INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to affirm Vaughan Public Libraries' (VPL) commitment to intellectual freedom and to provide a framework for fostering intellectual freedom through access to services, collections, and programs.

APPLICATION

This policy serves as a guiding framework that informs VPL's internal, external, and virtual services, including but not limited to collections, programs, displays, exhibits, use of meeting rooms, technology, and communications and marketing.

Collections - VPL's Intellectual Freedom Policy applies to all materials for all ages, in a variety of formats both print and digital, including materials that are purchased, streamed, or shared from or with other institutions. VPL recognizes the right of any individual to object to using certain library materials for personal use, however VPL does not accord to an individual the right to restrict freedom of others to make use of that same material (see Collection Policy).

Programs – VPL's sponsored programs including those offered by staff, paid presenters, collaborators or partners are also governed by the principles of Intellectual Freedom. No customer shall disrupt the experience of another customer at a VPL sponsored program. (see Code of Conduct).

Displays and Exhibits - Display spaces and their contents, including displays of library materials, art and other exhibits, and community information on bulletin boards are intended to celebrate the culture and heritage of the community and support the learning and leisure needs of a diverse community. Selection of exhibits does not constitute endorsement by VPL of either content or viewpoint; rather it reflects the commitment to Intellectual Freedom and the right to express differing opinions and experiences (see Exhibits and Displays Policy).

Technology – Use of public computers, technology, and networks, including legal uses of public computers, Creation Space equipment, digital devices, VPL's Wi-Fi network, and other services provided by VPL, comply with the principles of Intellectual Freedom (see Internet Policy).

Meeting Rooms – VPL allows for the use of meeting rooms and bookable spaces, including non-commercial and commercial rentals of spaces owned or operated by VPL, by organizations and individuals whose conduct supports the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code and complies with VPL's Code of Conduct. Rental or permission to use VPL facilities does not imply VPL endorsement of the aims, policies or activities of any group or individual (see Operational Policy).

Communication and Marketing – VPL's use of communication and marketing channels, including VPL's website, social media and print publications reflect VPL's commitment to Intellectual Freedom. Use of hosting sites does not imply endorsement by VPL of the hosting company's opinions, policies, or activities.

Any expression or dissemination of views that promote and/or incite hatred, as outlined in the Criminal Code of Canada, are prohibited at VPL. Only Canadian courts can determine what constitutes hate speech.

STATEMENT ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

VPL's commitment to intellectual freedom aligns with VPL's vision, mission, and values with Intellectual Freedom being one of VPL's core values. VPL supports all expressions of knowledge and intellectual creativity, providing access to a wide variety of information sources and ideas. VPL supports the right of individuals to access information, express their thoughts, and form opinions without censorship or interference.

VPL will defend and advocate for unfettered access to Library resources and services. Customers are responsible for what they choose to read, view, listen to or attend, and have a right to privacy about these choices. Intellectual freedom also means customers will find ideas and content that they may consider offensive, unacceptable, or harmful. The inclusion of content within VPL's services does not indicate endorsement by VPL, the Vaughan Public Library Board (VPLB), or VPL employees.

VPL will meet its obligations under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code that guarantee everyone the fundamental freedoms of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, within the limits prescribed by law.

The VPLB endorses the statements of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries as well as the Ontario Library Association's Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual.

ROLE OF PARENTS AND LEGAL GUARDIANS FOR CHILDREN

Children are entitled to borrowing privileges and have ready access to most materials and services provided by VPL. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for monitoring, limiting, and guiding the use of VPL services by their children. No item will be excluded from the collection solely because it may come into the possession of a child and VPL services are not restricted by the possibility that children may access an item or service that their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may consider inappropriate.

REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION

VPL welcomes open discussions about intellectual freedom. VPL recognizes the right of any individual to object to using certain library materials for personal use and to express opposition to an author, presenter, performer, or creator's' ideas or to their creative expression in items selected and programs or services delivered by VPL. While individuals have the right to reject items or services for themselves, VPL does not accord to any individual the right to restrict the freedom of others to make use of that same material or service.

VPL customers who object to a specific item in the collection or service may submit a Request for Reconsideration via the VPL website. Customer privacy and confidentiality will be respected through the Request for Reconsideration process (see Privacy Statement). Decisions will be communicated to the originator of the request following completion of a formal staff review. Final decisions regarding Requests for Reconsideration rest with the CEO.