

Meeting Space Policy & Guidelines

The Hampton Falls Free Library welcomes everyone to use our meeting spaces so that they may gather to access and share information, exchange ideas and participate in community activities. We endorse the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which states:

“Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations or individuals or groups requesting their use.”

Permission to use the Library's Meeting Spaces does not imply endorsement by the Library's Staff, the Trustees of the Hampton Falls Free Library, or the Town of Hampton Falls of the beliefs, policies, practices, or program of any individual or group using the facilities.

Priorities of Use

Priority for Meeting Space use is given to Library-sponsored activities. Providing Meeting Space is not a primary mission of the Library and must always be subordinate to the paramount need to provide a safe, peaceful, and respectful environment for normal library pursuits.

Public Nature of Use

1. All meetings and events must be of an educational, cultural, or civic nature.

Meeting spaces may be used for meetings by non-profit groups engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, charitable, advocacy, civic, religious, or political activities that are based in Hampton Falls or serve Hampton Falls residents. Individual use is permitted by local students for public presentations.

Meeting spaces shall **not** be reserved or used for social gatherings, private parties (including but not limited to birthday parties, showers, potlucks, banquets, graduations, weddings, memorials, or family reunions) or fundraising events.

2. Public use of meeting spaces shall not interfere with library operations. Meetings and events that interfere with patrons in their customary use of Library facilities, impede Library staff in the performance of their duties, or endanger the Library building or collection are not permitted.

3. All Library policies apply to any activity in the meeting spaces. Those organizing or attending meetings are encouraged to familiarize themselves with our Library's "Behavior Policy." Any conduct in violation should be reported to staff. The further use of meeting spaces may be denied to individuals or groups who disregard Library regulations.

4. All meetings and events must be open to all members of the public and news media. Activities taking place in the Meeting Spaces must not be closed to any person in any legally protected category, including but not limited to age, gender, sex, race, religion, marital status, political affiliation, national origin, or disabling condition. Library staff reserve the right to attend meetings and events at any time.

5. All meetings and events must be accessible to all. Users of Library Meeting Spaces must comply with all applicable local, State and Federal laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

6. All non-Library sponsored meetings and events must be free of charge for those attending and open to the public. A community group wishing to charge a fee may do so only with the permission of the Library Director or Board of Trustees. The proposed fee must be shown to be necessary to cover the costs of the program or class. Presenters may sell their materials during their programs.

Application/Reservations

1. Reservations are approved by the Director or Board of Trustees in order of receipt.
2. A Hampton Falls member of the organization must sponsor an event of a non-local organization.
3. Meeting Space reservations may be made up to six months in advance.

Cancellations

The Library reserves the right to cancel a reservation due to weather, lack of power or some other emergency. When the Library closes because of a facility or weather-related emergency, reasonable efforts will be made to notify the responsible individual/group scheduled to use a meeting room.

General Guidelines

Hours of Use

1. Meeting Spaces are available for use during the Library's normal operating hours.
2. Individuals or groups needing setup time before their meeting should allow for it in their reservations. Access to Meeting Spaces will not be permitted before or after the reservation time.
3. All participants must leave by the time the Library closes for the day.

Room Capacity

1. Users of the Library Meeting Spaces must adhere to the maximum capacity of each area.
 - a. Maximum occupancy in the Joan S. Topp Multi-Purpose Room is 18 adults or children.
 - b. Maximum occupancy in the Central Hall is 60 people seated or 90 standing.
2. Youth/children's groups must have one adult in attendance for every eight children.

Setup

1. Set up of chairs and tables are the responsibility of each individual or group.
2. Egress routes may not be obstructed in any way and exit signs must remain clearly visible.
3. Permission to hang decorations or set up signs or tables for a meeting require prior approval by the Library Director or their designee.
4. No flame-producing or hazardous devices may be used in the Library.
5. Storage is not available.

Equipment

1. Requests for use of any Library-owned equipment (e.g. podium, projector, easel) must be made when reserving the Meeting Space.
2. A Library staff member will set up Library-owned equipment, ensure its proper operation, and

store it after use.

3. Library staff will not operate equipment during programs (i.e., start/stop videos or slideshows).

4. Individuals or groups providing their own laptop and who wish to connect to the Library's network, display, or sound system are strongly encouraged to test their device ahead of time.

5. Technical questions can be addressed to the Library Staff subject to their availability.

Food and Beverage

- Light refreshments (such as box or bag lunches, cookies, finger foods, etc.) may be served.

Outside catering is permitted.

- No food may be prepared on Library premises, however, use of electric warming appliances such as crock pots and coffee makers are permitted, but not chafing dishes with open flames.

- Individuals/groups serving refreshments must provide all serving equipment.

- Alcoholic beverages may be served in the Library with special permission and reimbursement of an insurance rider.

- Leftover food, beverages, and serving items must be **removed** from the Library.

- All cleanup must be completed before the end of the reservation time and before leaving.

Publicity

- Advertising of meetings and events is the sole responsibility of the applicant.

- All publicity concerning meetings should make clear that the Library is **not** the sponsor, and advertisements must include the statement, "not a program of the Hampton Falls Free Library."

- Neither the name nor address of the Hampton Falls Free Library may be used as an organization's official address except for library-affiliated organizations or with the approval of the Library's Director.

Clean Up/ Damages/Liability

- Individuals and groups are responsible for leaving meeting spaces in good order and as found.

This includes: returning all tables and chairs to the original setup, placing all trash in receptacles provided by the Library, reporting any spills immediately to a staff member, and removal of all personal effects.

- The Hampton Falls Free Library or its staff is not responsible for items lost or stolen.

- No fees are charged for use of the meeting space, however, the Library reserves the right to collect payment from the responsible party for damages or costs incurred through the use of its facilities, equipment and meeting spaces.

Indemnification

By using a Library's Meeting Space, individuals and groups agree to hold the Library Board of Trustees, the Town of Hampton Falls, and all Library Staff harmless and to indemnify them against all costs, damages, losses, claims, and expenses incurred, directly or indirectly, as a result of the Meeting

Space use. Such costs, damages, losses, claims, and expenses shall include, without limitation, any damage to the meeting space or any other part of the Library building, grounds, or collection; the cost of employee overtime, if occasioned by the use of the Meeting Space; the cost of police protection, if deemed necessary by the Board of Library Trustees; and any claim asserted by any third person against the Library Board of Trustees, the Town of Hampton Falls, and/or any Library staff on account of any alleged injury causally related to the meeting, together with defense costs including reasonable attorneys' fees.

Release

In consideration of the use of any Meeting Space, an individual or group, for itself and each and all of its members, hereby releases, remises and waives any and all claims which they, or any of them, ever will or may have against the Library Board of Trustees, the Town of Hampton Falls and/or the Library's Staff for any injury to persons or damage to property suffered by such group or any of its members during or as a result of the use of the Meeting Space(s), except insofar as such injury or damage is directly and solely caused by the negligence or intentional misconduct of any person belonging to or acting on behalf of the Hampton Falls Free Library Board of Trustees, the Town of Hampton Falls or the Library's Staff.

This Policy was approved by the Hampton Falls Free Library Board of Trustees on: May 25, 2023

Meeting Space Reservation Form: Date: _____

Name of Group: _____

Name of Responsible Person: _____

Card number or address: _____ Phone: _____

Date and Time of Meeting: _____ End Time: _____

Number People expected: _____

Meeting Space Requested: _____

Requested Equipment: _____

I have read and understand the Meeting Space Policy and Guidelines for the reserved space.

Meeting space reservation approved:

Signed: _____ Date: _____