



Policy No.: P09

Policy Title: Welcoming Library

Date Originated: May 2023

Date Last Reviewed/Revised: September 2025

Point of Contact: CEO/Director of Public Libraries

POLICY STATEMENT

The mission of the Pickering Public Library (“Library”) is to inspire a thriving community and be a place where everyone comes together to discover, learn, play, and connect. As a public library, we strive to provide safe and equitable spaces where every person, including our community members, employees, volunteers, and visitors, is included, respected, and valued.

The Library does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, violence, vandalism, racism, abusive language, or any behaviour that may be harmful or unlawful in its spaces or at its events.

If an individual engages in disrespectful behaviour toward others whether during the provision of Library services or within Library spaces, staff may intervene, identify the issue, and seek a constructive resolution. In certain cases, specific measures may be taken to prevent ongoing or future negative interactions.

This policy provides staff with the authority and guidance to respond to inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour, whether directed at employees, volunteers, or members of the public. It outlines clear procedures, including, when necessary, the exclusion of individuals from Library services or spaces, in order to help maintain a safe and respectful environment for all.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Library employees, volunteers and community members and pertains to everywhere the Library operates, whether on Library property, in the community, over the phone or email, or through our website and social media.

DEFINITIONS

Client

- Any user of library spaces, services, programs, or resources, regardless of whether they have a Pickering Public Library card.

Discrimination

- Treating an individual (or group) adversely by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit, opportunity or service enjoyed by others, because of their age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, place of origin, race, sex, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics, as these terms are defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Harassment or Harass

- As defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, means engaging in a course of vexatious behavior, comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome to an individual(s) whether inside the workplace or outside. It may include but is not limited to behavior, conduct or comment that is directed at or is perceived to be offensive to another individual(s);
- on the grounds of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, age, handicap, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status, gender identity, gender expression as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code; or
- which is reasonably perceived by the recipient as an intention to bully, embarrass, intimidate or ridicule the recipient.

Exclusion

- The prohibition of an individual(s) from receiving a Library service, program or activity or entering specific Library property for a period of time.

Exclusion Letter

- A written communication that details a violation of this Policy

Trespass to Property Act

- The Ontario legislation dealing with unwelcome entry into private and public property (Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.T21)

Vandalism

- Deliberate destruction, damage, defacing of property-owned, leased, or permitted through the Library.

Violence

- Threatening behavior against an employee, volunteer or client such as: shaking a fist or finger pointing at an individual(s), destroying, damaging or defacing property, throwing objects; verbal or written threats to attack physically or discriminate; leaving threatening notes or threatening emails; wielding a weapon; stalking; or physically aggressive behaviors including hitting, shoving, standing excessively close to an individual(s) in an aggressive manner, physically restraining an individual(s) or any other form of physical assault.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Expectations of Clients in Library Facilities – Code of Conduct

Clients in Library facilities are expected to follow Library policies, municipal, provincial and federal laws, codes, rules and regulations, and Library staff instructions. In order to achieve positive experiences in the shared spaces, clients are asked to:

- Treat Library staff and other clients with respect. Discrimination, harassment and violent or disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Do not enter the Library with drugs, alcohol or weapons.
- Smoke and vape outside.
- Leave large personal items (bicycles, scooters, shopping carts) outside. Personal items should not exceed what can be brought into the facility in one trip.
- Dress for a public setting. Shoes are required. Full face masks (balaclavas) are not permitted.
- Stay alert and engaged and refrain from long periods of sleeping.
- Visit with an animal that has service animal documentation.
- Canvassing, surveying or protesting activities are not permitted on Library property.

Clients who do not meet the above expectations may be temporarily excluded from Library services and spaces and provided with an Exclusion Letter.

To discuss the exclusion, the client may request a meeting with the Director, Engagement and Client Experience (or designate) by submitting the *Return to the*

Library Form included with the Exclusion Letter. This form must explain why the client believes their access should be restored. If unsatisfied with the outcome, the client may submit a final written appeal to the CEO for formal review.

Authority

- Public Libraries Act
- Trespass to Property Act
- Criminal Code of Canada

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Respect in the Workplace Policy
- Use of Library Space Policy
- Exclusion of Use of Library Services and Spaces Procedure

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Return to the Library Form
- Appendix 2 – Welcome to Your Library Signage

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.
Please speak to Library staff for assistance.