



Intellectual Freedom

Operational

Purpose

The purpose of the Brantford Public Library Intellectual Freedom Policy is to define Intellectual Freedom and to articulate how the Library recognizes Intellectual Freedom as one of its core values.

Principles

- To support values underpinning a democratic society, including free, open and equitable access to a diverse range of information and ideas, civic engagement, intellectual freedom and freedom of expression.
- To deliver a high quality, consistent level of resources.
- To communicate to customers a written standard of service.
- To provide and maintain accurate information that meets the specific needs of the public.
- To acknowledge the Library's commitments to access for all, diversity and inclusion.

The Policy aligns with the Brantford Public Library's Principles & Values:

- We believe in intellectual freedom;
- We believe in access for all;
- We will be efficient and effective in all we do to provide quality service in a welcoming environment;
- We work in partnership with other organizations to further the Library's mission.

Policy

The Brantford Public Library recognizes its obligations under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees Canadians freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media.

The Brantford Public Library Board endorses the basic principles of Intellectual Freedom as outlined in the Statement on Intellectual Freedom as set out by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) and the Ontario Library Association (OLA) statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual to guide its decisions.

"It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may

consider being unconventional, unpopular, or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials."

The Library recognizes and abides by all laws dictated at the federal, provincial or municipal level, including the Criminal Code of Canada and the classifications assigned to films, television series and video games by the Ontario Film Review Board.

While Library staff may assist customers, the ultimate right and responsibility for choosing and using Library materials, spaces and services rest with the individual.

The availability of an item within the Library's collections does not indicate endorsement of its content by the Library. The Library recognizes that some resources selected for its collections may be controversial, unconventional, or unpopular.

The principles outlined in this policy cover all library materials, services and operations.

Collection Development

As per the Library's Collection Development Policy, the materials in the Library are selected to offer a diverse, balanced and high-quality collection representing multiple viewpoints. The Library's selection criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Relevance to community needs;
- Importance as a historical document or as a current event;
- Relation to the existing collection and other materials on the subject;
- Popularity and local demand;
- Comprehensive treatment of a subject and clarity;
- Timeliness, integrity and accuracy of information;
- Reputation, skill and authority of the author and publisher.

Hate Speech

The Library's position on intellectual freedom does not apply to expressing or disseminating views that promote and/or incite hatred. Such communications, as outlined in the Criminal Code of Canada, are prohibited at Brantford Public Library. Canadian courts determine what constitutes hate speech.

Parental Responsibility

Responsibility for children's or teens' choice and use of resources rests with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Resource selections are not restricted by the possibility that children or teens may access materials their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may consider inappropriate. The Library believes in the freedom of the individual and the right and obligation of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to guide, develop, interpret, and maintain their code of values in their family. Therefore, the Library will not limit individuals' access to the content included in its collections.

Computers and the Internet

The Library provides unfiltered internet access to support intellectual freedom, which means we do not block any websites. However, users must comply with our Rules of Conduct and Internet Access Policy. Illegal activity is prohibited on Brantford Public Library's computers and servers.

Requests for Reconsideration

Brantford Public Library recognizes the right of individuals to express opposition to creative ideas in Library materials or services. Customers may submit a written Request for Reconsideration form. This form can be completed online or submitted at any point of service. Reconsideration requests will be explored and responded to by the Manager, Library Resources. The CEO / Chief Librarian holds the ultimate authority to decide whether or not to uphold the material or service.

The Library also upholds values supporting access for all, diversity and inclusion. As such, the Library's Request for Reconsideration process will include consideration for these core values as well as the Intellectual Freedom Policy.

Applicable Legislation

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: Section 2(b) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects "freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication."

Criminal Code: Section 63 pertains to Unlawful Assemblies and Riots. Section 297 pertains to defamatory libel. Section 318 pertains to hate propaganda.

Ontario Human Rights Code: Subsection 13 pertains to infringing on freedom from discrimination.

Other Sources

OLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual:
https://accessola.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020_OLAIntellectualFreedomStatement.pdf

Freedom to Read: <https://www.freedomtoread.ca>

Canadian Federation of Library Associations: <http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/home-page>

American Library Association: <http://www.ala.org>

International Federation of Library Associations: <https://www.ifla.org>

Banned Books Week: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/banned>

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: Brantford Public Library Collection Development Policy; Brantford Public Library Internet Access Policy

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