Library Spaces Policy

Library Services Policy

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Purpose

This policy explains how Burlington Public Library (BPL) provides and manages welcoming, accessible, safe, and flexible public spaces. It sets expectations for how Library spaces are used and shared for learning, connection, work, study, leisure, and play.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone using BPL-controlled buildings, rooms, furnishings, amenities, display areas, and outdoor spaces. Additional requirements may appear in related terms and conditions, forms, and guidelines.

Definitions

Caregiver: A person responsible for the care, behaviour, and safety of a child while using the library.

Library space: Any indoor or outdoor area under BPL's control, including reading and study areas, children's spaces, program and meeting rooms, event spaces, display areas, entrances, and shared amenities.

Partisan: Strongly supporting one cause, leader, or group over another

Public exhibit: Artwork, creative work, or cultural or historical material displayed in a library space by an individual, group, organization, school, or public body.

Room user: A person, group, or organization that books or rents a BPL room or event space.

Universal design: Design that makes spaces and services usable by as many people as possible, without the need for separate or specialized arrangements wherever practical.

Statement of Policy

BPL provides clean, welcoming, accessible, and people-centred spaces where people from all walks of life can connect, learn, work, study, socialize, and play. We design and manage Library spaces to support a range of activities and balance individual preferences with the shared needs of the community.

BPL meets or exceeds applicable accessibility requirements and applies universal design principles when planning and improving spaces. We provide equitable access to basic amenities and distribute use of limited spaces fairly, transparently, and sustainably.

Everyone who uses library space contributes to a respectful environment by treating people with dignity, using spaces and resources for their intended purposes, following the law and BPL requirements, and responsibly supervising people in their care.

We review how people use our spaces and draw on customer feedback, accessibility considerations, service demand, safety, operational experience, and evolving community needs to improve spaces and related practices.

Policy Details

Your public library is a community place where different people use the same resources together. BPL welcomes everyone, regardless of identity, ability, circumstances, interests, or reason for visiting and removes barriers where reasonably possible.

We treat each other with dignity in library spaces and respect each person's choice to participate in activities, exhibits, and events without disrupting or preventing others from doing the same. We support and protect freedom of expression in accordance with Canadian law and applicable BPL policies. Everyone must use library space lawfully and safely, and follow designated uses, occupancy limits, reservations, and reasonable staff direction Activities must not promote hatred or unlawful discrimination, endanger anyone, block emergency access, damage or misuse property, disrupt library operations, or interfere with others' lawful use.

Inclusive Design and Access

We balance accessibility, safety, comfort, durability, environmental responsibility, operational needs, and available resources when designing and maintaining BPL spaces. When we plan or change spaces, we meet or exceed applicable accessibility requirements, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and apply universal design principles.

Our spaces support quiet study, socializing, group work, leisure, play, programs, and community gatherings, with activities varying by branch and area. We use layouts, furnishings, signs, technology, and staff guidance to help these activities coexist and that you can find and use spaces and amenities as independently as possible.

BPL provides basic amenities, including washrooms, seating, warming and cooling areas, and drinking water, according to each location's features and operating conditions. We use clear, equitable booking or time limits for spaces and amenities with limited availability. Some spaces are free and others have an approved low fee, which we communicate before confirming a booking.

We may temporarily restrict access for library programs, approved bookings, maintenance, safety, emergencies, or operational needs.

Political and Partisan Use

BPL maintains a position as an independent and impartial organization. Using BPL space for partisan political events, campaign activities, or lobbying is prohibited. Library space may be rented or used by BPL for civic engagement and non-partisan political activities such as voter awareness events, all candidates' debates, or polling stations.

Children and Caregivers

Children of all ages are welcome to use BPL collections, programs, services, and spaces. Parents and caregivers are responsible for the behaviour, safety, well-being, and supervision of children in their care and must use the same care they would in another public place.

Children under the age of 10 must be directly supervised by a responsible caregiver and may not be left alone in the library. When a child under the age of 10 attends a library program, the caregiver must remain in the library building and may be required to remain in the program space with the child depending on the program.

We assist children with library services but do not take on caregiver responsibilities. Staff follow applicable law and procedures to safeguard a child's immediate safety and well-being

Non-Endorsement

Use of BPL space by a collaborator, renter, or vendor does not imply endorsement of that organization, business, or individual's viewpoints, services, or products by BPL.

Sale of Goods and/or Services

Selling goods and/or services in BPL spaces is not allowed. Limited exceptions apply and require prior written permission from library management.

Booked and Rented Spaces

Use of library rooms is prioritized for BPL programs and services. BPL may then offer remaining availability for use or rent by community service providers, clubs, and non-profit organizations, and finally to individuals, businesses, and commercial groups.

Providing space does not mean BPL endorses a room user's ideas, messages, activities, or views.

Room users must keep activities within the booked space and may not solicit participation from general library visitors. Activities must respect library operations, and follow all booking or rental terms and conditions. They must not claim or imply any affiliation, endorsement, sponsorship, or partnership with BPL or use BPL's name, logo, or images without prior written permission. Written permission from BPL and all relevant permits are required for any regulated or licensed activities, such as serving alcohol or screening a film.

BPL may deny, cancel, or end a booking early if the use violates, or is reasonably likely to violate the law any BPL policy, or applicable terms and conditions. BPL may also act if the use creates a safety or security risk, damages property, or unreasonably disrupts library operations.

Public Exhibits

BPL may offer limited display space for exhibits, considering size, timing, suitability for the library environment, safety, accessibility, community engagement, and diverse cultural representation when reviewing submissions. A written agreement is required for all exhibits.

BPL makes all final decisions about selecting, placing, arranging, altering, and removing public exhibits in library spaces. Exhibitors must prepare, deliver, install, remove, and insure their work. BPL does not accept responsibility for loss of or damage to exhibited work, except where required by law.

Administration

The CEO or designate establishes and maintains the terms and conditions, procedures, and other operational documents needed to administer this policy consistently. BPL communicates applicable conditions before confirming a rental, booking, or exhibit and provides information and assistance as requested to ensure users understand and comply with these conditions.

Document Information	Details
Approved by	Burlington Public Library Board
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Amended Dates	
Associated Documents	Related Policies: • Corporate Accountability Policy Other Documents: • Public Art Display Application • Customer Experience Standards • Room Rental Terms & Conditions • Free Meeting Rooms Terms & Conditions