

## **Purpose**

Ottawa Public Library (OPL)'s intellectual freedom position statement describes

- The guiding principles underpinning OPL's commitment to intellectual freedom; and,
- OPL's responsibilities to uphold intellectual freedom in various contexts.

## **Statement**

OPL supports intellectual curiosity and enquiry. One of OPL's core values is to support intellectual freedom: the free and open exchange of lawful information and ideas in a democratic society, respecting individual's rights to privacy and choice.

## **Guiding Principles**

- 1. Ottawa Public Library (OPL) is committed to upholding the core tenet of intellectual freedom.**

The Library's role is to act as a curator of information and a champion of information literacy. Its services are governed by applicable legislation, as well as its vision, mission, and values. OPL provides access to, but does not endorse, multiple viewpoints via its services (including collections, programs, displays, meeting room rentals, and Internet access).

- 2. OPL supports unrestricted access to, and lawful use of, the Internet.**

Individuals accessing the Internet at the Library will not be prevented from accessing information that some may consider explicit or offensive.

- 3. OPL welcomes open discussions about intellectual freedom, including challenges to the Library's decisions.**

Individuals may challenge an item in the collection, program, display, or meeting room booking, or content viewed on the Internet in the Library. They may also appeal OPL's decision regarding this challenge. To keep

the conversation about intellectual freedom open, OPL will report on all challenges, provide training for trustees and employees, and develop a plan to support ongoing discussions about intellectual freedom in the community, working with key stakeholders.

## Responsibilities

Library Board trustees are responsible for:

- Facilitating access to all legal expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity;
- Resisting attempts by any individual or group to restrict access to such expressions; and,
- Upholding and supporting employees in the administration of intellectual freedom in Library services.

Employees are responsible for:

- Facilitating access to all legal expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity;
- Making available the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who wish to use them and conform with applicable regulations;
- Acquiring and making available the widest variety of materials and information; and,
- Upholding and supporting the intellectual freedom, including all related administrative policies, procedures, and supporting documents.

## Legislative Context

1. [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
2. [The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
3. [The Criminal Code](#)
4. [The Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
5. [The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
6. [The Ontario Public Libraries Act](#)

## Applicability

This statement applies to all OPL services, including:

1. Collections, including print and electronic materials for all ages, in a variety of formats, including materials that are purchased, streamed, or shared from or with other institutions;
2. Library programs, including programs offered by staff, paid presenters and Library partners;
3. Display spaces, including displaying community information on bulletin boards in branches;
4. Public computers and networks, including legal uses of public PCs and Chromebooks available in OPL branches, and use of the OPL wifi network at all locations; and,
5. Meeting rooms, including non-commercial and commercial rentals of meeting room spaces owned or operated by OPL.

This statement does not apply to any expression or dissemination of views that violate applicable Canadian legislation, or activities that contravene applicable Canadian legislation. Such communications and activities are prohibited on library premises and may result in a person's immediate expulsion from the premises and referral of the matter to the Ottawa Police Services.

## Challenges and Appeals

Library cardholders may challenge content in the collection, Library programs, display space, public computer or network access, or a meeting room booking by completing a Request for Reconsideration form on the Library's website. Requests are reviewed by staff, and a written response is provided to the cardholder within 30 days of receiving the request for reconsideration.

Individuals can appeal a decision regarding a challenge in writing to the CEO, provided there is new pertinent information. A written response is provided to the cardholder within 30 days of receiving the appeal. The response to the appeal is OPL's final decision, unless there is new information from a Canadian court of law (e.g.: a legal ruling).

A list of challenges received, and OPL's responses, will be presented to the Library Board annually, commonly during Freedom to Read Month (February).

## Related Statements

OPL endorses the following statements regarding intellectual freedom:

1. [Canadian Federation of Library Associations \(CFLA\) Statement on Intellectual Freedom](#); and,
2. [Ontario Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual](#).

## Supporting Documents

1. [Content Services Framework](#);
2. [Public Network Access Policy](#);
3. Duty to Report Child Pornography Policy (for employees);
4. [Meeting Room Booking Policy](#);
5. [Display Space and Bulletin Board Use Policy](#);
6. [Accessibility Policy](#);
7. [Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Policy](#); and,
8. [Taking Photos and Videos in the Library Policy](#).

## Statement Review

This position statement will be reviewed every four years in the first quarter of the second year of the term of the Board, or as required.

<b>Effective Date:</b> June 14, 2022	<b>Last Review Date:</b> May 9, 2017
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