

## MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: November 17, 2022  
Author: Dawn Ibey, Director, Central Library & Public Service  
VanDocs#: DOC/2022/282181  
Meeting Date: November 23, 2022

TO: Library Board  
FROM: Zahra Hussein, Chair, SFHR Committee  
**SUBJECT: Inclusive Library Services Policy**

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### **SUMMARY**

This report follows an October 2022 report that was presented to the Services, Finance and Human Resources committee for discussion. It provides a revised Inclusive Library Services Policy that incorporates feedback from the SFHR Committee discussion, the CRPD Committee discussion, and from staff stakeholder groups in Appendix A (clean) and Appendix B (tracked). It recommends that the existing Diversity and Inclusion Statement (Appendix C) be rescinded, and provides an overview of aligned VPL policies (Appendix D) for information.

### **PURPOSE**

This report is for decision.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) That the Board approve the Inclusive Library Services Policy.
- 2) That the Board rescind the Diversity and Inclusion Statement.

### **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

The SFHR Committee discussed the revisions incorporated from board members and staff since the October meeting, and expressed appreciation for staff work to create a stronger policy. They noted further areas for clarification, and supported recommending the policy for approval with the latest revisions incorporated.

## **POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to support staff with conversations related to racist and other unwanted behaviours. It is related to many other policies that either support equity, diversity, and inclusion or that set expectations for behaviour. This policy differs from the suite of related policies in that the intent of this policy is to clearly state the Library's position on equity, diversity and inclusion, and our expectations and intolerance of unwanted behaviours related to personal characteristics in an externally facing policy. An overview of the related policies is presented in Appendix D.

## **INDIGENOUS CONSIDERATIONS**

This work is aligned with our efforts to support and advance the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through VPL's programs and services, including those rights identified in Article 11:

*11. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature*

The policy confirms the Library's commitment as articulated in the VPL 2020-2023 Strategic Plan to prioritizing and sharing Indigenous voices through our collections and programming and establishing VPL as a place to learn about the history and cultures of Indigenous people, including the truths of the historic and ongoing impact of colonization.

This policy also supports the rights of Indigenous peoples to access services and opportunities at VPL expressed in Article 2 and Article 3 of UNDRIP:

*2. Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.*

*3. Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.*

While supporting the work of UNDRIP, this policy also considers equity, diversity, and inclusion across all communities that have been historically and intentionally discriminated against and have had their voices suppressed.

## **STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

This policy supports efforts in several goals of the VPL 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

Belonging and Connection goals supported:

- Engage and celebrate the diverse cultures and languages of Vancouver
- Establish the library as a forum for civic conversation and understanding

Organizational Strength goals supported:

- Ensure that VPL staff have the support and resources to adapt to a transformed work environment
- Foster an inclusive workplace that reflects the diversity of our community

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2020, staff identified that they were experiencing and witnessing more overt acts of racism and sexism and other unwanted behaviours from patrons towards staff and between patrons in the library. In October 2021 the Board received a [report](#) for information that outlined considerations for an external facing equity and anti-racism policy that would take a more direct stance on racism, discrimination, and inclusion than is present in existing policies. In October 2022, the Services, Finance, and Human Resources Committee received the draft policy for discussion. Concurrently, the draft policy was provided to a number of staff stakeholder groups for feedback. The attached policy in Appendix B incorporates feedback from all these inputs and shows the changes made since the October 2022 meeting. Appendix A provides a clean version of the policy.

The Diversity and Inclusion Statement was approved by the Board in June 2010. The statement articulated the Library's commitment to deliver inclusive services to all. The statement reflects the Library's and societal understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion issues at the time the statement was written. Our understanding of these issues has grown considerably and a new more nuanced policy is required. The policy is recommended for rescission and is provided in Appendix C.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Staff Input**

The policy development working group offered key staff stakeholder groups the opportunity to review and provide input on the policy via participation in a focus group and/or by completing a survey. The working group then analyzed the feedback and adjusted the policy where appropriate. Feedback received will additionally be used to inform the development of tools and resources to support implementation once the Board approves the policy.

