

## ATTACHMENT 1: Toronto Public Library Response to MM 11.14

January 6, 2021

Chris Murray  
City Manager  
City of Toronto  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor, East Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mr. Murray:

*Re: Toronto Public Library Response to [MM11.14 - Reviewing City of Toronto Policies Governing the Use of Libraries and City Facilities](#)*

The Toronto Public Library Board (the "Board") is committed to the principles outlined in the City of Toronto's (the "City") *Vision Statement on Access, Equity & Diversity*, and its *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy*. This commitment is reflected in the Toronto Public Library's ("TPL") Mission and Value statements, and in specific policies, including TPL's *Community and Event Space Rental Policy*, *TPL's Rules of Conduct Policy* and *TPL's Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy*, which is modelled on the City's *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/ Discrimination Policy*. TPL's *Community and Event Space Rental Policy* is also aligned with obligations outlined in the City's *Hate Activity Policy*, TPL's obligations under the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), and is in line with the Canadian Federation of Library Association's position on third-party use of publicly funded library meeting rooms and facilities.

Public libraries in Ontario are governed by the [Public Libraries Act](#) R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44, which authorizes public library boards to make rules regulating all matters connected with the management of the library and library property.

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### Office of the City Librarian

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In 2017, TPL commenced a review of TPL's *Community and Event Space Rental Policy* (the "Rental Policy"), which included consulting members of the public and other stakeholders, examining relevant legislation and City of Toronto policies, and reviewing TPL's mission statement: *The Library preserves and promotes universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment*. TPL also engaged an external law firm to review the Rental Policy.

In December 2017, the Board approved a revised Rental Policy. The main objectives of the Rental Policy are to provide equitable access to library services and to maintain a welcoming and supportive environment free from discrimination and harassment. In updating the Rental Policy, TPL incorporated City of Toronto *Hate Activity Policy* language regarding not tolerating discrimination, contempt, and hatred into the Rental Policy. The policy statement was reinforced to articulate that:

- decisions about room bookings are based on the purpose of the room rental booking, not the individual or group making the booking, and
- appeals about decisions are made to the City Librarian who is the final decision maker on room rental booking matters.

This revised Rental Policy more clearly sets out the conditions under which TPL will allow or deny room rental applications, requiring all persons and groups using library space to abide by the law and TPL policies. The revised language in the Rental Policy explicitly states that hate activity is not permitted on TPL premises. Below is a summary of some of the changes TPL made to the Rental Policy in 2017:

- TPL revised the Purpose section of the Rental Policy to add language about TPL's objective and commitment to providing equitable access to services and maintaining a welcoming supportive environment free from discrimination and harassment.
- TPL strengthened the language in the Denial of Use sections 4.4 (a) and 5.4(a) to include language from the City's *Hate Activity Policy*.
- Under the same Denial of Use sections 4.4(a) and 5.4(a), TPL specifically references that violations of the *Criminal Code of Canada* (including hate propaganda laws) and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* are unacceptable.

In addition to revising the Rental Policy in 2017, TPL also changed room rental procedures. The new procedures provide TPL staff more information about the stated purpose behind each room rental application. This allows TPL staff to make better informed decisions about the room rental application and to ensure that room rentals comply with TPL's policies.

TPL also incorporated language similar to the Denial of Use sections 4.4 (a) and 5.4 (a) of the Rental Policy into the terms and conditions of the contract that must be signed by all individuals and groups renting TPL community and event space. In keeping with the City of Toronto's [Hate Activity Policy](#), these contracts also require individuals and groups renting TPL community and event space to confirm that they will not conduct any business or activities that are in violation of the *Community and Event Space Rental Policy*, the *Criminal Code of Canada* (including hate propaganda laws) or the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

A welcoming and supportive environment free from discrimination and harassment is an important statement that appears in TPL's mission statement and was added to TPL's revised *Community and Event Space Rental Policy*. It means TPL welcomes diversity and supports equity and inclusion by welcoming everyone without judgement to pursue their interests at the library. TPL staff maintain a welcoming and supportive environment free of discrimination and harassment by using the guidance provided in TPL's *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy* and the tools provided in TPL's *Rules of Conduct*.

Sincerely,

Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

**Additional Resources:**

- [Community and Event Space Rental Policy – Revisions](#). Toronto Public Library Board. December 17, 2017.
- [Rules of Conduct Policy](#). Toronto Public Library Board. January 21, 2013.
- Toronto Public Library [Vision, Mission and Value Statements](#).
- [Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Discrimination Policy](#), Toronto Public Library Board. December 12, 2016.
- [Position on Third-Party Use of Publicly Funded Library Meetings Rooms and Facilities: An Interpretation of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#). Canadian Federation of Library Associations. March 2019.