

# Library Operations Policy

## 1 Purpose

This policy details the library service expectations, lending conditions, membership requirements, information services, public internet access, use of facilities and responsibilities of library customers.

## 2 Policy

### 2.1 Background

Public libraries in NSW operate under the *Library Act 1939*, the *Library Regulation 2018* and the *Local Government Act 1993*. This policy supports the administration of the provisions of the *Library Regulation 2018* Part 2, Local Libraries; and Part 3, Use of libraries and library books.

The development of this policy has been guided by the Australian Library and Information Association's core values detailed in section 12.5 of this document.

### 2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Library Operations Policy are to:

1. Detail library membership options and requirements.
2. Detail the lending conditions that apply to library collections.
3. Outline the service delivery standards and requirements of the library, including its information services, public computers and internet.
4. Detail the responsibilities of library customers in using the library services and facilities.
5. Provide details on applicable 'local rules' in relation to the provisions of the *Library Regulation 2018*.

## 3 What can customers expect from the library service

Library customers can expect:

1. Prompt, courteous and efficient service by approachable and non-judgemental staff.
2. A welcoming and safe environment.
3. Free and equal access to resources and services to all individuals and groups within the community, in accordance with the NSW *Library Act 1939*.
4. A range of library resources and services at each library and online tailored to the needs of the community.
5. Library information resources which are relevant and up-to-date.
6. Access to items from lending collections regardless of the branch at which the item is located.
7. Access to a range of information technologies, including public computers, the internet and electronic resources.
8. Access to staff with professional expertise and knowledge.
9. Provision of assistance to people who need adaptive technology and different media to enable them to use the full range of library services and facilities.

10. Confidentiality in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)* and the Council's *Privacy Management Plan*.
11. To have suggestions and comments about the library service welcomed.

#### 4 What Council expects from customers when using the library service

It is expected that library customers will observe the following requirements:

1. Treat fellow customers and library staff and volunteers with respect and courtesy (unsociable behaviour, including excessive noise, intoxication, harassing or threatening staff or customers, is not acceptable).
2. Behave in a manner, which does not disturb other people using the library nor has the potential to damage equipment, facilities or library resources.
3. Return library items on time, so that others may have a chance to borrow them.
4. Take care of the items you have borrowed, preventing damage or loss.
5. Pay for any fees or charges accrued by library membership accounts.
6. Keep library membership cards in a secure place and not lend them to other people.
7. Use the library premises, computers, services or resources for legal and legitimate purposes only.
8. Seek prior agreement from the Service Leader Libraries to sell for profit, distribute leaflets, undertake surveys, circulate petitions or collect for charity within the library.
9. Supervise children in your care in the library.
10. Leave pets outside the library. Only assistance animals required by disabled persons are permitted on the premises.
11. Leave the library and follow staff instructions when requested at closing time and during emergency procedures.
12. Meet acceptable levels of personal hygiene or dress, in the interests of health and safety and the interests of other customers using library facilities.
13. Inform library staff promptly of any concerns relating to the behaviour of other customers.
14. Keep personal items with you at all times as the Library is not responsible for the security of personal belongings.
15. When using personal electronic devices only use power points provided for this purpose and ensure that power cords do not create a trip or other hazard.
16. Allow bags or property to be inspected by staff as requested when leaving the library.
17. Understand that library services, programs, activities and events limit our ability to always provide quiet spaces.

#### 5 Exclusion

Customers who do not comply with the Customer expectations with this policy may be asked to leave the library or may be refused access to the library buildings by any library staff member.

1. The direction to leave may be for a cooling off period, and may not necessarily result in exclusion from the library for a period other than for the cooling off period.
2. Customers who are asked to leave the library may be excluded from the library for a period of time as determined by the General Manager and/or Service Leader Libraries. Defined periods of exclusion have been determined for the following breaches:
3. The usual period of exclusion for a person asked to leave the Library will be two (2) months. The delegate determining the exclusion will consider:
  - a) the nature and severity of the breach; and

