

Plaistow Public Library	Policy: Meeting Room
Adopted: 9/14/2004	Page 1 of 7
Revised: 5/12/2015, 5/8/2018, 10/9/2018	

*Please read this document carefully as failure to follow this and related Library policies may result in the loss of Meeting Room privileges.*

**PURPOSE & GENERAL GUIDELINES**

The intent of this policy is to meet the compelling interest of ensuring that time and space are available for the Library’s own programs and that the Library’s limited facilities are made available to the community on an equitable basis in accordance with the guidelines and priorities specified below. The use of a meeting space signifies acceptance of the terms of this policy.

The Plaistow Public Library’s meeting rooms are provided to further the mission and goals of the Library as approved by the Library Board of Trustees. The meeting rooms are intended to serve as limited public forums, in the first instance for library-sponsored programs and secondarily, for public events organized by local groups and organizations of a civic, cultural and/or educational nature.

Library programs and activities have absolute priority over all other uses and this policy does not apply to library-sponsored or co-sponsored events and programs (including events sponsored by the Friends of the Plaistow Public Library).

Library staff have the right to enforce proper use of the meeting rooms in accordance with this and other Library policies (see especially the Library’s Code of Conduct policy) and are authorized to monitor events and to terminate them at their sole discretion in accordance with these policies.

Exceptions to this or other policies may be made at the discretion of the Library Director and/or the Library Board of Trustees if deemed the best means of furthering the mission and goals of the Library. Exceptions shall only be valid if provided in writing by the Director or Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Inquiries about and appeals concerning Library policies or decisions may be submitted in writing to the Library Board of Trustees. Upon review, the Board’s decision is final.

**ELIGIBILITY/ FREE USE OF MEETING SPACES**

Meeting rooms are available free of charge to any non-profit group based in Plaistow for civic, cultural and/or educational programs. Tax-deductible donations to the Library or to the Friends of the Plaistow Public Library are always welcome. Other groups may use the library spaces subject to the Fee Schedule below.

Groups, or individuals acting on behalf of a group, must provide proof of residency or legal address upon request. Any group not legally incorporated in Plaistow must be able to demonstrate that a substantial connection to the Town of Plaistow exists through its stated

mission, service area, or membership. The Board of Trustees is the final arbiter of whether a substantial connection exists.

Programs must be **FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**. Admission fees, payment of dues, sales of any type, solicitation of funds, and promotion of commercial products or services are prohibited. Library meeting rooms may be used at no cost for the purpose of discussing political or religious ideas but not for political rallies, proselytizing, religious services, or similar events involving partisan promotion of, or opposition to, one or more specific candidates or religions. Candidates for political office may host a “Meet the Candidate” event that provide voters an opportunity to interact with the candidate and to learn more about his or her qualifications and positions.

Groups may charge a reasonable fee to cover the costs of literature, materials or supplies used during the course of an event with the prior approval of the Director. Arrangements for any such fees must be made in advance and stated clearly on the application form. An intention to charge such a fee must be indicated at the time the reservation request is made.

Individual tutoring sessions may be private but must be **FREE**.

Meeting rooms may also be used by municipal, state, federal or similar governmental or quasi-governmental agencies with approval from the Library Director. These meetings do not have to be open to the public unless otherwise required by law.

**FEE SCHEDULE FOR PRIVATE MEETINGS / USE BY COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The Plaistow Public Library permits the use of the Nelson and History Rooms for private meetings or by commercial organizations in accordance with the following fee schedule.

<b>History Room or Half of Nelson Room</b>	
\$20	Up to 2 hours
\$40	Between 2 and 4 hours
\$80	4 hours or longer

<b>Entire Nelson Room</b>	
\$40	Up to 2 hours
\$80	Between 2 and 4 hours
\$125	4 hours or longer

Payment must be made at least 7 days before the date of use. All other meeting room policies continue to apply.

**RESERVATION PROCEDURE**

Spaces other than Study Rooms must be booked online through the “Spaces” reservation system and are subject to approval by the Library before any booking is confirmed. Online forms must be completed in full and signed by an individual aged 21 years or older, herein referred to as the Sponsor. Library staff will review each request and will provide confirmation in writing and/or electronically if no further information is required and if the request has been approved.

Requests are generally approved on a first come, first served basis. The Library will prioritize requests as follows: Library-sponsored events; Town of Plaistow events; meetings by local non-profit groups which are free and open to the public; meetings by non-local groups and commercial organizations. Groups using Library spaces more often than twice per month will also receive lower priority.

