

REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

OCTOBER 23, 2025

SUBJECT: Intellectual Freedom Policy Review

PURPOSE: For Approval

PREPARED BY: Senior Team

PRESENTED BY: Michael Ciccone, CEO

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Library Board approve the proposed revisions to the Library's *Intellectual Freedom Policy*.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this policy is to provide broad direction on access to intellectual content through services, collections and programs offered by London Public Library.

Intellectual Freedom is guaranteed as a basic democratic right by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and is defined as a universal right by the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

The Library believes that all people have the right to access expressions of knowledge, creative thought and intellectual activity. The Library supports, defends and promotes intellectual freedom and actively advocates in defense of the rights of library users to read, seek information, and express their views.

The current policy, a list of significant revisions, and the revised policy are appended.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval, Administration will update the Library's *Intellectual Freedom Policy* to incorporate revisions. As part of the Board Policy Revision Cycle, revisions to the policy will be submitted for approval again in October of 2028.

CURRENT POLICY

PURPOSE:

Intellectual Freedom is guaranteed as a basic democratic right by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and is defined as a universal right by the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. London Public Library (Library) believes that all people have the right to access expressions of knowledge, creative thought and intellectual activity. The Library supports, defends and promotes intellectual freedom and actively advocates in defense of the rights of library users to read, seek information, and express their views.

The purpose of this policy is to provide broad direction on the access to intellectual content through services, collections and programs offered by the Library.

SCOPE:

The Library will act in compliance with the Canadian *Copyright Act* and other laws governing intellectual property, and the *Criminal Code* of Canada and other legislation governing access to and communication of information, knowledge, opinion, creative thought and intellectual activity.

The Library also recognizes the right to privacy of the individual user. This is defined in the Library's *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy*.

DEFINITIONS:

The Library uses the definition of "Intellectual Freedom" from the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the Library that:

- Intellectual Freedom is a core value of public libraries;
- the Library endorses the *Ontario Library Association (OLA) Statement on Intellectual Rights*, the *Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA) Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries (2019)*, and the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom*;

- the Library will offer a range of choice for library users in the provision of collections and digital services;
- the Library will make its services, collections and resources equally accessible to all users and will not discriminate due to race, creed, gender, age or any other protected ground;
- the Library is committed to achieving a balance between Intellectual Freedom and supporting parents and guardians in their responsibility to monitor children's use of and access to Library materials and the Internet; and,
- the Library acts in compliance with federal and provincial legislation, including the Canadian *Copyright Act* and other laws governing intellectual property, the *Criminal Code* of Canada, and other legislation governing access to and communication of information, knowledge, opinion, creative thought and intellectual activity, such as the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*. The Library does not purchase or retain materials in contravention of the laws of Canada and/or the Province of Ontario.

INQUIRIES

- Board Chair
- CEO & Chief Librarian

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Language in PURPOSE moved to SCOPE

- Removed language outside the scope of the policy that is included in other policies (e.g. privacy, collections)
- Added an endorsement of *The CFLA Statement on Libraries and the Intellectual Freedom of Children & Youth*
- Removed the following from the Intellectual Freedom Policy and included it in the Collections Policy: *The Library will not purchase or retain materials in contravention of the laws of Canada and/or the Province of Ontario.*

REVISED POLICY

PURPOSE:

To provide broad direction on access to intellectual content through services, collections and programs offered by London Public Library.

SCOPE:

Intellectual Freedom is guaranteed as a basic democratic right by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and is defined as a universal right by the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

London Public Library (Library) believes that all people have the right to access expressions of knowledge, creative thought and intellectual activity. The Library supports, defends and promotes intellectual freedom and actively advocates in defense of the rights of library users to read, seek information, and express their views.

DEFINITIONS:

The Library endorses the definition of “Intellectual Freedom” from the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the Library that Intellectual Freedom is a core value of public libraries. As such, the Library endorses:

- *The Ontario Library Association (OLA) Statement on Intellectual Rights;*
- *The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries;*
- *The CFLA Statement on Libraries and the Intellectual Freedom of Children & Youth, and*
- *The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom;*

In practice, the Library will:

- Make its services, programs, collections and resources equally accessible to all users and will not discriminate due to race, creed, gender, age or any other protected ground;

- Commit to achieving a balance between Intellectual Freedom and supporting parents and guardians in their responsibility to monitor children's use of and access to Library materials and the Internet, and
- Acts in compliance with federal and provincial legislation, including the Canadian *Copyright Act* and other laws governing intellectual property, the *Criminal Code* of Canada, and other legislation governing access to and communication of information, knowledge, opinion, creative thought and intellectual activity, such as the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

INQUIRIES

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