In many cases, staff feedback aligned with the comments made by the Services, Finance, and Human Resources committee. The area of the draft policy where the two parties held differing views was over the inclusion of statements in section 3 on expectations of behaviour. While the Services, Finance, and Human Resources committee felt that this information is held in other policies, staff felt that having these statements in this policy would better support them in their work with our patrons. The draft attempt to balance these interests. Staff also provided feedback on the importance of addressing micro-aggressions in the policy and in subsequent staff tools.

### **NEXT STEPS**

After approval by the Board, as part of the roll out of the policy, staff will work on the development of companion pieces to support staff in understanding and implementing the policy. Typical tools include guidance documents, scripts for handling difficult situations, and training sessions.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Training required will be incorporated into VPL's annual operating budget. At the October 2022 meeting, the Board approved a request for investment for up to three new positions to support staff working in public service as part of the 2023 budget process, should Council ask for submissions. If approved, these positions would include providing support in implementing this policy.

**APPENDIX A**

**INCLUSIVE LIBRARY SERVICES POLICY (CLEAN COPY)**

<b>SUBJECT: INCLUSIVE LIBRARY SERVICES</b>	
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>POLICY CODE: VPL-BD-??-???-202?</b>

## Objective

The objective of the Inclusive Library Services policy is to support staff with conversations related to racist and other unwanted behaviours, including anti-Indigenous racism, and to:

- affirm the right of access and the right of representation of diverse groups and experiences in all of the Library’s activities and services;
- support providing equitable and inclusive library spaces and services where all are welcome;
- Identify that the Library actively highlights voices in our community that have historically or intentionally experienced discrimination through its collections, programs, and services and
- assert that bullying or harassment, verbal abuse, or other disrespectful behaviour towards Library staff, Security Services’ staff, and patrons of the library is not acceptable.

## Scope

This policy applies to all members of the public using VPL facilities and services, Library staff, Security staff, and Board members. It applies to all Library services, activities, and spaces, including but not limited to collections, programs, and displays. Private rentals of library rooms and spaces is governed by the Public Meeting Rooms and Facilities Use policy.

## Definitions

**Bullying and Harassment** refers to words and/or actions that are offensive, humiliating, threatening, or intimidating toward a person. This includes verbal abuse such as yelling, swearing at staff or patrons, or the use of slurs or insults.

**Discrimination** is the mistreatment, or unfair treatment, of someone based on one or more personal characteristics.

**Disrespectful behaviour** includes bullying and harassment, and also persistent arguing, or any aggressive or belligerent actions toward staff or patrons, including microaggressions, or comments on personal characteristics.

**Library Spaces** include physical spaces such as branches, as well as online spaces including programs, workshops, and social media.

**Microaggressions** are indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a particular group.

**Personal characteristics** are aspects of a person’s identity. The personal characteristics covered by this policy include, but are not necessarily limited to, race,

colour, ancestry, place of origin; religion; marital status; family status; physical or mental ability; sex, gender identity/expression or sexual orientation; age; Indigeneity; receipt of public assistance; experience of homelessness/being unhoused; immigration status; or other socio-economic conditions.

## **Indigenous Considerations**

Indigenous peoples have been historically and intentionally discriminated against, and the Library is committed to supporting article 2 of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their Indigenous origin or identity.

The Library has taken action and will continue to prioritize and share Indigenous voices through our collections and programming and works towards establishing VPL as a place to learn about the history and cultures of Indigenous people, including the truths of the historic and ongoing impact of colonization.

## **Policy Statements**

### **1. Vancouver Public Library values all people.**

- 1.1. The Library strives to offer welcoming spaces, a sense of belonging, and positive experiences for everyone. It is a shared space that serves as a community hub for all, regardless of personal characteristics.
- 1.2. The Library acknowledges the compounding effects of multiple forms of discrimination that many in the community we serve experience.
- 1.3. The Library is a platform that celebrates and showcases voices in the community, especially the voices of communities that have been historically or intentionally suppressed.

### **2. Vancouver Public Library endeavors to create a respectful, inclusive and equitable environment for its staff, patrons and the general public.**

- 2.1 The Library is committed to intentional work to create a respectful, inclusive and equitable Library environment.
- 2.2 The Library values diversity, respectful spaces and communication, and access for all, without compromising its commitment to intellectual freedom, and the right to access the full range of knowledge, ideas, and opinions.
- 2.3 Intellectual freedom values access to diverse views. Disagreement is part of exploring ideas, however, dialogue and behaviour in library spaces must be respectful.
- 2.4 The Library is committed to ensuring the safety and dignity of staff members and patrons.
- 2.5 The Library upholds the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in all of its activities by:

- a) Working to create an environment that welcomes, respects and celebrates the differences among us.
- b) Seeking meaningful engagement, dialogue and collaboration with individuals from equity denied groups to shape and inform library programs, services, policies and practices.
- c) Prioritizing equity, diversity and inclusion by promoting increased public awareness through our policies and practices, collections, programs, displays, and services.

