

Policy 4500

Reconsideration of Library Materials	
Approved	June 9, 2005; June 9, 2015; May 25, 2023
Most Recent Review	May 2023

Policy Statement

A vital society encourages members of its community to actively participate in an open exchange of ideas and opinions. Material selectors consequently strive to provide the widest possible range of resources within Okotoks Public Library collections. The Okotoks Public Library affirms the *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries (2019)* by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (attached). If a library user feels strongly that any type of material is unsuitable for the library, a request for reconsideration may be submitted.

Purpose/Rationale

Certain materials are controversial and any given item may offend some library users. When a library user complains or expresses concerns about a specific title or type of material in the collection or weeded from the collection, the Library needs to have a defined process for addressing the concerns.

Procedure

1. Any individual or group that resides in Okotoks and/or Foothills County seeking the reconsideration of an item in the Library's collections must submit a completed Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form to the Library Director.
2. Upon receipt of the form, the Director will consult with Library staff, with the person submitting the request if needed, and with other relevant sources that may provide useful information in considering the request (e.g. book reviews, circulation/use statistics, author's reputation, awards).
3. The Director will make a timely decision regarding the request, and will provide a brief written explanation for the decision.
4. The material in question will remain active in the collection during the review process.
5. Once a decision has been made, materials will not be eligible for reconsideration for three (3) years.
6. Concerns about digital content provided by third-party vendors cannot be addressed by the Library directly but may be passed on to the third-party vendor and/or taken into consideration in determining whether to continue using the vendor.

Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries (2019)

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 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.