

## Responsible Conduct Policy

Policy Name	Responsible Conduct Policy
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Approval Authority	Director, Community Experience
Responsible Person	Manager, Library Service Operations
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### 1 Introduction

The Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) places great emphasis on our conduct, behaviour and values. This policy supports the integration of these values in our day-to-day behaviour and decision making.

### 2 Purpose

The purpose of the Responsible Conduct Policy (the Policy) is to contribute to the GRLC being:

- A safe place
- A welcoming place
- A respectful place, where needs and interests can be pursued freely, and people show due regard to the needs, sensitivities, and rights of others.
- A place where collections, services and programs are inclusive of people and where we support the rights of all people regardless of age, gender, ability or background.

GRLC actively supports the substantive rights outlined in the [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic.\)](#), notably those of relevance to the role and function of public libraries including freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, freedom of expression, taking part in public life and cultural rights.

This Policy defines the commonplace standards of behaviour expected in GRLC spaces and establishes how GRLC staff respond when these standards are not observed.

GRLC staff are empowered to determine whether behaviour is inappropriate or offensive – and therefore unacceptable – for the purposes of this Policy.

### 3 Scope

The Policy applies to:

- All employees, volunteers and approved contract labour of GRLC.
- GRLC premises and vehicles used to deliver library services.
- Other spaces and places where GRLC staff may be providing outreach services and programs or attending events as representatives of GRLC.

- Communication with GRLC staff conducted from outside GRLC premises, by mail, telephone, email, social media, other Internet services or any other means.

## 4 Definitions

**CEO** – Chief Executive Officer of GRLC

**Inappropriate or offensive behaviour** – Behaving in a way that may cause offence to a reasonable person.

**Infringement of security and safety** – Events, actions, or behaviours that harm, create risk of harm or threaten harm.

**Incident Report** – A report that is prepared by GRLC staff following an infringement of security or when a library customer refuses to co-operate with staff enforcing the Policy.

**This Policy** – This Responsible Conduct Policy.

**GRLC premises** - All GRLC branches, mobile library service, home library service and any other premises or areas that GRLC has leased, hired, or otherwise contracted to use, including for offsite programs and services.

**Security Services** - A private entity employed by GRLC to provide a service at named GRLC sites which may include specialised guarding and monitoring.

## 5 Policy

GRLC welcomes everybody and is here for everyone in our communities. This Policy reflects GRLC's values of equity and inclusion and is underpinned by the [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#), notably the role and function of public libraries including freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, freedom of expression, taking part in public life and cultural rights. This is applied through the observance of two commonplace standards of behaviour:

- That the security and safety of people or property is not infringed.
- That due regard is shown for the needs, interests, and rights of others.

Failure to observe these standards is considered unacceptable.

### 5.1 Inappropriate or Offensive Behaviour

This includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- communication or conduct that causes offence or disturbance to others;
- displaying material to other members of the public that is offensive, objectionable or illegal, such as pornography, expressions of racial hatred, and representations of violence;
- being noisy in designated quiet areas (including receiving and conducting telephone or online calls);
- personal hygiene or dress that is not reflective of community norms or compliant with any Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) requirements;
- canvassing or hawking;
- interference with personal property;
- abuse of or behaving aggressively towards GRLC staff or contractors;
- abuse of GRLC property, or behaviour that puts GRLC property at risk, including misuse of furniture and eating or drinking in non-designated areas;

- abuse of GRLC systems and processes (e.g. deliberately misfiling library material, circumventing booking systems);
- refusal to comply with any legislated requirements (such as during a state of emergency);
- child abuse or neglect; and
- consumption of alcohol except at an authorised program or event.

## **5.2 GRLC staff initial response to inappropriate or offensive behaviour**

The initial response of GRLC staff to inappropriate or offensive behaviour will, where practicable, be to:

- Name the inappropriate or offensive behaviour that the customer must cease.
- Encourage the customer to behave in an acceptable manner.
- Employ all relevant training in dealing with difficult customers.
- Point out the possible adverse impacts of the customer's behaviour on others.
- Support the customer in using GRLC services effectively.

### **5.2.1 Second response and removal**

A customer on GRLC premises whose behaviour is inappropriate or offensive, and who fails to heed initial requests by GRLC staff to cease behaving in that way, will be informed by the most senior staff member available that they must leave the premises for the rest of that day.

- Staff may call on a senior staff member to assist with removal of the customer.
- When a customer is being removed from GRLC premises, they must be informed why they are being removed, that the removal is occurring under this Policy and that they will not be permitted to re-enter GRLC premises until the next day.

## **5.3 Infringement of the security and safety of people or property**

This includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- events, actions or behaviours that harm, create a risk of harm or threaten harm, including intimidation and harassment;
- theft or malicious damage of property, including personal property and the property of GRLC;
- trespass, including unauthorised entry to non-public areas and unauthorised access to GRLC information systems.

### **5.3.1 GRLC staff response to infringements of security and safety**

GRLC staff are required to refer all apparent infringements of security to their direct Supervisor or Manager and complete an Incident Report.

### **Photography and filming in GRLC premises**

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of other library patrons, filming and photography are prohibited in GRLC libraries without prior approval. When permission has been given by the GRLC, approval must still be sought from any parties who may be in the frame. Filming or photographing another person without their consent is strictly prohibited. Any person who is found to be photographing or filming on library premises without permission will be asked to cease and if this request is refused will be ejected from the premises.