**2.6** The Library works to ensure that people who have historically been excluded or underrepresented see themselves reflected in the collections, programs, and services offered.

**3. Bullying, aggression, harassment, or other disrespectful or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated at the Library.**

- 3.1.** Patrons are required to conduct themselves in a responsible manner so as not to cause or participate in the mistreatment of another person or group of persons.
- 3.2.** Patrons must not engage in abuse, including verbal abuse, persistent arguing or belligerent behaviour towards other patrons or staff.
- 3.3.** Patrons can expect staff or security to intervene if patrons are treating other patrons disrespectfully.
- 3.4.** Patrons who are asked to stop disrespectful behaviour are expected to do so immediately.
- 3.5.** Disrespectful behaviour towards staff, their work, or their personal characteristics is not acceptable.

**Non-compliance Consequences**

Patrons who refuse to comply with this policy, or refuse to cooperate with staff requests, may be restricted from library privileges, and may be banned from library premises.

Complaints related to staff compliance with this policy will be considered under the Code of Conduct.

The VPL Board may request that Council remove board members who fail to comply with this policy.

**Policy Administration Roles and Responsibilities**

<b>Director, Central Library &amp; Public Service</b>	Oversees and recommends updates to the policy as required.
<b>SFHR Committee</b>	Reviews policy as required and recommends changes to the Board



<b>Board</b>	Approves policy and revisions to the policy
<b>Chief Librarian &amp; CEO</b>	Administers the policy

### **Related Policies**

- [Access to Vancouver Public Library Services without Fear](#)
- [CFLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Collection Development](#)
- [Expectations of Behaviour](#)
- [Human Rights & Harassment](#)
- [Public Meeting Rooms and Facilities Use Policy](#)
- [Respectful Workplace](#)

### **Approval History**

<b>ISSUED BY:</b> Library Board	<b>APPROVED BY:</b> Library Board	<b>DATE:</b>		
<b>REVISED BY:</b>	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>		
<b>REVISED BY:</b>	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>		

<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW</b>		<b>REVIEW CYCLE</b>	<b>[#] Years</b>
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### **Related Procedures**

<https://www.vpl.ca/policy/social-media-terms-use>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INCLUSIVE LIBRARY SERVICES POLICY (TRACKED CHANGES)**

<b>SUBJECT: INCLUSIVE LIBRARY SERVICES</b>	
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>POLICY CODE: VPL-BD-??-???-202?</b>

## Objective

The objectives of the Inclusive Library Services policy is to support staff with conversations related to racist and other unwanted behaviours, including anti-Indigenous racism, and include to:

- affirm the right of access and the right of representation of diverse groups and experiences in all of the Library’s activities and services;
- support providing equitable and inclusive library spaces and services where all are welcome;
- Identify that the Library actively highlights voices in our community that have historically or and intentionally experienced discrimination through its collections, programs, and services and
- assert that bullying or harassment, verbal abuse, or other disrespectful behaviour towards Library staff, Security Services’ staff, and patrons of the library is not acceptable.

## Scope

This policy applies to all members of the public using VPL facilities and services, Library staff, Security staff, and Board members. It applies to all Library services, activities, and spaces, including but not limited to collections, programs, and displays. This policy does not apply to private rental of library meeting rooms. Private rentals are governed by the Public Meeting Rooms and Facilities Use policy.

## Definitions

**Bullying and Harassment** refers to words and/or actions that are offensive, humiliating, threatening, or intimidating toward a person. This includes verbal abuse such as yelling, swearing at staff or patrons, or the use of slurs or insults.

**Discrimination** is the mistreatment, or unfair treatment, of someone based on one or more personal characteristics.

**Disrespectful behaviour** includes bullying and harassment, and also persistent arguing, or any aggressive or belligerent actions toward staff or patrons, including microaggressions, or comments on personal characteristics.

