

Policy 1.5

Intellectual Freedom

The Board affirms its support of the principles embodied in the Canadian Library Association Statement of Intellectual Freedom and Libraries adopted by the Association on September 27, 2015. The Statement is provided below:

The Canadian Library Association recognizes and values the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html> as the guarantor of the fundamental freedoms in Canada of conscience and religion; of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; of peaceful assembly; and of association.

The Canadian Library Association supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>, which include the interlocking freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In accordance with these principles, the Canadian Library Association affirms that all persons in Canada have a fundamental right, subject only to the Constitution and the law, to have access to the full range of knowledge, imagination, ideas and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly. Only the courts may abridge free expression rights in Canada.

The Canadian Library Association holds that libraries are a key institution in Canada for rendering expressive content accessible and affordable to all. Libraries are essential gateways for all persons living in Canada to advance themselves through literacy, lifelong learning, social engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandate and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them

Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Library employees, volunteers and employers as well as library governing entities have a core responsibility to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in the performance of their respective library roles.

**Approved by the Greater Victoria Public Library Board:
Reviewed and amended by the Planning & Policy Committee:**

**January 26, 2016
January 12, 2016**