

Policy 1.6

Policy title:	Patron Behaviour Policy
Policy number:	1.6
Objective:	To ensure the safety and wellbeing of library patrons and staff, and to outline measures to be taken against patrons who breach the <i>Library Regulation 2005</i>.
Link to Strategic Plan:	RTRL Strategic Plan
Policy created: 07/07/10	Committee last reviewed: 16/08/2023
Last reviewed by staff: 05/07/2023	TRIM Ref: ED23/42007

Introduction

The Library Regulation 2005 (under the Library Act (NSW) 1939) provides guidelines for acceptable behaviour by library patrons and identifies measures to exclude patrons who breach the Regulation. In particular, this policy provides guidelines to assist staff in implementing the Library Regulation 2005, clause 17, which concerns asking a patron to leave the library if they are behaving in an unacceptable manner. The Regulation gives all staff the authority to ask a patron to comply with the Regulation, and to ask that patron to leave the library if the Regulation has been breached.

Procedure

If a library patron should become rude, abusive or threatening in any way towards a staff member, then the staff member concerned may politely refuse to deal with that person and should communicate to that person that they will not be assisted in any way until their behaviour is moderated. In extreme cases the member of staff should seek help from other staff, call the security firm or police, abandon the service desk for a place of safety, or if necessary, leave the library premises altogether. The safety of the staff member is always paramount.

If a patron has exhibited anti-social behaviour (e.g. abusive swearing, downloading pornography, physical assault on another patron or staff member, soliciting for money), the Library Regulation 2005 allows for the patron to be banned from the library for a period of time, to be determined by the governing body of the library. Banning a patron from Richmond Tweed Regional Library means that the patron may not use the facilities of any branch (including the Mobile library).

For less serious but nevertheless disruptive behaviour, such as noisy arguing, children or young people running around the library, a warning should be issued and if this is not heeded, the offending patron(s) should be excluded from the library for the day. Library staff members have the authority to exclude a patron for one day, in consultation with their direct supervisor. If this happens, the staff member should inform the Business Manager – RTRL (Manager) by email.

Any request to ban a patron for longer than one day for anti-social behaviour should be referred to the Business Manager. In discussion with the staff member involved, the Business Manager should decide on an appropriate ban and write a letter to the patron informing them of the length of the ban and the reason for it. The patron should also be informed that for their library rights to be re-instated, at the end of the period of the ban, they must write to the Business Manager, undertaking to be of good behaviour at all times while in the library.

For a serious infraction, such as a physical assault or threatening verbal abuse, a letter should be sent to the patron banning them temporarily from every branch of Richmond Tweed Regional Library. The matter should then be discussed with the Management team as soon as possible and a response formulated. The patron could be banned for one month, three months, one year, five years or life, taking into account the nature of the assault/abuse and the history of the patron. The patron should then be sent another letter advising them of the period of their ban. They should also be advised that at the conclusion of their ban, they must write a letter to the Business Manager undertaking to be of good behaviour in the library. On receipt of this letter, the Business Manager can approve the reinstatement of library privileges.

All such incidents should be appropriately documented as soon as possible after it has occurred and sent to the Lismore City Council WHS Officer, Area Librarian and Business Manager – RTRL. Incidents of physical assault or threatening verbal abuse should be reported to the police immediately.

Business Manager

Richmond Tweed Regional Library