Expressive Activity on Library Property Policy

The Brimfield Public Library District recognizes and respects the right of the public to speak, assemble peaceably, petition, and otherwise engage in constitutionally protected expression. This policy governs demonstrations, protests, solicitation, canvassing, petitioning, campaigning, the distribution of materials, and the display of signs on Library property. Its purpose is to protect the exercise of those rights while ensuring the Library's ability to operate safely, serve all patrons without disruption, and care for its building and grounds.

This policy does not govern the Library's own communications, the Community Bulletin Board, donation boxes, display cases and exhibits, or the reservation of Library meeting spaces. (See Library Communications Policy, Community Information Policy, and Meeting Space Use Policy)

Definitions

- **Expressive activity** means speech or conduct protected by the First Amendment, including demonstrating, protesting, picketing, leafleting, petitioning, canvassing, campaigning, conducting surveys, public speaking, and displaying signs.
- **Solicitation** means requesting or attempting to obtain money, goods, services, personal information, signatures, or participation in an activity or event. Solicitation includes sales, fundraising, and the conducting of surveys.
- **Library property** means the Library building and the grounds, parking areas, and walkways owned or controlled by the Library District. Library property does not include the public sidewalks, streets, or public rights-of-way adjacent to Library property.

Forum Designation

The Library building's interior spaces and grounds are a limited public forum. As such, expressive activity on Library property is subject to the reasonable, viewpoint-neutral restrictions set out in this policy.

The public sidewalks, streets, and public rights-of-way adjacent to Library property are traditional public forums that are not owned or controlled by the Library District. This policy does not apply in those areas.

General Standards for Expressive Activity

All persons engaging in expressive activity on Library property must comply with Library policies, including the Acceptable Library Use Policy, and with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

Expressive activity on Library property must not:

- Block or obstruct building entrances, exits, emergency exits, or accessible routes required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Impede motor vehicle or pedestrian traffic or create unsafe conditions in parking areas or on walkways.
- Disrupt the normal functions of the Library, including activities, programs, services, and access to resources.
- Exceed posted occupancy limits.
- Damage Library property, furnishings, or landscaping, or endanger the health or safety of any person.
- Interfere with the right of others to assemble peaceably or to speak, including individuals expressing opposing views.
- Involve amplified sound, including megaphones, loudspeakers, and public address systems.
- Involve tents, canopies, tables, or other temporary structures placed on Library property without the prior approval of the Library Director.
- Continue on Library property after the Library has closed for the day, or involve overnight presence on Library property.
- Involve any weapon prohibited by the Acceptable Library Use Policy or by Illinois law.

All trash, litter, and materials associated with the activity must be removed by the participating individual or group.

Solicitation, Canvassing, Petitioning, and Distribution of Materials

Solicitation, canvasing, petitioning, campaigning, and the distribution of materials not connected with the work of the Library are not permitted on Library property. Limited exceptions are:

- Fundraising conducted for the benefit of the Library, which must be approved in advance by the Library Board of Trustees
- The sale of books, music, or other creative work products by a presenter at a Library program such as a concert, book launch, or author event, which must be approved in advance by the Library Director. (See Programming Policy)
- Materials posted to the Community Bulletin Board or donation boxes placed in the Library's foyer in compliance with the Community Information Policy.

These restrictions do not apply on days the Library serves as a polling place during the hours the polls are open. (See Elections and Polling Place Activity below)

Signs

Hand-held signs carried by a participant are permitted on Library grounds, subject to the General Standards above. In addition:

- Signage must not be attached to Library structures, furniture, or landscaping.
- Free-standing, staked, posted, or unattended signs and banners may not be placed on Library property.
- Signs must not block sightlines for vehicles entering or leaving Library property.

This section does not apply to signage produced or sponsored by the Library, or to temporary election signs placed in accordance with Illinois election law as described below.

Chalking, Painting, and Other Exterior Messaging

Chalking, painting, and similar markings are not permitted on Library property unless produced or sponsored by the Library. Any such messaging will be treated as graffiti and removed as soon as possible.

Elections and Polling Place Activity

The Library's Activity Room serves as a temporary polling place for Peoria County elections, and, at times, as an early voting location. Illinois law governs electioneering on polling place property, and on Election Day the regulation of electioneering on polling place property is an exclusive power and function of the state, enforced by the election judges. Library staff will not attempt to regulate electioneering while the polls are open and will refer questions and complaints to the election judges or to the county election authority.

