

Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual Freedom at Saskatoon Public Library

One of Saskatoon Public Library's core values is intellectual freedom. **We support open and unrestricted access to information, and protect individual rights to privacy and choice without fear of censorship or discrimination.**

What Is Intellectual Freedom?

It is your right to read, write, listen to and talk about your beliefs and opinions. At SPL, we support intellectual freedom as the foundation for an informed, democratic society. We are not alone:

- The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* protects intellectual freedom. It declares that all Canadians have the right to "freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression."
- "Freedom of expression is a fundamental right of all Canadians, and freedom to read is part of that precious heritage.... Censorship does not protect society; it smothers creativity and precludes open debate of controversial issues" (Book and Periodical Council *Position Statement on Freedom of Expression and Freedom to Read*).
- "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. ...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" (Canadian Federation of Library Associations *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries*). See Appendix A for the organization's full statement.

Our Collection

Saskatoon is diverse and so is our collection.

At SPL, we ensure that our collection contains the widest possible variety of content, including materials that some will find unpopular or unacceptable. Materials of a controversial nature are not censored or restricted.

We serve the interests and needs of people of varied economic, social, educational and cultural backgrounds, and of differing religious and political affiliations. Our selection criteria include:

- Literary and artistic merit.
- Authenticity and honesty of presentation.
- Usefulness for the intended audience.

Our materials are "open access," meaning that they are equally available to all members of the community.

Kids & Borrowing

Parents and guardians are the best judges of what kids should and should not do. We encourage you to have discussions with your children about what is appropriate for them to read, listen, view and play.

Hate Speech

Our position on intellectual freedom does not apply to the expression or dissemination of views that promote and/or incite hatred. Such communications are prohibited at SPL, including our online presence. Canadian courts determine what constitutes hate speech.

Computers & the Internet

We provide unfiltered internet access in support of intellectual freedom, which means we do not block any websites. However, users must comply with our *Terms of Use for Computers & Wi-Fi*.

Challenging Materials

We value your opinions. If there is a book, magazine, DVD or video game in our collection that you do not like, share your concerns with us. You can talk to an employee or submit a written *Request for Reconsideration of Library Material* form. Ask for the form at any service desk. All issues will be explored and responded to.

Suggesting Materials

Is something missing? If you know of valuable materials that would contribute to the Library's collection of viewpoints, let us know by suggesting a title for purchase here:

<https://saskatoonlibrary.ca/services/request-a-title/>

Intellectual Freedom Resources

- Freedom to Read: <https://www.freedomtoread.ca>
- Canadian Federation of Library Associations: <http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/home-page>
- American Library Association: <http://www.ala.org>
- International Federation of Library Associations: <https://www.ifla.org>
- Banned Books Week: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/banned>

Appendices

- Appendix A: *Canadian Federation of Library Associations Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries*

Appendix A

Canadian Federation of Library Associations

Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 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 Federation of Library Associations 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 Federation of Library Associations affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations 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 mandates 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 foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination

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.

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