**Reservations for library spaces may be made in advance according to the following schedule:**

**Up to 3 months in advance**

- **History Room**
- **Nelson Room “Off-Peak”:**  
~ **Mon - Fri, 9 am to 5 pm**

**Up to 30 days in advance**

- **Nelson Room “Prime Time”:**  
~ **Mon - Thurs, 5 to 7:30 pm**  
~ **Sat, 9 am to 1 pm**

### **STUDY ROOM RESERVATIONS**

The Library’s three Study Rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. A room may be reserved up to one week in advance with the Library Director’s approval. The Study Rooms are reserved in 2 hour increments. Additional sessions beyond the first 2 hour period on a single day are granted at the discretion of Library staff based on anticipated demand. If another patron requires use of a Study Room, users may be asked to give up the space within 5 minutes if they have occupied a room for longer than 2 hours.

### **INSURANCE / SECURITY DEPOSITS**

The Library reserves the right to seek guidance from the Town Manager’s Office, Police Department or other Town departments to determine whether a proposed use presents an increased risk of lawsuits or damages for bodily injury and/or property damage.

In such cases – for example, with very large groups or when the Kitchen is being used – the Library may require a security deposit, proof of insurance, and/or the presence of staff or a police detail. Any associated costs shall be the responsibility of the Sponsor, with payment due 7 days before the event.

The deposit will be returned once the spaces used have been inspected to verify that they are clean and that no equipment has been damaged.

### **AFTER-HOURS USE**

The Nelson Room is available for after-hours meetings, seven days a week, until 11 p.m. This includes meetings that begin both before and after the Library closes. There will be no access to the main portion of the Library during closed hours.

Access to the Nelson Room is provided by a keypad on the door closest to Main Street. Approved users will be given a temporary PIN code to unlock the door. The code will automatically expire at the end of the scheduled reservation.

All attendees must be out of the building by 11:00 p.m as the security system is automatically enabled at that time. Groups which set off the alarm by staying late or improperly securing the building will be assessed a \$100 fee if the Police or Fire Department is dispatched as a result.

As building use will be unsupervised, the Sponsor must use the checklist provided by Library staff to ensure that relevant policies are followed.

As no telephone service is available in the Nelson Room area, guests must bring at least one cell phone in order to contact the appropriate authorities in the event of an emergency.

During the winter months, the Library reserves the option to cancel reservations if in the Director's judgment the weather is forecast to impede public safety (e.g., winter storm warnings; see Rescheduling and Cancellations policy below).

### **LIBRARY & SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Library staff will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that: meeting spaces are in a clean, neat and orderly condition; that sufficient tables and chairs are available; and that the Nelson Room partition is open/ closed in advance, as appropriate. The Sponsor (or designee) is responsible for all other event support services: room setup according to the group's requirements, carrying equipment and materials, operating audiovisual equipment, making photocopies, etc.

Groups who violate Library policies may be denied further use of meeting spaces or be required to pay higher security deposits for subsequent reservations.

The Sponsor is responsible for communicating all relevant Library policies to event attendees. The Sponsor is responsible for paying all associated fees, including any damages and/or cleaning costs required, above and beyond any security deposit, as a result of their group's use of the facility and equipment.

### **USE BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS**

Individuals under the age of 21 may use the Library's group meeting spaces provided that adequate adult supervision is available (one supervisor 21 years or older for every eight youth).

### **RESCHEDULING & CANCELLATIONS**

The Library will do its best to accommodate requests to reschedule or relocate a meeting. Any group canceling a meeting room reservation must provide the Library with 72 hours notice.

Failure to provide such notice will jeopardize the group's access to meeting rooms in the future.

The Library reserves the right at any time to reschedule previously approved meetings or to move a meeting to a different space. Such changes will always be a last resort, necessitated by unforeseen circumstances, or by the need to prioritize library-sponsored programs or to allocate a limited resource as equitably as possible. Absent extraordinary circumstances, such changes will not be made within 30 days of a scheduled meeting. Groups using library spaces most heavily are most likely to be asked to accommodate a change request.

If the Library is forced to close because of inclement weather or other extraordinary circumstances, it will notify the Sponsor or designated contact person as soon as possible. Closings will also be posted on Facebook, the Library's website and WMUR (Channel 9). Groups are advised to telephone the Library if there is a chance it will have to close before or during their program's scheduled meeting time. It is the responsibility of the Sponsor to notify those planning to attend.

Refunds of any applicable reservation fees and security deposits will be granted if the Library is closed due to weather or other emergency, or if a reservation is cancelled with at least seven days' notice. The Library will not be responsible, however, for any costs incurred by any group or individual as a result of an unscheduled closing or event cancellation.

#### **ADVERTISING/ IMPLIED SPONSORSHIP**

Granting of permission to use library facilities by a group or individual does not constitute an endorsement by the Library of that group or individual's aims, policies, or activities.