## **Termination of communication with GRLC staff conducted from outside GRLC premises**

A person who behaves unacceptably in communicating with GRLC staff from outside GRLC premises (by being abusive, for example, via telecommunications or written channels) will be informed that communication will be terminated unless the behaviour ceases. Communication will be immediately terminated unless the person complies.

### **5.4 Involving Victoria Police**

The most senior staff available, or the most senior staff present for the incident, is responsible for determining when the involvement of Victoria Police is warranted and for requesting the assistance of, and liaising with, the Victoria Police.

All GRLC staff may independently determine when the involvement of Victoria Police is warranted and request the assistance of, and liaise with, Victoria Police. Staff must attempt to inform the most senior staff available at the time, however staff do have authority to act, particularly when difficulty in contacting a senior staff member may increase risk of harm to any person or prevent enforcement of the law.

Staff must inform their Library Coordinator and Operations Manager via phone or email that Victoria Police were called in response to an incident and complete an Incident Report.

### **5.5 Authority to remove**

The authority to initiate the removal of a customer from GRLC premises under the Policy is delegated to all GRLC staff. If possible, the most senior staff available or the attending Security Services or Victoria Police member would initiate removal of a customer.

Authority to terminate communication by any customer from outside GRLC premises under this Policy is delegated to all staff.

### **5.6 Incident Reporting**

All incidents should be logged through the appropriate platform.

### **5.7 Bans**

#### **5.7.1 Grounds**

A person may be banned from entering GRLC premises, attending GRLC offsite programs and services, or communicating with GRLC staff from outside GRLC premises, on the following grounds:

- Infringements of security or safety;
- Repeated demonstration of inappropriate or offensive behaviour or a single act of inappropriate or offensive behaviour that is deserving of a serious sanction;
- If they have been the subject of an Incident Report or had communication with GRLC staff terminated three times within a 6-month period; or
- If they have instigated communications with GRLC staff that may be considered harassment.

A customer may be banned only on condition that their identity can be positively established.

Note that Incident Reports with reference to GRLC customers may be taken into consideration by the CEO, or delegated authorities, when issuing a ban.

### **5.7.2 Authority**

- The CEO has exclusive authority to issue bans for periods longer than one day.
- GRLC Executive Officers have delegated authority from the CEO to issue a ban and to determine the duration of a ban for any period in exceptional circumstances.

### **5.7.3 Consequences**

A customer who has been banned will be informed of the ban in writing via registered post and, if appropriate, via telephone or in person, by the relevant Library Coordinator. The correspondence will include a summary of incidents leading to the ban, the basis of the ban in policy, the duration of the ban and appeal rights and procedures and return after a ban process.

The duration of a ban is at the discretion of the CEO, or GRLC Executive Officers with delegated authority, and is determined by circumstances leading to the ban and whether the customer has been previously banned.

A banned customer seen on GRLC premises will be asked to leave immediately by the Library Coordinator, senior staff member or library staff.

Victoria Police may be called and asked to remove the banned customer on the ground of wilful trespass.

Entering or attempting to enter GRLC premises during the term of a ban may be a ground for extending the ban.

### **5.7.4 Appeals**

A customer who has been banned may appeal to the CEO regarding the ban.

The determination of the appeal will be made by consideration of the available Incident Reports and records, consultation with the Operations Manager / staff member requesting the ban and any case put forward by the customer bringing the appeal.

The appeal should be settled within one working week of its receipt and the customer informed of the outcome as soon as is practicable.

A person who has been banned may also escalate their case to the [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#).

### **5.7.5 Register of bans**

A confidential list of current customers banned from the library is kept at GRLC and maintained by the Manager, Library Service Operations. It may be viewed by library service staff only. The register may include information identifying banned people, including photographs. Victoria Police may request information from this register through identified formal channels.

## **5.8 Protection of GRLC Property**

GRLC may seek restitution for serious damage to, or theft of, GRLC property resulting from apparently intentional or reckless actions.

## 5.9 Information Privacy

Under the Victorian *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, GRLC is committed to protecting the privacy of customers.

Formal records are made of infringements of security or a customer's refusal to cooperate with staff enforcing the Policy. These records facilitate the enforcement of this Policy, and inform improvement of this Policy, related procedures and staff-training.

A record made in the enforcement of this Policy is treated as confidential and subject to strict controls:

- Records are registered in GRLC's OH&S system.
- Records are made available within GRLC only for purposes related to the enforcement of this Policy and only with the approval of the CEO.
- Records are made available outside GRLC only with the specific permission of the CEO and only if this is required under law, is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the law, or there are reasonable grounds for believing that any customer's life or health would be put at risk by not disclosing the information.
- Members of the public have access to records created in the enforcement of this Policy in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

GRLC staff will discuss and disclose information about an individual's conduct only when reporting incidents or debriefing with supervisors or managers.

## 5.10 Training and Development

This Policy will form part of the induction process for GRLC staff upon commencement. Managers will ensure staff training is offered each year about this Policy.

## 6 Regular review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or following significant incidents if they occur, or after any relevant legislative changes (whichever occurs first).

## 7 Related Legislation and Documents

### 7.1 Legislative Context

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards 2022
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- GRLC Staff Code of Conduct
- GRLC Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedures
- GRLC Responsible Conduct and Banning Procedure (internal only document)
- GRLC Internet and Computer Conditions of Use