



*Building Community.  
Enriching Lives.*

## Room Use Policy

This policy is for the use of the Mahwah Public Library (hereafter "Library") for outside groups and does not apply to Library programs; Library sponsored programs, or approved Mahwah Public Library-affiliated groups.

The Library Board welcomes individuals, community groups and charitable and commercial organizations to apply for the use of selected Library rooms and areas, as available, on a fee-per-use basis as set out hereafter in section 5.

Private Rental/Use of a Library room does not constitute a Library endorsement of any policies or beliefs of any individual, group or organization which rents or uses rooms in the Library

### 1. General Principles

- 1.1. Under New Jersey law (N.J.S.A. 40:54-17), the Library Board of Trustees manages the Library and is responsible for all policies and rules and regulations governing the use of the Library and its meeting rooms and as such reserves the right to change any or all of the Room Use Policies without notice.
- 1.2. The Library and its public areas are maintained to serve residents who visit to read and borrow Library materials, attend Library cultural and educational programs, conduct research with support from Library staff and utilize Library resources and technologies.
- 1.3. The Board of Trustees believes that as a cultural, educational, and informational center, the Library assumes an obligation to make its meeting room available to all eligible non-partisan, secular community organizations and tax-supported government bodies for public meetings on an equal basis, provided that such use of the meeting room does not interfere with the effective use of the Library by the general public or the regular operation of the Library.
- 1.4. Therefore, the Library recognizes interest from individuals and organizations who seek rooms or areas where they may conduct their activities.
- 1.5. The Board of Trustees of the Mahwah Public Library reserves the right to limit, control and determine the conditions of any and all uses of the Library meeting room by non-library organizations as well as cancel or relocate any scheduled meeting, if circumstances warrant. These regulations may be changed at any time, subject to legal limitations.
- 1.6. The Board of Trustee assigns the responsibility of interpreting and executing these Policies to the Library Director and his/her designee.
- 1.7. The words "organization, group or individual(s)" used interchangeably throughout shall mean the "applicant" for the use of selected Library rooms and areas, as available and shall be subject to the Policies set forth herein.

### 2. Room Use Guidelines

- 2.1. The Library's peaceful environment and cultural and educational activities remain of primary importance. Failure to comply with this policy, or the Library's code of conduct, will disqualify the individual/ group from future use of the Library's rooms.

- 2.2. No use of the Library, including use of any meeting rooms, is permitted that will interfere with effective use of the Library by the general public or the regular operation of the library.
- 2.3. The Library does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political ideology, creed, ancestry or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, in choosing to make its rooms available to interested parties.
- 2.4. Gambling, the use of tobacco products, illegal substances, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the meeting rooms and all other areas of the Library and premises.
- 2.5. Meeting rooms shall not be used to hold demonstrations, rallies or conduct solicitations for business or perform fundraising for any organization not directly affiliated with the Library. Organizations and individuals shall not be permitted to advocate for or promote religious or political doctrine or beliefs.
- 2.6. Applicants shall comply strictly with all town ordinances and rules and regulations of the Health, Police, and Fire Departments regarding public assembly. Use of the meeting room will be limited to the capacity approved by the Fire Department. If it is necessary to have a uniformed firefighter or police officer present to enforce safety provisions, the expense will be borne by the applicant. Proof of any such arrangements must be provided prior to the beginning of the event.
- 2.7. Library related programs, i.e. programs sponsored or hosted directly by the Library shall take precedence over all other events. Priority for use of the room is in the following order: Library programs and events; events sponsored by the Friends of Mahwah Library; meetings of Township agencies, boards and committees; room rentals by Mahwah residents or organizations; and room rentals by non-Mahwah residents or organizations.
- 2.8. No organization/individual may refer to the Library as their permanent meeting place. No organization/individual may use a Library room more than four (4) times in one month and twelve (12) times in each calendar year.
- 2.9. All groups must be supervised by a responsible adult and a responsible adult will be required to complete the application. If permission is granted to an organization whose members are eighteen (18) years of age or younger, one (1) supervising adult for every ten children must be in attendance.
- 2.10. All meetings and programs must be free of charge. No organization/individual may make a collection or charge a fee to those attending the meeting/program unless specifically requested in writing in advance and approved in writing prior to the event by the Board of Trustees; their decision will be final.
- 2.11. Press releases, posters, invitations, and other promotional materials are the responsibility of the applicant. Publicity for events must include a street address, telephone number and, where possible, email address of an individual sponsor or organization sponsor. Publicity, fliers, brochures, etc. cannot be left at the Library without express permission of the Director. Library staff will not provide program information, conduct registration or collect money for any event or meeting.
- 2.12. Organizations/individuals may not imply that an event or meeting is sponsored, co-sponsored or endorsed by the Library in any advertising or publicity. Except as a designation of location, the name of the Library may not be used in any advertising related to the use of meeting rooms, nor may the Library's telephone number be placed on any publicity. All such materials must be presented in advance for review. The Library reserves the right to review details for each proposed event or meeting, including but not limited to such aspects as safety, security and management and may either require an amendment to the proposed use or deny it based on the application.
- 2.13. The Library is not responsible for equipment, supplies, materials, or other items owned by an organization and used by them in the Library. Porter services and storage space are not available.
- 2.14. Use of a meeting room is limited to the purpose described in the rental application. Any change of use must be provided, in writing, and approved in advance by the Library Director. Programs may be canceled by the Director for non-compliance. Timely notice of cancellation must be provided and the Director or his/her designee reserves the right to visit and/or observe any program or meeting held on Library property.

