

Intellectual Freedom Policy

Intellectual freedom is the right of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment. Intellectual freedom is one of the core values of the library profession; it promotes access to information and guides the defense against censorship.

The library provides an impartial environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together with the universe of ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions. The library board affirms the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to View, and Freedom to Read policy statements in support of acquiring and managing collections.

The Freedom to Read Statement asserts, "The freedom to read is essential to our democracy." In a democratic society, individuals must be sufficiently knowledgeable to make informed decisions. Libraries provide their users with necessary information through a wide selection of materials from varying points of view. It is essential that library resources remain free to use for all, regardless of age. The Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations lay out rationales for these principles of intellectual freedom. Incorporating the tenets of intellectual freedom foundational documents (such as the First Amendment, the Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read Statement) into the selection policy provides support for intellectual freedom as a philosophy underlying the policy. Strong selection policies include a statement of support for intellectual freedom. Intellectual freedom policy statements are often attached to selection policies.

The Board of Directors of the Ford City Public Library affirms its belief in the following basic policies which govern the selection and availability of materials in this library: As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected are chosen for values of interest, information, and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case will library materials be excluded because of the race or nationality or the social, sexual orientation, political, or religious views of the author.

The Library strives to provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times. No library materials should be proscribed or removed from the library because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. The Library does not necessarily endorse every idea or presentation contained in the materials it makes available. It would conflict with the public interest for the Board of Directors or the staff of the library to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as the sole standard for determining what materials should be made available by the library. It is contrary to the public interest to

require a reader to accept with any book or other item the prejudgment of a label characterizing that item or its author as subversive or dangerous.

Attempts to censor library materials will be met by the Library's maintenance of its responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment. The Ford City Public Library cooperates with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement of free expression and free access to ideas.