**Library Spaces** include physical spaces such as branches, as well as online spaces including programs, workshops, and social media.

**Microaggressions** are indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a particular group.

**Personal characteristics** are aspects of a person’s identity. The personal characteristics covered by this policy include, but are not necessarily limited to, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin; religion; marital status; family status; physical or mental ability; sex, gender identity/expression or sexual orientation; age; Indigeneity; receipt of  
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public assistance; experience of homelessness/being unhoused; immigration status; or other socio-economic conditions.

## **Indigenous Considerations**

Indigenous peoples have been historically and intentionally discriminated against, and the Library is committed to supporting article 2 of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their Indigenous origin or identity.

The Library has taken action and will continue to prioritize and share Indigenous voices through our collections and programming and works towards establishing VPL as a place to learn about the history and cultures of Indigenous people, including the truths of the historic and ongoing impact of colonization.

## **Policy Statements**

### **2. Vancouver Public Library values all people.**

- 1.4. The Library strives to offer welcoming spaces, a sense of belonging, and positive experiences for everyone. It is a shared space that serves as a community hub for all, regardless of personal characteristics.
- 1.5. The Library acknowledges the compounding effects of multiple forms of discrimination that many in ~~the our~~ community ~~we serve~~ experience.
- 1.6. The Library is a platform that celebrates and ~~showcases~~~~lifts~~ voices in ~~the community, our community,~~ especially the voices of communities that have ~~been~~ historically or intentionally ~~been~~ suppressed.

### **3. Vancouver Public Library endeavors to create a respectful, inclusive and equitable environment for its staff, patrons and the general public.**

- 2.1 The Library is committed to intentional work to create a respectful, inclusive and equitable Library environment. ~~and taking action to improve.~~
- 2.7 The Library values diversity, respectful spaces and communication, and access for all, without compromising its commitment to intellectual freedom, and the right to access the full range of knowledge, ~~imagination,~~ ideas, and opinions.
- 2.8 Intellectual freedom values access to diverse views. Disagreement is part of exploring ideas, however, dialogue and behaviour in library spaces must be respectful.
- 2.9 The Library is committed to ensuring the safety and dignity of staff members and patrons.
- 2.10 The Library upholds the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in all of its activities by:
  - a) Working to create an environment that welcomes, respects and celebrates the differences among us.

- b) Seeking meaningful engagement, dialogue and collaboration with individuals from equity denied groups to shape and inform library programs, services, policies and practices.
- c) Prioritizing equity, diversity and inclusion by promoting increased public awareness through our policies and practices, collections, programs, displays, and services.

2.11 The Library works to ensure ~~remove barriers so~~ that people who have historically been excluded or underrepresented see themselves reflected in the collections, programs, and services offered.

**4. Bullying, aggression, harassment, or other disrespectful or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated at the Library.**

- 4.1. Patrons ~~and staff~~ are required to conduct themselves in a responsible manner so as not to cause or participate in the mistreatment of another person or group of persons.
- 4.2. Patrons must not engage in abuse, including verbal abuse, persistent arguing or belligerent behaviour towards other patrons or staff.
- 4.3. Patrons can expect staff or security to intervene if patrons are treating other patrons disrespectfully.
- 4.4. Patrons who are asked to stop disrespectful behaviour are expected to do so immediately.
- 4.5. Disrespectful behaviour towards staff, their ~~or staff~~ work, or any their personal characteristics is not acceptable.

**Non-compliance Consequences**

Patrons who refuse to comply with this policy, or refuse to cooperate with staff requests, may be restricted from library privileges, and may be banned from library premises.

Complaints related to staff compliance with this policy will be considered under the Code of Conduct.

The VPL Board may request that Council remove board members who fail to comply with this policy.

