

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Library Service

CODE OF CONDUCT IN LIBRARIES

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1. Policy Statement

The Royal Borough Library staff and customers have the right to a non-abusive, safe and friendly environment. We have an Acceptable Behaviour policy to protect ALL staff and customers while on Library premises or business. It is important that senior staff know what is happening on Library premises and are informed about all incidents, however minor, by staff and customers.

This policy is run in tandem with the Byelaws and Libraries Internet Usage Policy and supports it. It is also supported by Corporate policies concerning staff welfare and conduct.

2. Security

The Service is committed to taking any measures appropriate to improve the safety of its premises and environments. In particular the Service will:

- Ensure that staff and visitors to non-public areas wear identification
- Ensure that means of calling for assistance are available in all vulnerable areas, e.g. panic buttons and that these are regularly maintained and tested, and staff trained in their use and the expected response.
- Make available personal alarms to all staff who are required to go into vulnerable areas, in particular those staff required to provide services outside the Library premises, e.g. Home Library Service.
- Ensure staff and public security will be considered as a high priority when any alterations are made to premises and internal design.

3. Staff duties

It is the responsibility of staff to ensure the acceptable behaviour of the public and colleagues.

The Royal Borough regards harassing or victimising someone for any reason (for instance because of their race, sex or disability) or inciting or condoning such acts by others to be gross misconduct. Similarly, serious physical or verbal abuse or bullying towards fellow employees, clients or members of the public is regarded in the same way.



4. Reporting Incidents involving members of the public

Any incidents that customers or staff believe to be unacceptable should be reported to the senior in charge at the time. Incidents will be recorded appropriately.

The Accident and incident Reporting System (AIRS) will be completed by staff in cases of:

- Any incident which results in you fearing for your personal safety, the safety of others and/or the security of library property
- Threatening behaviour towards staff or members of the public
- Vandalism
- Physical attacks on staff or members of the public
- All cases of injury to staff or public
- Any member of the public who is asked to leave Library premises
- Theft – council or personal
- Racial abuse – a racial incident is defined as “any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”

The purpose of this system is:

1. To maintain an accurate record of incidents and witnesses in case any future action or claim for compensation is required.
2. For senior staff to monitor staff and building security and take action where there is felt to be an unreasonable risk.
3. For senior staff to monitor any health and safety issues and take action to ensure that a safe environment is provided for staff and public.

5. Support for the public

The senior member of staff in charge will make sure that appropriate support is offered in the event of an incident affecting a member of the public. This will include the recording of the incident, and the offer of contacting, or offering facilities to contact, the police. There are counselling services offered within the borough that are available to members of the public – details can be found using the Kensington and Chelsea online A – Z services; staff are able to access counselling through the Workplace Options Programme.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

6. Exclusions

The Service is committed to taking every step possible to minimise unacceptable behaviour, and in serious or persistent cases the Director of Libraries and Archive Services may exclude a member of the public from Library premises or services. Such exclusions are facilitated by the gathering of evidence at the time of the incident (and subsequently), and by the identification of witnesses, both staff and customers. We will keep a record of all such incidents.

In addition to long-term exclusions, the senior in charge is entitled to ask any individual to leave Library premises whenever the byelaws have been broken. By law, any individual refusing to leave in such circumstances can be removed by the police.

7. Information sharing

The Service will make every effort to ensure that all senior staff are provided with as much information as is available about violent or abusive customers, including those individuals who have been formally excluded from Library premises and facilities.

Forms for public comments, complaints and praise are available at all service points and online through the Council's website. All correspondence with the public will follow the Council's complaint procedure.

Each letter will state how long a copy will be kept for.

8. Legislation

Section 4A for 1986 Public Order Act makes it an offence to cause intentional harassment, alarm or distress.

Section 5 of the 1986 Public Order Act makes it an offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour or disorderly behaviour, within the hearing or sight of a person to whom it is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress, even when no intent is involved.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (part 5.2) makes it an offence where a person pursues a course of conduct causing harassment or causing another to fear that violence will be used against them.

Information Updated April 2018