

Niagara Falls Public Library	Date Effected May 20, 2015	Intellectual Freedom Policy
	Last Revised May 20, 2015	

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.

1. The Board endorses the Canadian Library Association’s Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom (amended November 18, 1985)

2. The Board endorses the Ontario Library Association’s Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual (November 7, 1998)

3. 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

4. The board directs the CEO / Chief Librarian to ensure that the principles of intellectual freedom are integrated into all organizational policies, procedures and practices.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Canadian Library Association. Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom, 1985.
(Appendix A)

Ontario Library Association. Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual, 1998
(Appendix B)

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**Canadian Library Association
Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom**

All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's *Bill of Rights* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity, and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society.

Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.

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

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.

Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups. Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.

Adopted and approved by CLA Executive Council June 27, 1974; Amended November 17, 1983 and November 18, 1985.

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**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.

Endorsed by the membership of the OLA at the 96th Annual General Meeting, 1998.