

DDCL Bookings and access policy

Public libraries are fundamental to the success and growth of any democratic society. They promote informed and cultured citizenship. DDCL provides an inclusive service; it allows all members of the community equal opportunity to engage in a wide range of social and cultural activities outside the pressures of the commercial environment.

DDCL accepts that we live in a multicultural society and its policies reflect this. We are open to all regardless of age, background, ability, religion, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity. Within the constraints of budget and space DDCL seeks to:

- Provide materials to enhance and extend the intellectual and cultural development of our community.
- Meet the information needs of our community for work, leisure, health and wellbeing.
- Support formal and informal education for customers of all ages and backgrounds.
- Promote and extend the use of books and other media for recreation.
- Provide a forum for the discussion and dissemination of facts and ideas.

To support these aims, DDCL provides a service for private groups to make bookings and to use the library space, either for private events (such as committee meetings and social gatherings), or for events where the public are admitted (such as readings, recitals or charity events). DDCL does not endorse or promote any particular political, social, religious or other ideology but intends to provide access to the widest range of knowledge and experience to encourage and inform public debate.

Public bookings

The European Convention on Human Rights states that: *“Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinion and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.”* (Article 10:1). This is modified by the statement that: *“The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society.”* (Article 10:2)

In consideration of this, DDCL reserves the right to restrict or refuse public bookings from religious, social, political or other groups which are seeking to proselytise or from any organisation, movement or action which, in the considered opinion of the Trustees, could incite fear, hatred, unrest, discomfort or apprehension to fellow members of our community.

Groups requesting bookings may appeal against such decisions, and DDCL Trustees undertake to give them written reasons and explanations for the refusal on a case-by-case basis. However, this formal process will not be activated until all informal lines of correspondence and communication have been exhausted.

For more information on Public Libraries and censorship consult the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) and CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professions) websites.