- b) whether the breach is a first or repeat occurrence.
4. Where the breach is a repeat occurrence and/or the nature and severity of the breach is deemed to warrant a longer period of exclusion, the period of exclusion may be up to one (1) year.
5. The Service Leader Libraries is delegated to determine a period of exclusion from library premises for periods of up to one (1) year and to sign letters of exclusion for periods up to (1) year.
6. Where a person has been excluded for a period of one year, the exclusion may be reviewed and lifted if a delegated senior officer of Council, not involved in the original decision, is satisfied that such action is warranted.
7. The General Manager may extend a period of exclusion for a further period or determine a period of exclusion, including if necessary a lifetime ban. Such determinations are made on a case by case basis, taking into account the nature and severity of the breach, the safety and security of staff and volunteers, library customers, the collections and/or facilities.
8. The Council/Library has the authority to take this action under Section 17 (1) of the *Library Regulation 2018*, which states:
  - a) A library staff member may direct any person to leave the library and not to re-enter the library for such period as the staff member directs, if the staff member is of the opinion that:
    - i. the person has contravened any provision of this Part, or
    - ii. the person's condition, conduct, dress or manner is likely to give offence to any person in the library or to interfere with any other person's use of the library.
9. The authority to issue a warning and to direct a person to leave Library premises is delegated to all Library staff.
10. Where a person has been excluded from the library for a breach of the *Library Regulation 2018* or this policy, a letter of exclusion, signed by the delegate, will be delivered to the person, either by post, in person or where necessary by email.

## 6 Library Membership

Membership to the library is free, in accordance with the requirements of the *Library Act 1939*.

### 6.1 Membership categories

The library offers several different categories of membership and requires formal identification to join the library.

1. **Adults** – Permanent residents and ratepayers of Coffs Harbour City can join free of charge.
2. **Minors (Juniors)** – Persons under eighteen (18) years of age can also become members (including infants), however they must have permission of a parent or legal guardian. The parent or guardian should accompany the child or young adult to the library and produce current identification when signing the responsibility section of the membership application.
3. **Independent Minors** – Minors who are sixteen (16) years and over and who are living independently can join the library. Current identification showing proof of age and address is required.
4. **Outside Students** – Students who attend City educational institutions (eg. CHEC) but who permanently reside outside the City area can join for the current year of enrolment

free of charge. Proof of enrolment must be produced, such as a student card. Students should join as a reciprocal borrower should they meet the requirements detailed below.

5. **Reciprocal Borrowers** – Visitors and non-residents who are current members of their local public library (in Australia) may join as a reciprocal borrower. This type of membership is free, however a current membership card from their home library is required, and staff are required to contact the home library to check that the membership is still valid.
6. **Organisations** – Local organisations (e.g. pre-schools) can join the library, however written approval from the organisation's executive on letterhead is required, nominating who the card holder will be.
7. **Visitors & Non-Residents** (who are not members of their local public library) – Visitors to the City and all those who do not fit into the above categories may also join. A refundable deposit is required for membership to this category.

## 6.2 Accepted Forms of Identification for Proof of Residence

Current identification showing the current address must be produced. Accepted forms of documentation are listed below:

1. Drivers licence.
2. Health care concession card.
3. Lease agreement.
4. Council rates notice.
5. Electoral enrolment card.
6. Utility account notice (eg. telco or electricity account) along with a credit card or Medicare card.

## 7 Lending Conditions

### 7.1 Loan period

1. The standard loan period is four (4) weeks.
2. One (1) loan extension (renewal) is allowed only (except if an item is reserved for another member) - for another four (4) weeks.
3. Heavily reserved items will have a reduced loan period of two (2) weeks.
4. Requests for loan extensions can be made by phone, email or in person at any branch library. Members can also renew their loans online via My Account.
5. Some library collections are not for loan, such as Reference and Local Studies. The materials in these collections are for use within the library only.
6. The loan period for special collections or materials may vary from the standard period as determined by the Service Leader Libraries.

### 7.2 Loan limit

1. Overall borrowing is limited to thirty (30) items on-loan per borrower.
2. In response to the need to balance demand and availability, loan limits for general and special collections or materials may vary from the standard policy as determined by the Service Leader Libraries.
3. Visitor members (not Reciprocal Borrowers) are restricted to a maximum of three (3) items on loan at a time.

