually on questions of politics, religion and morality.
2. That intellectual freedom requires freedom to examine other ideas and other interpretations of life than those currently approved by the local community or by society in general, and including those ideas and interpretations which may be unconventional or unpopular.
3. That freedom of expression includes freedom for a creator to depict what is ugly, shocking and unedifying in life.
4. That free traffic in ideas and opinions is essential to the health and growth of a free society and that the freedom to read, listen and view is fundamental to such free traffic.



5. That it is the responsibility of libraries to maintain the right of intellectual freedom and to implement it consistently in the selection of books, periodicals, films, recordings, other materials, and in the provision of access to electronic sources of information, including access to the internet.
6. That it is therefore part of the library's service to its public to resist any attempt by any individual or group within the community it serves to abrogate or curtail access to information, the freedom to read, view and listen by demanding the removal of, or restrictions to library information sources in any format.
7. That it is equally part of the library's responsibility to its public to ensure that its selection of material is not unduly influenced by the personal opinions of the selectors, but determined by the application of generally accepted standards of accuracy, style and presentation.

Approved, OLA Board of Directors, December 2003

Reaffirmed, OLA Board of Directors, December 2005

OLA Position on Children's Rights in the Public Library

Children in Public Libraries have the right to:

1. Intellectual freedom.
2. Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.
3. A full range of materials, services and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their needs.
4. Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
5. A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
6. Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in children's services.
7. Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user.
8. An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the library administration, library board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of children's services.
9. Library policies written to include the needs of the child.

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, November 1998.

OLA Position on Teens' Rights

Goals for Library Services for Teens:

Young people are valuable members of our library community who deserve the same respect, dignity and human rights as all library members. This document provides a framework for developing library services to teens that meet the educational, informational, and cultural and leisure needs of young people in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Each public library has a different community to serve and therefore different priorities and needs.

Although specific services for teens have not been well established in all libraries, these goals are created in the belief that young adulthood is a unique life stage and that young adults are entitled to the same quality of library services offered to other age groups in the population.

(Adapted from the IFLA Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults, 2006 and the YALSA Guidelines for Library Services to Teens, Ages 12-18, 2006.)



The goal of library services for teens is to assist with the transition from children's services to adult services and to provide access to both resources and an environment that meets the needs of young people for intellectual, emotional and social development. Specifically these needs are based on the unique seven developmental needs of adolescents and the five core values of quality service to teens:

7 Developmental Needs of Teens:

- Physical Activity,
- Competence and achievement,
- Self definition,
- Creative Expression,
- Positive social Interaction with Peers and Adults,
- Structure and Clear Limits,
- Meaningful Participation

Excerpted from: Dorman, G. (1981). *The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User's Manual*. Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence.

5 Core Values of service to teens

- Respecting and responding to unique YA needs,
- Providing equal access,
- Empowering Youth through participation,
- Engaging Teens in active collaboration,
- Supporting healthy youth development.

Core Values excerpted from Jones, P. (2002). *New directions for library service to young adults*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Teens in Ontario Public Libraries have the right to:

1. **Intellectual freedom:** The library establishes clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by young adults to library resources and information sources; and respect for the rights of young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship. The library's teen collection, policies and services should be consistent with the concepts of intellectual freedom defined by the CLA, OLA and Ontario Human Rights code.
2. **Equal access to the full range of materials, services, and programs specifically designed and developed to meet their unique needs:** The Library integrates library service to teens into the overall plan, budget and service program for the library. Library service to teens is integrated with those offered to other user groups.
3. **Adequate funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs:** The Library incorporates funding for materials and services for teens in the library operating budget and ensures there is equitable distribution of resources to support programs and services for young adults.
4. **Collections that specifically meet the needs of teens:** The Library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage lifelong learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development. The library endeavors to develop collections that encourage leisure reading, support homework and school success and responds to gender and cultural diversity. The library provides unfettered access to technology including social networking, licensed databases, and other online library resources for teens.
5. **A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages:** The Library provides identifiable spaces for teens that are separate from children's spaces where possible, reflects their lifestyle and allows for teens to use this library space for leisure or study, either independently or in groups.



6. **Welcoming, respectful, supportive service at every service point:** The Library promotes friendly, positive, non-biased customer interactions with teens, providing staff development and training and ensures that services for teens embrace cultural and gender diversity and economic differences. Library staff will endeavor to respect the teen's need for privacy and nonjudgmental service and assist young adults in acquiring the skills to effectively access all library resources and become information literate.
7. **Library Programs and Services appropriate for Teens:** The Library fosters youth development by providing programs for teens that contribute to literacy, life-long learning and healthy youth development. The library endeavors to provide volunteer opportunities for helping others through community service hours including participating on Library Advisory Boards, and other projects that help develop a sense of responsibility and community involvement. The library's teen services initiatives are effectively managed according to best practices in the field of Youth Services.
8. **Trained and knowledgeable staff specializing in teen services:** Library staff is knowledgeable about adolescent development and age appropriate resources for young adults inclusive of those with special needs. The library provides services by teen specialists as well as by others who are trained to serve teens.)
9. **An advocate who will speak on their behalf to the library administration, library board, municipal council and community to make people aware of the goals of teen services:** The Library works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.
10. **Library policies are written to include the needs of the youth.**

Adopted at the Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, June 2010.