

Hanover Public Library POLICIES

Policy Title: **Intellectual Freedom**

Policy type: Foundation

Revision date: July 24, 2014

Signature of Chair:

Recognizing that the Hanover Public Library 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 Ontario Library Association's **Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual**, and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) **Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom**. These statements are attached as appendices A and B.
2. 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
 - b) guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity under the law, 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
3. The board directs the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that the principles of intellectual freedom are integrated into all organizational policies, procedures and practices.

Appendices:

Ontario Library Association. **Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual**, approved November 7, 1998, reaffirmed by the OLA Board of Directors December 2005. (Appendix A)

Executive Board of IFLA, IFLA **Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom**, approved 25 March 1999, The Hague. (Appendix B)

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Appendix A

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, and 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, Ontario Library Association
1998 Annual General Meeting
November 7, 1998.

Reaffirmed, OLA Board of Directors, December 2005

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Appendix B

IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

Statement prepared by IFLA/FAIFE and approved by The Executive Board of IFLA 25 March 1999, The Hague, Netherlands

IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) supports, defends and promotes intellectual freedom as defined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

IFLA declares that human beings have a fundamental right to access to expressions of knowledge, creative thought and intellectual activity, and to express their views publicly.

IFLA believes that the right to know and freedom of expression are two aspects of the same principle. The right to know is a requirement for freedom of thought and conscience; freedom of thought and freedom of expression are necessary conditions for freedom of access to information.

IFLA asserts that a commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession.

IFLA therefore calls upon libraries and library staff to adhere to the principles of intellectual freedom, uninhibited access to information and freedom of expression and to recognize the privacy of library user.

IFLA urges its members actively to promote the acceptance and realization of these principles. In doing so, IFLA affirms that:

- Libraries provide access to information, ideas and works of imagination. They serve as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture.
- Libraries provide essential support for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development for both individuals and groups.
- Libraries contribute to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom and help to safeguard basic democratic values and universal civil rights.
- Libraries have a responsibility both to guarantee and to facilitate access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity. To this end, libraries shall acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society.

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- Libraries shall ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views.
- Libraries shall acquire, organize and disseminate information freely and oppose any form of censorship.
- Libraries shall make materials, facilities and services equally accessible to all users. There shall be no discrimination due to race, creed, gender, age or for any other reason.
- Library users shall have the right to personal privacy and anonymity. Librarians and other library staff shall not disclose the identity of users or the materials they use to a third party.
- Libraries funded from public sources and to which the public have access shall uphold the principles of intellectual freedom.
- Librarians and other employees in such libraries have a duty to uphold those principles.
- Librarians and other professional libraries staff shall fulfil their responsibilities both to their employer and to their users. In cases of conflict between those responsibilities, the duty towards the user shall take precedence.