### 7.3 Reservations

1. Library members may reserve lending material at any branch library free of charge and can choose to collect the reserved item at any branch library.
2. The number of concurrent reservations allowed per member will be set by the Service Leader Libraries taking into consideration issues such as shelf space and borrowing limits.
3. A library notice is sent to advise members when a reservation is ready to collect. Uncollected reservations are returned to the collection for others to borrow when the hold period expires.

### 7.4 Library Cards

1. For efficiency the Library prefers members to use their library card to borrow material and to access printing or copying services.
2. Library staff will look up a member's details if they do not have their card with them – current photo identification is required. The person using a computer booking must be the same card holder booked in for the session.
3. The borrower named on the membership card, or their guarantor, is responsible for losses and/or damage to library material borrowed on that card.
4. A fee is charged for the replacement of any membership card which has been lost, stolen or damaged.

### 7.5 Overdue and Lost / Damaged Items

1. All borrowing privileges will be suspended if any items are overdue. Overdue items cannot be renewed and must be returned to the library.
2. Library notices will be sent to members to remind members of overdue loans and request their return. Invoices are also sent for non-returned and lost material for the replacement costs of the material.
3. Charges also apply for the replacement of items lost or damaged by a borrower.
4. Damaged items will be retained by the library for auditing purposes. Requests to keep damaged items which have been paid for may be granted by the Service Leader Libraries.
5. Borrowing privileges will also be suspended if accounts for fines, or lost or damaged items remain unpaid.

### 7.6 Fees, Charges and Fines

1. *The Local Government Act 1993* provides for Council to apply fees and charges as resolved by Council annually.
2. Borrowers must pay for items which are non-returned, lost or damaged.
3. The replacement charge consists of the original purchase price or value and an item processing fee.
4. The library does not charge overdue fines.

### 7.7 Responsibility for Minors

1. Responsibility for losses or damage incurred by members under eighteen years of age is assumed by the parent or guardian. This acceptance of responsibility is indicated by the parent's or guardian's signed declaration on the membership application form.
2. Parents (or guardians) are responsible for the supervision of their children's reading matter and Internet access.

## 8 Reference and Information Services

The library will:

1. Provide assistance and instruction to help library customers locate library resources and to use the library's catalogue, digital services and electronic resources.
2. Provide access to library materials in the wider library network via inter-library loan.
3. Offer referrals to appropriate special collections or organisations.

Fees and charges may apply:

4. Reference services are provided free to all library customers, however extended research enquiries may attract a fee.
5. Printing or photocopied information provided to customers may attract a charge (cost per page).
6. Inter-library loans will be provided on a cost reimbursement basis for items obtained from fee charging libraries and also include an administrative Request Placement charge.

## 9 Use of Public Access Internet and Computers

1. The library makes the internet accessible in accordance with the Library Core Values outlined in Section 12.5.
2. The internet, a global electronic network of networks, provides users with a massive and varied amount of information resources beyond the library's onsite collection. Information on the internet may be reliable and current or it may be inaccurate, out-of-date or unavailable.
3. The library does not monitor and has no control over the information accessible via the internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Internet users need to be good information consumers, questioning the validity of the information. Library staff can offer useful advice in this area.
4. The library respects users' rights to privacy. However the library will comply with law enforcement agencies that issue warrants to inspect our electronic systems and logs.
5. Library customers use the internet at their own discretion. The library does not censor access to material and does not protect internet users from information or content they may find individually offensive. As with other library materials, restriction of a child's access to the internet is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian. However, the library reserves the right to cancel a user's access to the internet should offensive or illegal content be viewed in what is a public area.
6. Library staff will assist with internet use as time permits, but cannot offer personal individual tuition on computer use. Email can be accessed by internet users with web-based email accounts only. Internet users must not damage or alter the setup of computers used to access the internet, nor are they to knowingly install any software, programs or plug-ins onto library computers.
7. Security cannot be guaranteed in an electronic environment and therefore internet users are warned that all communications and transactions are vulnerable to unauthorised use. The library does not assume any responsibility for damages arising from a user's use of our public internet access services.
8. Bookings are required to use the library's public access computers. The library will apply time limits to use public access computers and public internet services, including wireless internet (wifi), in order to provide equitable access to these limited resources. Internet users who arrive (login) 10 minutes or more late will forfeit their booking to the next person waiting.