No group may imply in advertising, postings on social media, or during a program or event that the Library has sponsored, supports or endorses the group or any particular program or event.

Groups may identify the Library as the location of a meeting and provide its address in their publicity, in text whose font and size are less prominent than other text, but may not mention the Library in the event name or use the Library's phone number, email address, logo, or other image or likeness.

The Library is not responsible for promoting events organized by outside groups or individuals. The Library may, at the discretion of the Library Director, co-sponsor events which are consistent with its mission and as programming capacity allows. Signs or other advertising materials are not allowed on library property. Directional signs may be put up on the day of a meeting with the Library Director's prior approval. Materials used or distributed at a meeting must be removed at the end of the meeting.

**MEETING SPACE DESCRIPTIONS**

Meeting Room	Description	Capacity	Availability
Mary Nelson Room (entire)	27' x 40'	75-100 lecture style	7 days/ week, meetings must end by 11 pm
Mary Nelson Room (half)	27' x 20'	20-30 seated at tables	7 days/ week, meetings must end by 11 pm
History Room	25' x 13' 9' x 3.5' conference table 10 conference chairs	8-10	Open hours only
Study Rooms 107 & 111	12' x 8' 4' table; 5 chairs	4	Open hours only
Study Room 110	5' x 5' Bench; 2 chairs	1-2	Open hours only

The **Nelson Room** is a multi-use room with a folding partition wall to divide the space into two rooms (Kitchen/ Left; Right). Features include:

- ◆ Seating capacity of 75 lecture style (100 with minimal spacing); 150 with no furniture
- ◆ Easy after-hours access to parking lot
- ◆ 8 large rectangular tables (6 person, 4' x 6')
- ◆ 4 smaller rectangular tables (2.5' x 5')
- ◆ High speed wireless network
- ◆ Public address system
- ◆ Ceiling-mounted LCD projector & screen (6' x 8')
- ◆ Podium
- ◆ Dry-erase board
- ◆ Adjacent to and with direct access to a small kitchen (see below)
- ◆ Access to restroom

The **Kitchen** is a 12' x 10' space which may be used in conjunction with the Nelson Room, subject to prior approval. Features include:

- ◆ Large counter space
- ◆ Electric stove
- ◆ Microwave
- ◆ Refrigerator
- ◆ Sink
- ◆ Coffee pots and urn

The Kitchen must be reserved in advance. The Kitchen is intended to provide a space to facilitate the final stages of food service. It is not intended to serve as a full kitchen for preparing food from scratch. There are no dishes, utensils or pots and pans available.

The **History Room** serves as the Library's special collections room and is an attractive space for private meetings of 10 or fewer. Features include:

- ◆ Seating capacity of 8 (comfortable), 10 (more cozy)
- ◆ Large windows
- ◆ Comfortable conference chairs
- ◆ Conference table (9' x 3.5')
- ◆ Podium
- ◆ Wireless access

Light refreshments may be served in the History Room with the Library Director's prior approval.

## **BASIC RULES FOR USE OF MEETING SPACES**

- A. All events must be conducted in an orderly manner and in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including the policies of the Plaistow Public Library.
- B. Use of meeting spaces must not interfere with the regular operations of the Library.
- C. Meeting room doors must be left unlocked while the rooms are in use.
- D. Materials may not be stored prior to/ after the event, or attached to walls, ceilings, windows, doors or furnishings without the Library Director's prior approval. Long-term storage of materials is not permitted.
- E. Door exits must not be blocked or concealed by furniture, decorations, or other materials.
- F. If additional equipment, tables and/or chairs are needed, library staff must be contacted for permission. Borrowing from adjacent rooms is prohibited without approval by library staff.
- G. Lights must be turned off lights and entry doors locked if events run later than Library closing.
- H. After-hours use of the building must end no later than 11:00 pm.
- I. Meeting rooms must be left in a clean, neat and orderly condition immediately following the event. A vacuum, broom and dust pan are available for guest use. Groups must bring all other cleaning supplies. All supplies, food, drinks and trash should be removed at the completion of the use of the room.
- J. Light refreshments only may be served and/or consumed. (Coffee, cookies, appetizers, and finger sandwiches are examples of light refreshments). Groups wishing to provide more substantial refreshments must explain the extent of food/drinks on the Application Form.
- K. Smoking, alcohol, open flames, and food warmers are prohibited.
- L. If there is an accident or emergency, contact a Library staff member as soon as possible. For after-hours events, contact names and telephone numbers are displayed in the Nelson Room.
- M. Damages shall be reported to Library personnel promptly.
- N. The Library assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items. Any items left behind will be kept for a week and are then subject to disposal.