

Policy Name:	Intellectual Freedom	Policy #:	A3
Version History: Approval Feb 20, 1987; Revised Sept 16, 2010; Feb 20, 2020			

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that collections, services, displays and programming serve all parts of the community and respect the diversity of its citizens, to support the free access to ideas, promote public information, and foster enlightenment.

Policy Statement

The Port Moody Public Library (PMPL) supports intellectual curiosity and enquiry, and supports intellectual freedom as the prerequisite for an informed, democratic society as part of its core values. PMPL defends the right of library users to “freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression” as embodied in section 2(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. PMPL endorses the statements on intellectual freedom made by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (Appendix 1) and the British Columbia Library Association (Appendix 2).

PMPL’s support for Intellectual Freedom does not apply to the expression or dissemination of views that promote and/or incite hatred as defined by the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Such communications are prohibited on library premises and may result in a person’s immediate expulsion from the premises and referral of the matter to law enforcement services.

The selection of an item for the collection does not constitute endorsement of the viewpoint expressed in that item. Room bookings or community displays do not constitute endorsement of viewpoints expressed by groups making use of PMPL facilities.

PMPL respects parents’ right and responsibility to determine their own child’s access to library materials and services.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Canadian Federation of Library Association's *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries*, Approval History: June 27, 1974. Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; September 27, 2015. Reviewed 2018.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations recognizes and values the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms 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 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 of 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, procedure 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 roles.

Appendix 2: British Columbia Library Association's *Statement on Intellectual Freedom*

1. It is in the interest for libraries and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expression, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.
2. It would conflict with the public interest for libraries to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as the sole standard for determining what books and other materials should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for libraries or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on the basis of the personal history or political affiliation of the author.
4. There is no place in British Columbia for extra-legal efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of the writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept any book with the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of library administrators and librarians, as guardians of the peoples' freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.
7. It is the responsibility of libraries and librarians to give full meaning to intellectual freedom by providing books and other materials that enrich the quality of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, librarians can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.
8. Non-book materials should be judged by the same criteria as books.