### 3. Appropriate Use of Library Facilities & Equipment

- 3.1. Technology and audio-visual systems. There is wireless internet access provided throughout the lower level. All rooms feature audiovisual systems with HDMI inputs. Users wishing to use the audiovisual systems must supply their own laptop or device and all cables necessary to connect it to the audiovisual system via HDMI. The Library does not provide audiovisual and technology support, including setup and configuration of non-library equipment.
- 3.2. Refreshments may be served, subject to 2.4 above. Food may not be prepared on-site. Items to be served must be stated in the application. The Library does not provide serving utensils, dishes or drinking vessels. The group must provide their own cleanup. Set-up is one hour before the program and cleanup must be performed immediately upon completion of the program.
- 3.3. The room must be left clean and as the individual/group found it. No material may be attached to the walls for display purposes. Staff will set up or seating and table arrangements based on standard configurations established by the Library prior to the event.
- 3.4. The individual/organization renting a room is responsible for any damage done to the room and/or its contents, the buildings and ground, or for personal injuries incurred during attendance at the meeting and further agrees to pay costs for any extra cleaning or repairs necessary after the event through an additional maintenance fee charge as described in 3.5 below. A Certificate of Insurance, naming the Township of Mahwah and Mahwah Public Library as additional insureds must be provided in advance of the meeting.
- 3.5. The condition of the meeting room shall be checked by an authorized employee of the Library both before and after the event or meeting, and the condition of the premises with particular respect to any damage or shortage shall be noted in writing. Payment for any such damage or shortage shall be made by the individuals/organization renting the room. If such payment is not made, the organization shall be barred from further use of the facility until such payment is made.

### 4. Hours of Operation & Emergency Closing

- 4.1. Programs/meetings may be held during normal hours of operation, Monday through Saturday. After-hours use may be available upon request, pending approval by the Director. Rentals will not be approved for dates on which the library is closed, or on Sundays.
- 4.2. All room rentals will be cancelled if the Library closes due to weather or other emergencies. Reasonable efforts will be made to announce the cancellation on the Library's website, and to contact the renting organization; however, the organization should verify that the Library is open prior to their reservation. If the Library closes, the renting organization will be given the choice of rescheduling their meeting, or receiving a refund.

### 5. Fees

- 5.1. Each room reservation will be considered an individual event for billing purposes. A 50% deposit will be required to reserve the room, with the balance due on the day of the event.
- 5.2. All room rentals require a \$100 security deposit, payable by check which will be returned upon satisfactory inspection of the room subsequent to use.
- 5.3. Organizations/individuals who cancel a room rental with less than 7 days' notice to the Library shall be charged an administrative fee equal to 25% of the full rental fee. This fee must be paid in full before the organization/individual may make additional reservations.
- 5.4. No fee will be charged for programs sponsored by the Library, or those sponsored by the Friends of the Mahwah Public Library.
- 5.5. No fee will be charge to official Township of Mahwah agencies, boards and committees, including organizations that are covered under the Township's insurance as "quasi" I, II, III, or IV.
- 5.6. The following fees will be charged to individuals that reside in Mahwah and businesses and organizations that are based in Mahwah:

