

Policies Register
incorporating
policies, procedures and protocols
Clarence Regional Library

Fines and Fee Waiving Policy

Policy, procedure, protocol

Policy

Adoption date

Review due date

October 2017

Responsible officer

Regional Librarian

1. Purpose

To establish guidelines for staff when dealing with customer requests to reduce or waive library fines and charges.

2. Definitions

Borrow – use of a library item, with an obligation to return it by the due date without damage.

Charge – an amount applied by the Library for lost or damaged items.

Due Date – refers to the date recorded by the Clarence Regional Library when a lent item is required to be returned to the Library

Fee/Fine – an amount applied by the Library for overdue items.

Item – refers to any book, magazine, videotape, CD, DVD, Microfilm, microfiche, cassette or any other recorded material, regardless of physical form, that is part of the Library collection.

Library – refers to the Clarence Regional Library.

Library Member - shall mean a person who has been issued a library card and is entitled to borrow items from the Library for which they may incur fines or charges.

3. Background/legislative requirements

Library staff are often required to respond to customer requests for the reduction or waiving of overdue fines and charges. This policy outlines the criteria under which requests for the reduction or waiving of library fees and charges can be made and the circumstances under which requests will be considered. Generally charges will only be reduced or waived as a result of extenuating or unforeseen circumstances such as accident, illness or disaster. This policy enables library staff to make decisions based on individual customer circumstances and provides for staff to refer more complex requests to a supervisor where necessary.

RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

Local Government Act 1993

NSW Library Act 1939

NSW Library Regulation 2005

4. Policy, protocol or procedure statement

POLICY STATEMENT

Council recognises there are cases requiring respect and compassion in special circumstances. This policy establishes guidelines for applying the principles of fairness, integrity, confidentiality and compliance with statutory requirements. It applies to all applications for waiving or reducing fines and charges.

1. Waiving of Overdue Fines

Overdue fines may be waived on the following grounds:

- Serious illness of customer or family member
- Accident involving customer or family member
- Death of customer or family member
- Presentation of Medical Certificate or Statutory Declaration
- Disasters such as flood, fire, criminal act, etc
- When a lost or damaged item charge has been paid, outstanding overdue fines on that item will be waived.

- When school access to the Mobile Library has been cancelled for teaching purposes.

There may be additional grounds under which the reduction or waiver of overdue charges may apply. Staff and supervisors will consider individual circumstances and the customer's explanation.

2. Waiving of Lost/Damaged Charges

Lost/Damaged charges may be waived on the following grounds:

- Disasters such as flood, fire, criminal act, etc
- Stolen Library Card

The administration charge and any outstanding overdue fines on that item/s will also be waived in these circumstances.

3. Reduction of Overdue Fines

A maximum charge will apply for overdue fines only. The maximum is identified in Council's current schedule of Fees and Charges. Amounts above the threshold will be waived. There is no maximum charge limit for lost/damaged items.

Once the maximum amount of fines is reached the Library Management System prevents a borrower from borrowing or reserving items until the full amount owing has been paid.

4. Reduction or Waiving of Inter Library Loan Charges

Inter Library Loan (ILL) charges will be waived if the request has been altered so that a charge no longer applies. This may occur where the request has been altered to a Suggestion for Purchase request, a Reservation, or a combined ILL request in the case of a two part title.

PRINCIPLES

- 1) Library staff will treat all people fairly and consistently under this policy.
- 2) Library staff recognise the importance of establishing overdue charges as a management tool for ensuring that all items are returned on time and that all customers have full and equitable access to these items.
- 3) Library staff recognise the importance of establishing lost and damaged item charges as a management tool for ensuring that all items are treated with care and that all customers have full and equitable access to these items.

5. Procedures

- 1) Customers are responsible for the library materials borrowed on their cards and are expected to return materials in a timely manner.
- 2) When dealing with all fines and charges, staff should remind borrowers of the various methods available to avoid fees, i.e.) Renewing items in person, by phone, or online.
- 2) Waiving customer fines and fees requires supervisory approval.

3) Upon waiving a fine or charge, staff must record in the library's computer system that a fine or charge was waived, the location, amount waived, reason for the waiver, and the staff member's name.

4) The waiving of fines and fees is an unusual circumstance. Customers who have had large amounts of fines or charges waived or reduced, either as a single act, or over a period of time, may be denied further service.

6. Attachments

Circulation Policy

Schedule of Fees & Charges