

Supporting age-appropriate access in public libraries

Overview

Alberta's government is undertaking further work to support age-appropriate access to library materials that contain explicit visual content.

These measures are focused on ensuring children are not exposed to explicit visual depictions of sexual acts in shared public spaces, while maintaining access to a wide range of library materials for all users.

What is being proposed

Alberta's government is considering regulatory changes that would introduce safeguards for minors in public libraries, including those housed in schools.

Potential measures include:

- Controlled access to explicit materials through library staff
- Physical separation of materials with graphic visual depictions of sexual acts
- Parental approval requirements for independent borrowing privileges for children aged 15 and under
- Adults will continue to have full access to library collections
- Materials will remain in libraries and will not be removed

No book bans

Government is **not banning books**.

- No materials are being targeted for removal
- No authors or titles are being prohibited
- Libraries will continue to offer diverse collections

How this will be implemented

Final requirements are definitions will be confirmed in the coming weeks through regulation.

- Changes will be introduced through future regulations
- Ministerial guidelines will provide additional clarity to library boards
- Libraries will have time to review collections and implement changes

Potential measures will focus on explicit visual depictions of sexual acts and are about age-appropriate access controls and not the removal of materials.



Why this work is being done

Public libraries are **shared public spaces** that serve both children and adults.

Government has a responsibility to ensure that:

- Appropriate safeguards exist for minors
- Parents have confidence in how materials are accessed
- There is consistency across public institutions, including schools and public libraries

These responsibilities inform an approach that balances:

- Protecting children
- Maintaining access to information
- Respecting the role of libraries
- Recognizing parents' role in decisions about their children's access to materials

What materials are in scope

While details are still to be finalized, any potential measures will be focused on a specific and limited category of content: materials that contain explicit visual depictions of sexual acts.

They are not intended to affect the vast majority of library materials, including written works, educational or health-related resources, or content that does not contain explicit visual imagery.

A thoughtful and collaborative approach

Alberta's government is taking a measured and thoughtful approach to this work.

This includes working with the library sector, engaging experts, and drawing on research to ensure that any measures are practical, clear, and effective.

The goal is to develop guidance that helps libraries prevent children from accessing explicit visual content, while ensuring these materials remain available to adults.

More information to come

Details of these measures are still being finalized and will be introduced through regulation in the coming weeks.

As this work progresses, additional information, guidance, and updates will be made available to support library boards and inform Albertans.