

Political Use of Space and Resources Policy

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Policy Category:	General
Approved by:	OPL Board
Accountability:	Chief Executive Officer
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Effective date:	September 19, 2024
Next Review Period:	2026
Supersedes:	Election Related Resources Policy

Purpose:

The public library is a foundational institution for informed and inclusive democracies, and it plays an important role in civic dialogue and debate. Oakville Public Library (Library) must always act and appear to act in a non-partisan way, especially during elections and referendums, while supporting the democratic process, freedom of expression, and informed discussion on social and political issues.

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, prohibits municipal boards including the Library from making campaign contributions to municipal candidates or registered third parties. This policy supports compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, the Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Board Members, and the Employee Code of Conduct.

The Library may engage in non-partisan activities that encourage political participation and voter awareness. Examples of such activities include using physical library space to serve as polling stations or library physical or virtual space to host all-candidate meetings/forums or to host programs and discussions about relevant current issues.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Members of Council, Town of Oakville or library staff, OPL Board members, volunteers, registered election candidates, registered third parties, and members of the public.

Policy Statement:

Political Participation

The Library encourages democratic participation and awareness through elections, demonstrations, and sharing of information on topics of political interest, in accordance with the Customer Code of Conduct Policy and Intellectual Freedom Policy.

Individuals who are conducting activities covered by this policy within library spaces must not intimidate or harass library users; must not block, hinder, or impede travel to or from the Library, and must not disrupt the orderly operation of the Library and its services.

Posting or distributing partisan campaign or election material in libraries or on library property is not permitted. Registered candidates for political office, and registered third party advertisers may not use open Library space or property to solicit or advocate among library users and may not use open Library space or property to make public statements or host media events, unless they are part of a shared Library program or announcement.

Elections

Library resources, assets or funding may not be used for any election related purposes, except as identified in this procedure.

1. Election campaigning

- a) Election campaign materials may not be displayed at Library facilities, unless otherwise outlined in this procedure.
- b) Library owned, rented or run assets and facilities may be rented in accordance with Library policy and procedures and current rates and fees for election campaign activities providing the rental is available to all candidates and third parties. Use of rentals are subject to the following conditions:
 - i. All election campaign materials must only be displayed within the allotted rental period in the allotted rented area designated in the rental agreement; and
 - ii. Rentals for campaign related activities are not permitted from the first date of advance voting to the day after voting day.
 - iii. “All candidates” meetings can be held at the Library, either as a library program or sponsored by another group, provided that all candidates are invited to attend such meetings. A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular library program or event.
- c) Registered candidates and registered third parties may attend Library organized or funded events during a campaign period, but may not display or distribute any campaign materials.

2. Use of corporate identifiers and resources

- a) The Library’s corporate logo, corporate branding, slogan or other corporate identifiers or that of its affiliates, shall not be used by any other body or person for any election campaign-related purposes.
- b) Registered candidates and registered third parties may not use photographs, videos, electronic images, or graphics, produced by the town or its affiliates. However, use of Oakville Public Library videos that are posted to YouTube is permitted, allowing the use

of such videos in election campaign material, in accordance with YouTube's Terms of Service

- c) Use of photographs or videos not produced by the Library or its affiliates, and taken from a publicly accessible place, in campaign advertising containing the corporate logo, corporate branding, slogan or other corporate identifiers is not in contravention of paragraph 2(a) of this procedure.
- d) Corporate resources shall not be used for:
 - a. the printing or distribution of any material that illustrates that a member of Council or any other individual is registered or intends to run for office; or
 - b. the printing or distribution of any campaign material that makes reference to, or contains the names or photographs, or identifies registered candidates.
- e) No Library consumable materials, such as toner and paper, associated with computer systems shall be used for election campaign-related purposes.
- f) Lists and files produced using Library resources, with the exception of lists produced for election purposes in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, may not be used for any election campaign-related purposes.
- g) In accordance with the Online Communications Policy, the Library will not publish any material used to promote individual political opinions or campaigns.

3. Oakville Public Library Staff and Volunteers

- a) In accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct, Library staff and volunteers, including any contractors providing services to the Library shall not canvass or actively work for any candidate or registered third party during hours in which the staff/contractor is receiving compensation from the Library or in the case of volunteers during their scheduled volunteer hours.
- b) The Library and library staff and volunteers will not support, endorse, or advocate the viewpoints or beliefs of any one candidate, political party, partisan organization, or group.

4. Library services

- a) The following Library services shall be discontinued for Members of Council as of nomination day:
 - i. all forms of advertising, including advertising in Library publications; and
 - ii. all printing, photocopying and distribution, including printing and general distribution of newsletters unless so directed and approved by the Library.

5. Technology related provisions

- a) Any links to external personal sites from an individual Member of Council serving on the Library Board on the Library website will be removed the date nomination papers are filed during a municipal election year. These links may include election-related web sites, social media links or domain names.
- b) Websites, domain names, emails, or other corporate systems that are funded by the Library shall not include any election-related campaign material or links to sites that feature election-related campaign material.
- c) Registered candidates and Members of Council may not use the Library website, domain names, and other systems, for campaigning or display of any.
- d) Election-related materials. Links to the Library's website are permitted from a candidate's election website for the purpose of obtaining information about the election or sharing program/service information.