

Community Information: Bulletin Board, Display Areas and Public Spaces

Purpose:

The Milford Public Library provides a limited amount of bulletin board and display area space for announcements and notices of local community activities and events, public service and commercial notices of educational, cultural, or community interest.

Policy:

The following applies to all public bulletin boards and all literature display areas used for the aforementioned purposes.

1. All items should be brought to the Circulation Desk for approval by the Library Director or designated Library staff.
2. Priority is given to local non-profit organizations and events. If display areas are crowded, library staff reserve the right to select notices for events with the widest appeal.
3. Items approved for display will be signed with a removal date and initials of the staff member. Most items will be displayed for up to 30 days unless approval is given for a longer period of time.
4. It is desirable that postings have a name and telephone number or email contact for further information or clarification.
5. Only the Library Director or designated staff will post materials so that materials are neatly posted and adequate space for the posting can be determined.
6. Only the Library Director or designated staff or the original person requesting an item be posted may remove notices.
7. Materials that support or oppose any political candidate or ballot measure will not be displayed. However, election information, such as that provided by the Secretary of State or the League of Women Voters may be made available.
8. Information on tutoring, day care services, and other child related services will be kept in the Children's Department.
9. Petitions may not be posted in the library.
10. Once items are removed, they are discarded.
11. Items posted or left on tables without authorization will be removed and discarded.
12. Oversized posters may be rejected because of space limitations.
13. The Milford Public Library does not assume responsibility for materials damaged or stolen.
14. The goal of the Milford Public Library is to maintain a position of impartiality. Therefore, it will accept items without discrimination on the basis of political or religious content. The Library supports the Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.
15. Acceptance of materials for display does not imply the library's endorsement of a group or organization, its policies or beliefs.

Library Spaces

The Library may occasionally allow local community oriented organizations to use certain areas of the Library on an informal basis. In order to be fair to the other users of the Library the following conditions apply.

- a. Approval must be obtained from the Library Director.
- b. Approval will be subject, but not limited, to the following: library usage, space availability and the needs of the community organization.
- c. The organization agrees that any disturbance to normal Library use will cause permission to be withdrawn at any time.
- d. The Library cannot provide any equipment, supplies, etc
- e. The organization agrees to hold the Milford Public Library harmless in matters of liability relating to their use of the facility.

Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Libraries often provide exhibit spaces and bulletin boards in physical and/or electronic formats. The uses made of these spaces should conform to the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*: Article I states, "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." Article II states, "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Article VI maintains that exhibit space should be made available "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

In developing library exhibits, staff members should endeavor to present a broad spectrum of opinion and a variety of viewpoints. Libraries should not shrink from developing exhibits because of controversial content or because of the beliefs or affiliations of those whose work is represented. Just as libraries do not endorse the viewpoints of those whose work is represented in their collections, libraries also do not endorse the beliefs or viewpoints of topics that may be the subject of library exhibits.

Exhibit areas often are made available for use by community groups. Libraries should formulate a written policy for the use of these exhibit areas to assure that space is provided on an equitable basis to all groups that request it. Written policies for exhibit space use should be stated in inclusive rather than exclusive terms. For example, a policy that the library's exhibit space is open "to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities" is an inclusive statement of the limited uses of the exhibit space. This defined limitation would permit religious groups to use the exhibit space because they engage in intellectual activities, but would exclude most commercial uses of the exhibit space.

A publicly supported library may designate use of exhibit space for strictly library-related activities, provided that this limitation is viewpoint neutral and clearly defined.

Libraries may include in this policy rules regarding the time, place, and manner of use of the exhibit space, so long as the rules are content neutral and are applied in the same manner to all groups wishing to use the space. A library may wish to limit access to exhibit space to groups within the community served by the library. This practice is acceptable provided that the same rules and regulations apply to everyone, and that exclusion is not made on the basis of the doctrinal, religious, or political beliefs of the potential users.

The library should not censor or remove an exhibit because some members of the community may disagree with its content. Those who object to the content of any exhibit held at the library should be able to submit their complaint and/or their own exhibit proposal to be judged according to the policies established by the library.

Libraries may wish to post a permanent notice near the exhibit area stating that the library does not advocate or endorse the viewpoints of exhibits or exhibitors.

Libraries that make bulletin boards available to public groups for posting notices of public interest should develop criteria for the use of these spaces based on the same considerations as those outlined above. Libraries may wish to develop criteria regarding the size of material to be displayed, the length of time materials may remain on the bulletin board, the frequency with which material may be posted for the same group, and the geographic area from which notices will be accepted.

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