
BL Personal Use of Collections, Library Property and Equipment

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1. PURPOSE

To detail the Library's rules and procedures governing the personal use of its property, collection and equipment during and outside working hours. This policy does not comprehensively cover use of the Library's Computer Access and Use of E-Mail and the Internet Policy.

2. SCOPE

All members of staff, agency staff, consultants, contractors and visitors to staff areas.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Library believes that all its staff, agency staff and contractors working for the Library should have sufficient equipment made available to them to enable the effective performance of their duties.

The Library recognises that equipment may be used for personal and non-Library purposes. This is acceptable provided that personal use is carried out within these guidelines and provided that the equipment is used properly and safely.

Members of staff have a responsibility for the safekeeping of the Library's property. They are expected to take reasonable precautions for the safekeeping of such property as may be entrusted to them. The Library's property includes items from the collections, equipment, money and papers containing information confidential to the Library. In cases of personal negligence, the members(s) of staff concerned may be required to make good any resultant loss or damage, whether it occurred on or off the Library's premises (See the Discipline Policy).

4. PROVISIONS FOR USE

4.1 Care and use of the collections

Staff are reminded that they have the responsibility to safeguard the collections under their care. As members of staff they have the privilege of access to many of the collections for personal use. It is important however, that they observe the rules for the use of that material under their care.

The removal of books, documents or any other items belonging to or intended for the collections, from their proper place within the Library except for authorised or Library purposes is strictly forbidden. Where staff are permitted to use books, etc. for their personal interest the prescribed procedures for recording their location must be meticulously followed. Any breach of these rules will be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence, which may lead to dismissal. (See Intranet - Office Notice 53/02 for guidelines on Care of the Collection).

4.2 Personal use of telephones and fax machines

Staff may use official telephones and fax machines to make a reasonable number of local calls, or for an emergency, but this facility should not be abused for purely social purposes. Pay phones are provided for other calls.

Staff should try to ensure that non-urgent incoming personal calls are kept to a minimum as these can interfere with business.

4.3 Personal use of computers

Staff may use the Library's computer systems for personal use in limited circumstances. However such use should be kept to a minimum and the Library expects individuals to ensure that it does not interfere with their work.

Excessive personal use in work time will be considered to be a non-productive use of work time and may lead to disciplinary procedures. Staff are advised that their personal visit history records are kept automatically by the Library's system.

Further details regarding the permitted use of computers can be found in the Computer Access and Use of E-Mail and the Internet Policy.

4.4 Personal use of photocopiers

Occasional use of the Library's photocopiers by staff for personal purposes is permitted. This privilege should not be abused.

4.5 Personal use of other equipment

Occasional brief use of other office equipment (including portable and audio-visual equipment) for personal purposes is allowed provided such use is not excessive and does not interfere with the availability of the equipment for the Library's purposes. The Library also expects such personal use to be generally restricted to its premises and to non-working hours. Should a member of staff wish to use office equipment off the Library's premises he/she must obtain written approval from his/her line manager using the appropriate form (which can be found on the Intranet). Appropriate security procedures must be followed.

4.6 Library stationery

Stationery that is provided for use in the office must not be taken away for personal use.

In particular, the Library letterhead must not be used in correspondence with third parties by members of staff or other Library workers, except in their capacity as representatives of the British Library.

4.7 Franking machines

Staff may use the Library's postal collection to send stamped mail but must not use franking machines to frank mail which is not bona-fide Library business mail.

4.8 Equipment taken off-site

Some members of staff make use of Library equipment off-site for business purposes (e.g. home workers, those on maternity leave, systems personnel, etc.). These members of staff must carry authorisation to carry the equipment off-site. When the equipment is taken off site the member of staff is required to sign a receipt for the equipment (see Intranet). Managers should ensure that their staff are aware of their personal responsibility when property is taken off Library premises. Staff in charge of such equipment are personally responsible for its safe custody and in cases of personal negligence may be required to make good any loss or resultant damage.

5. MONITORING

The Library is mindful of the general right of staff and other workers to privacy at work. However, in some circumstances if abuse is suspected, the Library may restrict staff use of telephones and other Library equipment. In carrying out such actions the Library will ensure that it does not contravene any relevant legislative provisions (for example the Data Protection act, Human Rights Act and associated codes of practice) that may be in force.

6. FAILURE TO COMPLY

If any member of staff makes use of Library equipment in breach of the rules and provisions contained within this policy such use may be considered to be misconduct under the Library's Disciplinary Procedure. Individuals are free to involve their trade union representative if they should wish to do so and the secretary of the appropriate trade union will be notified if disciplinary action is to be taken.

7. RESPONSIBILITY

All those persons referred to within the scope of this policy are required to adhere to its terms and conditions. Individual Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of this policy and that it is applied within their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed with the Human Resources Directorate prior to any action being taken.

The Human Resources Directorate has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy. Proposed changes to the policy will follow the process as described in Section A: Introduction: paragraph 1.1 of this Staff handbook.