**Policy Administration Roles and Responsibilities**

<b>Director, Central Library &amp; Public Service</b>	Oversees and recommends updates to the policy as required.
<b>SFHR Committee</b>	Reviews policy as required and recommends changes to the Board
<b>Board</b>	Approves policy and revisions to the policy

<b>Chief Librarian</b>	Administers the policy
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**Related Policies**

- [Access to Vancouver Public Library Services without Fear](#)
- [CFLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Collection Development](#)
- [Expectations of Behaviour](#)
- [Human Rights & Harassment](#)
- [Public Meeting Rooms and Facilities Policy](#)
- [Respectful Workplace](#)

**Approval History**

<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	<b>Library Board</b>	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>Library Board</b>	<b>DATE:</b>		
<b>REVISED BY:</b>		<b>APPROVED BY:</b>		<b>DATE:</b>		
<b>REVISED BY:</b>		<b>APPROVED BY:</b>		<b>DATE:</b>		

<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW</b>		<b>REVIEW CYCLE</b>	<b>[#] Years</b>
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**Related Procedures**

<https://www.vpl.ca/policy/social-media-terms-use>

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

<b>SUBJECT: Diversity and Inclusion Statement</b>	
<b>CATEGORY: Community Relations</b>	<b>POLICY CODE: BD-L-2010</b>

**Objective**

This policy outlines the Library’s stance on diversity and inclusion.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all VPL staff.

**Background**

It is the responsibility of Canadian public institutions, including libraries, to support a society that respects diversity and fosters social inclusion. Vancouver Public Library is responsible for working with its communities to create services that diverse communities identify as respectful, inclusive, and accessible.

**Policy Statements**

The library strives to deliver inclusive service, affirming the dignity of those they serve, regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental health, physical or cognitive capabilities, or socio-economic status. Library staff acts to ensure that people can enjoy services free from any attempt by others to impose values, customs or beliefs.

(Adapted from the CLA Statement on Diversity)

VPL staff will:

- Identify populations that may be under-represented or hard to reach based on diverse life circumstances.
- Seek to understand how diverse community groups define and describe themselves.
- Listen directly to communities rather than relying on indirect sources such as statistical reports, other public libraries, or community service providers.
- Work with diverse communities to develop inclusive consultation and engagement processes.
- Work with diverse communities to determine appropriate ways to design, deliver, and evaluate services.

This statement is intended to provide a fuller context for library staff who works with Vancouver’s diverse communities, and a framework from which to consider how VPL understands diversity and responds to community needs.



**Policy Administration Roles and Responsibilities**

<b>Director, Library Experience</b>	Oversees and recommends updates to the policy as required
<b>Board</b>	Approves policy and revisions to the policy
<b>Chief Librarian</b>	Administers the policy

**Related Policies**

- *Community Engagement Values Statement*
- *Customer Service Statement*

**Approval History**

<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	<b>Library Board</b>	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>Library Board</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>2010/06/26</b>	
<b>REVISED BY:</b>	<b>CRPD</b>	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>Library Board</b>	<b>DATE:</b>		

<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW</b>		<b>REVIEW CYCLE</b>	<b>5 Years</b>
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## Appendix D: VPL Policies Related to the Inclusive Library Services Policy

Policy Name	Primary Purpose	Primary Audience	External or Internal facing
<b>Access to Vancouver Public Library Services without Fear</b>	Assures patrons with uncertain or no immigration status that VPL staff will not ask for immigration status relating to the provision of library services.	Patrons	external
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	Sets minimum expectations for the behaviour of staff in carrying out their functions.	Staff	internal
<b>Collection Development</b>	Provides guidance towards achieving consistency in the selection of materials for the collection, defines the intended scope of our collections, and informs the public of the principles upon which selection and deselection decisions are made.	Patrons	external
<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Statement</b>	Affirms VPL's goal to provide library services equitably to all patrons regardless of any personal characteristic (i.e. race, socio-economic status, gender identity, etc.). Commits VPL to a variety of outreach activities to listen to diverse communities directly.	Patrons	external
<b>Expectations of Behaviour</b>	Provides a list of behaviours that are not permissible in the library, e.g. verbal abuse, consumption of alcohol or illicit drugs, leaving young children unattended, damaging library materials, refusing to cooperate with staff, etc.	Patrons	external
<b>Human Rights &amp; Harassment</b>	Sets out guidelines for the reporting, investigating and resolving of complaints of harassment in an effort to ensure a respectful workplace for everyone. Based on the BC Human Rights Code's "prohibited grounds" of discrimination.	Staff	Internal
<b>Respectful Workplace</b>	Sets out requirements to ensure a respectful workplace, prevent disrespectful behaviour and outline guidelines to address disrespectful workplace behaviour should it occur. Based on personally-targeted behaviour as opposed to "human rights" grounds in the Human Rights & Harassment policy.	Staff	Internal