

## Open Access and Intellectual Freedom Policy

### **Intent**

All people have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity and to express their thoughts publicly. The Palliser Regional Library affirms its commitment to the fundamental rights of intellectual freedom, the freedom to read and freedom of the press, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Public Library's mandate is to provide all types of informational and recreational material for all segments of the community. At the same time, the Palliser Regional Library acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians to make and/or influence choices on behalf of their minor children regarding what they deem to be suitable materials, services and programs.

### **Policy**

1. Except as prohibited by law:
  - All library materials, and all materials accessed through the library will be available to all patrons regardless of age.
  - Children and young adults will be given equal rights with adults and may borrow all circulation materials.
  - The library will not prevent patrons from using any material that they require.
2. The library will provide qualified staff to acquire materials and to assist anyone wishing to use those materials.

The Palliser Regional Library therefore declares its acceptance of the following propositions:

- 1) That the provision of library service to the public is based upon the right of the citizen, under the protection of and within the law.
- 2) That individuals have the right to make judgements regarding their choice of library materials, services and programs for their own use in accordance with their personal standards.
- 3) That individuals have the freedom to access materials, services and programs which include information, ideas or interpretations that may be unconventional or unpopular.
- 4) That freedom of expression includes freedom for a creator of a work to depict what is ugly, shocking and unedifying in life.
- 5) That free traffic in ideas and opinions is essential to the health and growth of a free society and that the freedom to read, listen and view is fundamental to such free traffic.
- 6) That it is the responsibility of libraries to maintain the right of intellectual freedom and to implement it consistently in the selection of materials and provision of services and programs.

- 7) That it is therefore part of the library's service to its public to resist any attempt by any individual or group within the community it serves to restrict or regulate access to library materials, services or programs. If an individual strongly objects to a particular item, he/she can submit a written materials challenge without fear of reprisal.
- 8) That it is equally part of the library's responsibility to its public to ensure that its selection of material is not unduly influenced by the personal opinions of the selectors, but determined by availability and the application of generally accepted standards of accuracy, style, and presentation.

### **Children's Rights**

The Palliser Regional Library will not act in place of parents or guardians to limit access to the collection, services or programs.

The Palliser Regional Library maintains that children in Public Libraries have the right to:

- Intellectual Freedom
- Equal access to the full range of services and materials available to other users.
- Materials, services and programs designed and developed to meet their needs.
- The benefits of funding for collections and services related to population, use and local community needs.
- A library environment that complements their physical and developmental stages.
- Trained staff knowledgeable in children's services.
- Welcoming, respectful, supportive service from birth through the transition to adult user.
- Library policies that respect the needs of the child.