- 5.6.1. Octagon: All Scout troops based in Mahwah are allowed to use the Octagon up to twelve times each year without charge. Additional Octagon rentals will be charged \$10 for the first two hours and \$10 for each additional hour
- 5.6.2. Small Meeting Room: \$20 first two hours, including setup; \$10 each additional hour or part of an hour.
- 5.6.3. Large Meeting Room: \$40 first two hours, including setup; \$20 each additional hour or part of an hour.
- 5.6.4. Winter Room: \$80 first two hours, including setup; \$40 each additional hour or part of an hour.
- 5.7. The following fees will be charged to individuals that reside outside Mahwah and organizations that businesses are based outside Mahwah:
  - 5.7.1. Small Meeting Room: \$60 first two hours, including setup; \$30 each additional hour or part of an hour.
  - 5.7.2. Large Meeting Room: \$120 first two hours, including setup; \$60 each additional hour or part of an hour.
  - 5.7.3. Winter Room: \$240 first two hours, including setup; \$120 each additional hour or part of an hour.
- 5.8. Use of the Winter Room piano: \$200 per event, regardless of duration.
6. Application Procedures:
  - 6.1. Applications shall be made online through the Library's website. All required information must be submitted before the application can be considered. Applicants are encouraged to provide any additional information about the event (brochures, etc.) will assist in the approval process. Applications are not transferable to other groups or individuals.
  - 6.2. Reservations for use of the room are made in order of request, and applications must be made in writing. No reservations will be finalized until the Application Form and Liability Waiver have been signed by a duly authorized officer or agent of the group.
  - 6.3. A Certificate of Insurance for General Liability, in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, naming the Township of Mahwah and the Mahwah Public Library as additional insured, must be provided with the room rental application. No room rental will be approved without a valid certificate of insurance. Please refer to the form "Insurance Requirements" and sample Certificate of Insurance, in this packet.
  - 6.4. The applicant must provide the Library with a "Hold Harmless" agreement indemnifying the Township of Mahwah and the Mahwah Public Library, and any of their officers, agents and employees, against any damage or injury arising from its occupancy and use of the facility and its equipment or the Library proper. The Township of Mahwah and the Mahwah Public Library shall not be held responsible for loss or damage to any property owned by the users of the Library facility.
  - 6.5. Once approved and fully executed, a copy of the application shall be returned to the applicant(s). Incomplete applications will be held for a period of 30 days.
7. Bases for denying application.
  - 7.1. An application may be denied for the following reasons:
    - 7.1.1. Jeopardizing the building or exceeding its capacity. If, in the judgment of the Director, the safety of the building or occupants will be adversely affected.
    - 7.1.2. Violations of laws. If the event violates any law, or violates any rule, regulation or condition governing the use of the meeting room.
    - 7.1.3. Competing Library function or organization with a preference. If there is a competing Library function.
    - 7.1.4. Promoting religious or political doctrine. If the event advocates for or promotes religious or political doctrine or beliefs.
    - 7.1.5. Fundraising and admission. If the event is of a fundraiser, or admission fees are charged.

- 7.1.6. Non-payment of fees. If the applicant has not paid any of the fees required herein.
- 7.1.7. Jeopardizing the reputation and good standing of the Library in the community and other bases for denial. Such other reasons as may be compelling and in the interests of the Library and its patrons, in the judgment of the Director. Applicant shall, however, be given the opportunity to be present at a meeting of the Library Board of Trustees at which the application shall be the subject of deliberation and to present any arguments in support of the application as set forth in section 2.15 above.
- 7.2. The applicant shall be notified in writing whether the application has been approved or denied, and a denial shall state the reason therefor.
- 7.3. An organization/individual denied permission may file an appeal to the Library Board of Trustees at least one (1) week prior to the next regular Board meeting. A copy must be sent to the Library Director as well. After review the Trustees will notify the appealing part in writing of its decision. The decision of the Library Board of Trustees is final

Policy last reviewed and updated: November 17, 2021.