9. Users of the library's public access computers need to be considerate to others in sharing the facilities, respect their rights and privacy and keep noise to a minimum.
10. Use of mobile phones should be kept to a minimum and not disturb other customers.
11. Public access computers may be used by two people while their behaviour is not disruptive. Customers must only use their own library membership/login to access computers.
12. Internet access at the library is free to the community. Files are to be saved to removable disks/drives only or be printed out. The library charges for printing. All electronic files and removable disks/drives are automatically checked for computer viruses by anti-virus software.
13. Internet users who do not comply with this policy may have their session terminated or be denied future access to the service.

## 10 Online Rating and Reviews

### 10.1 General Conditions for Reviews

Library customers can rate and review items listed in the library's online catalogue (i.e. add book reviews).

1. If approved, reviews will be published showing the reviewer's first name and the date of review - no other personal information will be displayed.
2. The recommended length is between 10 to 150 words. The best reviews include not only whether the reader liked or disliked an item, but also why.
3. Reviews must be the work of the reviewer not a copy of someone else's review.
4. Reviews must relate specifically to the item being reviewed, opinions on general topics are not accepted.
5. It also expected that the reviewer has read the material (or viewed or listened to it, depending on the medium).

### 10.2 Prohibited conduct and content for Reviews

The following non-exhaustive list details the kinds of conduct or content that is prohibited:

1. Content that would violate, or would facilitate the violation of, any applicable law, regulation, or Council or library rules or policies.
2. Content that is unlawful, libellous, defamatory, obscene, pornographic, indecent, lewd, harassing, threatening, harmful, invasive of privacy or publicity rights, abusive, inflammatory, or otherwise objectionable - including profanity or spiteful remarks.
3. Content that infringes the intellectual property rights or other proprietary rights of others, e.g.. reproducing material protected by copyright without permission.
4. Use of the service for commercial purposes such as advertising, promotion, or solicitation.
5. Comments on other reviews or features visible on the page.
6. Notification that our catalogue has typos in it. For information about a specific problem, please contact staff directly.
7. Single-word reviews. Readers want to know why a reviewer liked or disliked the item.
8. Comments focusing solely on the author or creator.
9. No spoilers! Please don't reveal crucial plot elements.
10. Phone numbers, mail, email, or web addresses, or domain names.

### 10.3 Management of ratings and reviews

Any review in violation of this policy may not be posted (published) or may be removed from the library website or online catalogue at any time.

## 11 Food and Drink

The Library aims to create an inviting, comfortable and safe environment for library customers while protecting significant library material and equipment from potential damage.

### 11.1 Drinks

Non-alcoholic beverages in spill-proof or covered containers are permitted (such as covered coffee cups, soft drink cans and water bottles).

### 11.2 Food

Snacks are permitted (such as commercially wrapped bars and biscuits) but hot food is not permitted.

### 11.3 Prohibited Areas

No food or drink is allowed in the Local Studies collection or to be consumed near Local Studies material.

### 11.4 General Conditions

1. Please act responsibly when consuming food and drink in the library and to be considerate of other library customers.
2. Please dispose of your rubbish in the bins provided and report any spills to library staff.
3. Library staff will use their discretion in determining whether food and drink are suitable to be consumed in the library. Customers will be asked to remove food or drink if it is considered to be a problem.

### 11.5 Children

Customers are responsible for monitoring the consumption of food and drink by children under their supervision.

### 11.6 Library Activities and Functions

1. Alcohol will only be served at an activity or function with the prior approval of library management. The library practises responsible service of alcohol.
2. Drink containers and foods not prescribed above may be used at library activities or functions with staff supervision.
3. Parents, teachers, and supervisors of young children shall be alerted when food or drink is served at children's activities.

## 12 Principles

Council's Library Operations Policy is underpinned by the following principles.

### 12.1 Access

1. Public access to information about Library Lending Conditions will be through Council's website. Hard copy information will also be available from Council's libraries.
2. Reasonable access assistance will be available to persons with special needs.



## 12.2 Responsiveness and Accountability

Library staff will implement and monitor this policy.

## 12.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

The principles of Council's Privacy Management Plan will be applied.

