

Plaistow Public Library	Policy: Meeting Room
Adopted: 9/14/2004	Page 1 of 6
Revised: 5/12/2015, 5/8/2018, 1/8/2025	

Please read this document carefully as failure to follow this or other 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 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). Events and programs sponsored by the Town of Plaistow have priority over those of other groups.

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.

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 shall be final.

ELIGIBILITY/ FREE USE OF LIBRARY MEETING SPACES

Meeting rooms are available free of charge on a first come, first served basis to any non-profit group based in Plaistow for civic, cultural and/or educational programs. 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 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 on the Meeting Room Request Form.

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.

PRIVATE AND/ OR COMMERCIAL USE OF LIBRARY MEETING SPACES

The Plaistow Public Library permits the use of the group meeting spaces described below by any group – private, non-profit, or otherwise – for non-public and/or for for-charge meetings/events, in accordance with the Board-approved fee schedule.

Rooms must be booked online through the “Spaces” reservation system and are subject to approval by the Library before any booking is confirmed. Payment must be made at least ten (10) days before the date of use. All other meeting room policies continue to apply. When approving reservation requests, the Library reserves the right to prioritize its own events and those of groups which are free and open to the public.

The Library also reserves the right to require in advance a security deposit and/ or proof of liability insurance for any event deemed to present greater than usual risk to the premises or participants.

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 views, philosophy, or objectives.

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.

RESERVATION PROCEDURE

Groups wishing to use a meeting room must submit a Meeting Request and Meeting Room Use Agreement form to the Library Director. The forms must be completed in full and signed using the Library’s online reservation system 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.

Groups may be required to provide proof of general liability insurance naming the Plaistow Public Library as an additional insured when the nature of an event leads to increased risk of lawsuits or damages for bodily injury and/ or property damage – for example, kitchen use and/ or use of potentially dangerous tools or materials.

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

Up to 3 months in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History Room• Nelson Room “Off-Peak”: ~ Mon - Fri, 9 am to 5 pm
Up to 30 days in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nelson Room “Prime Time”: ~ Mon - Thurs, 5 to 7:30 pm ~ Sat, 9 am to 1 pm

Groups or individuals using Library spaces more often than twice per month will receive lower priority.

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 two-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.

FEES & DONATIONS

When the Kitchen is being used, when refreshments are being served, and/ or in other circumstances where more intense use of the building is anticipated, a group may be required to provide a security deposit. The deposit will be returned once the spaces used have been inspected to verify that they are clean and in their original condition.

The Library reserves the right to seek the Police Department's guidance on whether any proposed use of a meeting room will require a police detail or other police presence. If so, the anticipated cost shall be the responsibility of the meeting Sponsor, with payment due prior to the event.

Donations to the Friends of the Plaistow Public Library are always welcome. Groups using the building after normal operating hours are encouraged to make a donation to help to cover the additional costs of keeping the building open.

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 ability to use or reserve 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. The Library is not responsible for any costs incurred by any group or individual as a result of an unscheduled closing or event cancellation.

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.

MEETING SPACE DESCRIPTIONS

Meeting Room	Description	Capacity	Availability
Mary Nelson Room (entire)	27' x 40'	75-100 lecture style	Meeting must begin during regular hours and end by 11 pm
Mary Nelson Room (half)	27' x 20'	20-30 seated at tables	Meeting must begin during regular hours and 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) and Right.

The **Kitchen** is a 12' x 10' space which may be used in conjunction with the Nelson Room, subject to prior approval. 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. 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 unless the Director has granted permission otherwise.
- 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 seek prior approval from the Director.
- K. Smoking, alcohol, open flames, and food warmers are prohibited.
- L. The use of glitter, confetti, or other similar materials that are hard to clean up is prohibited.
- M. No animals, except service animals, are allowed.
- N. If there is an accident or emergency, contact a Library staff member as soon as possible. For after-hours events, contact names and numbers are displayed in the Nelson Room kitchen.
- O. Damages must be reported to Library personnel promptly.
- P. 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.