

# Intellectual Freedom Policy

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## Purpose

Burlington Public Library (BPL) upholds the open exchange of information and ideas. BPL's collections, services, displays and programming must serve all parts of its community and respect the diversity of its citizens.

## Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual freedom is a core value at BPL and fundamental principle for public libraries. Intellectual freedom means supporting and facilitating the free exchange of information and ideas as a core tenant of a democratic society while respecting each individual's rights to privacy and choice.

Intellectual freedom is at the core of the library's mission, to preserve and promote universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information, and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment through our collections and services.

BPL is a resource where many points of view and modes of expression can be examined without hindrance. Few ideas and opinions have universal acceptance or condemnation in a pluralistic society. The use of language, either descriptive or expressive, can, stimulate controversy.

The Burlington Public Library Board endorses the statements of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations and of the Ontario Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Individual.

## Guiding Principles

- BPL is committed to equity and reconciliation, and strives to offer welcoming, inclusive collections, services and spaces while upholding the principles of freedom of expression and human rights. This commitment is also noted in BPL's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion policy as equity and intellectual freedom are mutually reinforcing.
- BPL will defend and advocate for everyone's privacy and dignity to decide what they want to read, view, listen to, or access.
- Burlington Public Library provides access to multiple viewpoints. This does not constitute endorsement of the viewpoint expressed in items in BPL's collections, programs, services, display spaces, room bookings by groups making use of these BPL facilities.
- BPL will meet its obligations under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code that guarantee everyone the fundamental freedoms of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication, within the limits prescribed by law.

## Requests for Reconsideration

- The content or manner of expressing ideas in material that fills the needs of some Library users may be considered offensive to other Library users. The Library recognizes the right of any individual or group to reject library material, programs or services for personal use but does not grant any individual or group the right to restrict the freedom of others.
- BPL cardholders who object to materials located in the collection, content in Library programs, display spaces, or on public computer, may be asked to complete a formal written request for reconsideration. Forms can be requested in branch from staff or online via Contact Us.
- Decisions made about requests for reconsideration will be communicated to the originators of the requests following completion of a formal staff review. The final decision on any challenge rests with the CEO.
- An annual report on challenges to Library materials is provided to the Library Board.

## Legislation

The 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 library recognizes and abides by all laws dictated at the federal, provincial or municipal level including the Criminal Code of Canada as well as the classifications assigned to films, television series and video games by the Canadian Home Video Rating System where applicable.

In the event that any portion of this Policy is inconsistent with relevant federal or provincial legislation, that portion and only that portion of the Policy shall have no application to the extent of that inconsistency. All other portions of the Policy shall continue in full force and effect.

## Related Statements

Burlington Public Library endorses the following intellectual freedom statements:

- Canadian Federation of Library Association (CFLA) Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries (<https://cfla-fcab.ca/en/guidelines-and-position-papers/statement-on-intellectual-freedom-and-libraries/>)
- Ontario Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual (<https://accessola.com/advocacy/ola-position-statements/> )

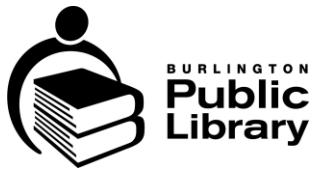
## References

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions - Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

Ottawa Public Library (2022) Intellectual Freedom Statement  
<https://bibliooottawalibrary.ca/en/intellectual-freedom>

Toronto Public Library, Intellectual Freedom Statement (2022)  
<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/terms-of-use/library-policies/intellectual-freedom-statement.jsp>

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- Associated Documents: Request for Reconsideration