## 12.4 Integrity, Dignity and Respect

1. Council treats all persons with courtesy and respect.
2. Council will not tolerate rude or aggressive behaviour towards library staff. In such circumstances, Library staff members are entitled to terminate phone calls or meetings as appropriate. Wherever possible, Library staff members will provide the person with initial warning that their conduct is inappropriate and that the meeting or conversation will be terminated.
3. Library staff will demonstrate fair and consistent decision-making.

## 12.5 Library Core Values

Council's Library Operations Policy will also be guided by the core values of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), being:

1. Promotion of the free flow of information and ideas through open access to recorded knowledge, information, and creative works.
2. Delivery of authentic information and evidence-based practice supported by quality research.
3. Connection of people to ideas, knowledge creation and learning.
4. Dedication to fostering reading, information and digital literacies.
5. Respect for the diversity, individuality and equality of all and recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
6. Adherence to information privacy principles.
7. Management, organisation and preservation of the human record.
8. Commitment to maintaining currency of professional knowledge and practice.
9. Partnerships and collaborations to advance these values.

## 13 Definitions

**Borrower:** a library member who borrows library material.

**City:** the Coffs Harbour local government area.

**Collection:** material or resources that are grouped together in physically logical arrangements and for consistent policy application, and are made available to the community to access on-site, online or for loan.

**Cooling off period:** time period that a library customer has after being directed to leave the library for not adhering to this policy, typically period is for the rest of the day however it may be up to one week. It is not the formal exclusion period determined by the delegate (see section 5).

**Council:** Coffs Harbour City Council.

**Customer:** a person who uses the library services or facilities, they may or may not be a member.

**Delegate:** a Council officer with the authority to exclude a person from the library for breaching this policy, this is normally the Service Leader Libraries but can also be a senior council officer or the General Manager of Council.

**Household:** a family unit residing at the same residential address.

**The Library:** Coffs Harbour City Council’s Library Service, also known as Coffs Harbour Libraries.

**Library Card:** membership card issued to library members.

**Local Studies:** all materials relating to the history, character and development of the Coffs Harbour local government area and immediately surrounding areas. The collection is located in the central library at Coffs Harbour.

**Long overdue:** an item on loan that is more than seven (7) days past its due date.

**Material:** items or resources held in the library’s collections.

**Member:** a person registered on the library database in order to use the library services, such as borrowing material.

**My Account:** secure online access via the Library Catalogue to an individual member’s own details and loan records.

**Non-Returned:** a long overdue item that is 28 days or more past its due date that is considered lost with replacement charges owed by the borrower for the item.

**Organisation:** an incorporated body or government agency.

**Reference:** a source of information or facts. Also refers to the library’s Reference collection – information resources which are not for loan, such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries, handbooks, etc.

## 14 Key Responsibilities

Position	Directorate	Responsibility
Mayor	Council	To lead Councillors in their understanding of, and compliance with, this Policy and Guidelines.
General Manager	Executive	To lead staff (either directly or through delegated authority) in their understanding of, and compliance with, this Policy and Guidelines. To approve resources to develop, implement and review this Policy and Guidelines.
Responsible Officer		Outline responsibilities of person(s) whose role it will be to carry out most of the functions under the policy.
Directors	All Directorates	To communicate, implement and comply with this Policy and related Guidelines.
Executive and Managers	All Directorates	To implement this Policy, Guidelines and related procedures. To lead staff in their understanding of, and compliance with, this Policy and Guidelines
All Council officials	Council	To comply with this Policy, Guidelines and related procedures.

## 15 References (laws, standards and other Council documents)

- *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*

- *Library Act 1939*
- *Library Regulation 2018*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *Coffs Harbour City Council Privacy Management Plan*
- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) Core Values Statement (2018)
- ALIA Statement on free access to information (2018)
- ALIA statement on Public Library Services (2018)

## 16 Details of Approval and revision

- **Approval date:** 9/06/2022
- **Responsible Group:** Community and Cultural Services Group
- **Responsible Section:** Community Programs
- **Superseded policies/procedures:**
- **Next review date:** 28/08/2025

### Table of amendments

Amendment	Authoriser	Approval ref	Date
This policy was reviewed and there have only been minor formatting and terminology changes and updates to references.	Council	2022/125	09/06/2022