



Use of Facilities and Grounds Policy

Approved by the board May 10, 2006

1) Scope and Objectives of Policy

The Policy covers:

- use of church premises, including the buildings, the meeting rooms, the kitchen, the sanctuary, and the grounds
- both free use (to members), and rental to external parties, including other churches and associated organizations
- use of equipment and furniture

The objective of the policy is to ensure:

- Proper use of facilities
- Proper priority for bookings
- Fair and equitable fee and usage allocation

2) General Principles

The North Shore Unitarian Church seeks to make the facilities of the church available not only to individual members, NSUC committees, and to other Unitarian congregations, but to members of the broader community.

The Board of the North Shore Unitarian Church may rent the church premises on a limited basis, for the purpose of raising funds. However, the premises may only be used for purposes consistent with its Mission. Such rental use should not conflict with the needs of members.

In making premises available, the North Shore Unitarian Church makes no guarantee as to the suitability or safety of any activity, nor does it accept liability for any loss or damage incurred, nor will assume responsibility for the opinions or activities of any organization or individual not officially connected with the church.

3) Procedure

1. All requests for use of premises will initially be made to the Church Administrator, who is responsible for administration of this policy
2. The Church Administrator will refer all requests according to the list of Responsibilities, below.

4) Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

is responsible for

- Decisions on extended use of the church building
- Decisions on any fundraising events or activities
- Decisions on recommendations from the Facilities Rental Committee (below)
- Decisions referred to the Board by the Administrator
- Timely review of all existing contracts

Church Administrator

is responsible for

- Co-ordination and decisions related to *bookings by members and others*. The Administrator may refer more difficult decisions or disputes to the Facilities Committee.
- Administration of all bookings
 - ✓ Informing all parties of the conditions under which any room may be booked
 - ✓ Maintaining the Church “Calendar”
 - ✓ signing of any relevant agreements
 - ✓ collection of any fees

The ARE Committee

- *All meetings of an educational nature* must be coordinated with the Adult Religious Education Committee. If any conflict in purpose cannot be resolved by the Facilities Rental Committee, the Board may hear an appeal.

5) Priority of Bookings

As a broad guideline, priority will be determined by order of booking. Specifically, a group or individual who has reserved a room by going through the accepted procedure will have priority over a later request or no request at all, however, the church administrator will have discretion to request a group to move to a different space depending upon the size of the group and the space required.

- The Church Calendar of major events will be decided by the Coordinating Committee at its annual Calendaring meeting. Facilities are reserved in advance for these events. Other bookings may be rescheduled if these major events need to be scheduled or rescheduled.
- The Board may “bump” a scheduled event in the case of pressing congregational business, and may preempt space, with the exception of Rites of Passage.
- Committees may book meeting space and times for the year at Calendaring Day. Other reservations for space can be made up to three months in advance.
- Individual members and member groups wishing to use rooms for personal or private purposes that are consistent with NSUC principles.

6) Political policy

We at the North Shore Unitarian Church are a non-partisan religious organization enjoying non-profit status, and;

We are a religious community that fosters education and life-long learning that promotes individual conscience and the democratic process and bears witness for liberal religious values in the community, and;

We welcome a diversity of opinion and encourage education, discussion and debate that is conducted in a respectful and inclusive manner, and;

We endeavour to educate our membership and those in the community through a democratic process that allows various views and a range of representatives from all political parties and groups to present the issues of the day,

Therefore it is the policy of the North Shore Unitarian Church that:

- All political candidates speak to the membership by church invitation only.
- Where political candidates are invited to speak at the church, this invitation will only be extended as part of an all candidates meeting where representatives of all parties are given an opportunity to present their views, or, in the case of a nomination process, an event where all nominees are invited to participate.
- With Board approval, elected representatives from local riding(s) may be invited to speak at and/or attend meeting(s) at the North Shore Unitarian Church to inform, to educate and to respond to questions from the membership and the community at large on issues of ethical concern
- When such meetings are planned, every attempt shall be made to inform the membership as well as to invite the general public.

7) Use of Premises by Individual Members

- Members in good standing and their immediate families (see fee schedule for special services for definition of immediate family) are entitled to the services of the minister and/or lay chaplains and use of the premises, for rites of passage.
- Custodial services in the above cases may be waived if the event involves fewer than 20 people and the organizing party is willing to name a qualified individual who will undertake the responsibility for the full range of custodial duties. These include:
 - ✓ Ensuring the sound system is only used by qualified individuals (as defined by the church, usually a trained member of the sound system team)
 - ✓ Ensuring that the church and all its rooms are properly secured
 - ✓ Ensuring compliance with fire regulations
 - ✓ Ensuring that at the end of the event, the premises are returned to “normal”, as defined by “Use of Premises”
- ✓ Members may also book the use of church facilities for social events if the above guidelines are followed and a deposit is paid in advance to the Administrator. A church member taking responsibility for the event must be on the premises throughout.

8) Use of Premises by Non-Church Groups: Particular Items

- An NSUC-appointed custodian must be paid for, and be in attendance for all uses of the premises by non-church groups, unless otherwise agreed to by consultation with the church administrator.
- The Administrator will ensure that non-church groups are familiar with the “Conditions of Use of Church Premises” attached to this policy.
- The custodian is generally responsible for the administration of the “Conditions of Use of Church Premises”: for unlocking and relocking the premises, and for operating the sound system should it be needed during the services. See the Job Description for the Custodian for more details.
- A non-church group may only use the address and name of the church for the purpose of enabling those attending an event to find the church. No other suggestion of association may be implied. No mail addressed to such a group may be directed to the church.

Conditions Of Use Of Church Premises

*All groups using the church shall be represented by a single individual—usually the Chair of a committee, or the Custodian in the case of rental agreements. This person, referred to as the **Manager**, will be directly responsible for ensuring that the following conditions are understood by the group and all conditions followed.*

1. *The Manager of an event is responsible for ensuring that all relevant laws and by-laws—including fire regulations—are strictly observed.*
2. All person using church facilities should strive to leave the premises in the same condition they found them.
3. All persons using church facilities should ensure that children are properly supervised, especially in the sanctuary and any areas where equipment may be damaged, or the activities of members may be disturbed.
4. All facilities and equipment used by a group must be left clean and in good working order. The carpets should be vacuumed if necessary.
5. The kitchen area is to be left clean and all utensils or equipment returned to the appropriate cupboard.
6. Organizations or groups outside the church may provide refreshments to their group but should bring their own supplies.
7. Any tablecloths that are used should be laundered and returned.

Use of Equipment

8. ***The sanctuary sound equipment is not to be used except by one of the qualified members of the church sound room team.***
9. Under no condition is church equipment, including tables, chairs or kitchen equipment to be loaned to people or groups for use outside the church premises.
10. On rare occasions, church equipment may be loaned to other Unitarian groups. Any such “loan” must be registered with the Administrator.
11. All groups in the building are financially responsible for any loss, theft, or damage.

Decorations

Decorations may be put up providing:

1. The decoration materials, and the manner in which they are put up, conform to safety and fire regulations.
2. Decorations do not cause damage to walls or other aspects of the room
3. The decorations are to be removed by the party after the event, unless they are left by request for a following group, in which case, the following group is responsible for removing them.

Liability

The church will not be held liable for any injury or loss incurred on the premises, for any loss, such as failure of equipment or other shortcoming in the facilities. All facilities rentals are provided with the understanding that the premises are “as found”. No guarantee can be made regarding the suitability of the building or premises for the occasion. A damage deposit of \$50 is required.