The following apply when the Library serves as a polling place:

- Electioneering, soliciting votes, and political discussion are prohibited inside the polling room and within the campaign free zone, which extends 100 horizontal feet from each entrance to the room used for voting and is marked by election officials. (10 ILCS 5/17-29)
- Beyond the campaign free zone, polling place property is a public forum for the time the polls are open. People have the right to congregate and engage in electioneering there, including the placement of temporary signs. (10 ILCS 5/7-41(c))
- Signs must comply with all applicable state and local sign regulations.
- No sign may be placed before the first day the Library serves as a polling place, and all signs must be removed within 24 hours after the polls close.
- No sign may be affixed to any Library structure or landscaping.
- Library staff may relocate signs as necessary to maintain access to the building, care for the grounds, or protect public safety.
- Signs remaining on Library property after the removal deadline will be taken down and held at the Library for 14 days, after which they may be discarded.

When the Library serves as an early voting location, the Library will follow the direction of the county election authority regarding electioneering and signage on those days. (10 ILCS 5/19A-70)

Where any provision of this policy conflicts with Illinois election law on a day the Library serves as a polling place, election law governs.

Communication

Communication with Participants

Library administrators will make every effort to communicate with the leaders of a demonstrating or protesting group and to maintain an open line of communication with them. Group leaders will be asked to identify a point of contact, to review this policy, and to establish a tone of respect and civil discourse.

The Library does not require a permit or advance notice for expressive activity. Organizers may wish to contact the Village of Brimfield or Peoria County regarding any permit that may apply to activity in streets or public rights-of-way.

Communication with Law Enforcement

It is not the Library's responsibility to supervise or control the behavior of participants occupying spaces outside Library property that are traditional public forums. Library staff will notify local law enforcement if a protest, demonstration, or gathering becomes violent, if there is a reasonable likelihood that it will become violent, or if participants interfere with patrons accessing and using the Library. When there is advance notice of a demonstration, Library administration will consult local law enforcement about proper procedure and may request local law enforcement support to ensure public safety.

Communication with News Media

The Library Director, or a person designated by the Director, is the only person authorized to speak on behalf of the Library regarding expressive activity on Library property. Staff will refer media inquiries to the Director.

Enforcement

Library staff are authorized by the Board of Trustees to enforce this policy. Enforcement will proceed as follows:

- Staff will explain the applicable provision and give the person a reasonable opportunity to comply.
- A person who does not comply may be directed to leave Library property. A person who refuses to leave when directed may be subject to removal by law enforcement and to prosecution for criminal trespass.
- Serious or repeated violations may result in the loss of Library privileges. (See Policy on Enforcement of Library Use Rules)
- Signs, materials, or structures placed in violation of this policy will be removed and held at the Library for 14 days, after which they may be discarded.
- Video surveillance is in use in certain locations throughout the building and grounds. (See Security Camera Policy.)

A person may appeal an enforcement decision in writing to the Library Director within 10 days after the decision is communicated. Appeals may be emailed to director@brimfieldlibrary.org or

left with Circulation Desk staff. The Director will provide a written response within 30 days. The Director's decision is final.

This Enforcement section does not apply to electioneering on polling place property while the polls are open, which is regulated by the election judges under State law.

Library Employees and Trustees

Individual Library employees and trustees are not prohibited from participating in demonstrations, protests, or other expressive activity, except that such participation must not take place during the employee's work hours and must not be conducted in a manner that suggests the employee or trustee is speaking or acting on behalf of the Library.

Nothing in this section limits any right an employee holds under federal or state labor law.

The presence of individuals, including individual Library Trustees or staff members, engaging in expressive activity does not imply endorsement by the Library or its Board of Trustees of the views expressed by those individuals.

Public Comment at Board Meetings

Public comment at meetings of the Board of Trustees is governed by the Board Bylaws and by the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120), not by this policy. This policy governs expressive activity on Library property generally; a Board meeting is a distinct proceeding with its own agenda, procedure, and statutory framework.

A protest, demonstration, or other expressive activity that takes place on Library grounds before or after a Board meeting, or outside the meeting room while the meeting is underway, remains subject to this policy.

Non-Endorsement

Permitting expressive activity on Library property does not constitute or imply Library endorsement of any group, organization, individual, idea, belief, cause, product, service, activity, or event.

Relationship to Law

Nothing in this policy is intended to override or conflict with applicable federal, state, or local law regarding free speech and public assembly. In the event of any inconsistency, the law shall govern.

Referenced Policies

Acceptable Library Use Policy; Board Bylaws; Community Information and Display Policy; Meeting Space Use Policy; Policy on Enforcement of Library Use Rules; Programming Policy; Security Camera Policy

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees on October 19, 2026