

Trent Lakes Public Library

Policy Type: Foundation

Policy Title: Intellectual Freedom

Policy Number: FN-04

Initial Policy Approval Date: 12-April-2019

Last Review/Revision Date: 2024

Year of Next Review: 2030

Policy Statement

The Board of the Trent Lakes Public Library recognizes its fundamental responsibility to uphold and advocate for the principles of intellectual freedom. This policy ensures the rights of all individuals to access information, ideas, and creative expression without restriction, subject only to Canadian law.

The Library adopts the **Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries** (originally approved June 27, 1974; amended November 17, 1983, November 18, 1985, and September 27, 2015) as a guiding framework.

Guiding Principles

1. Access to Information

- All library users have the right to access the full range of knowledge, creativity, and intellectual activity.
- Access includes materials that may be considered unconventional, unpopular, or controversial.

2. Equity and Inclusion

- The Library is committed to ensuring equitable access to information and intellectual expression for all community members, including underrepresented or marginalized groups.

3. Public Facilities and Services

4. The Library provides equitable access to its facilities, programs, services, and digital resources for individuals and groups. Access and use are subject to applicable Library policies, procedures, and code of conduct to ensure a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for all.

5. Freedom from Censorship

- The Library resists all efforts to restrict access to materials or services while respecting the right of individuals and groups to offer constructive criticism.

6. Privacy

- The Library protects the privacy of users' information, including borrowing and usage records, except as required by law.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board

- Uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in governance and oversight.
- Advocate for open access to information and ideas within the community.

CEO

- Ensure intellectual freedom principles are integrated into all policies, procedures, and practices.
- Provide guidance and training to staff, volunteers, and contractors on these principles.

Staff and Volunteers

- Implement Library policies in ways that uphold intellectual freedom and privacy.
- Support users in accessing information, programs, and resources without bias or restriction.

Challenge / Reconsideration of Materials

The Library maintains a **transparent process** for patrons requesting a review of specific materials:

1. Requests must be submitted in writing using the Library's *Material Reconsideration Form*.
2. The CEO (or delegated staff) reviews the request in consultation with relevant staff and professional guidelines.
3. The Board will review significant challenges or appeals, ensuring that decisions uphold intellectual freedom principles.
4. Users will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review.

Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed **every three years**, or sooner as required due to changes in legislation, library practices, or professional standards.

Related Documents

- **FN-03 – Values Statement** (Trent Lakes Public Library)
- **Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries** ([CFLA Link](#))

Intellectual Freedom (continued)
Appendix A



Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

Approval History: ~ June 27, 1974 Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; and September 27, 2015

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

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations 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.

Posted at <https://cfla-fcab.ca/en/guidelines-and-position-papers/statement-on-intellectual-freedom-and-libraries/>