



## MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

### ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

**SUBJECT:** Political Activities  
**SECTION:** Governance

**POLICY NUMBER:** 1-120  
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**IMPLEMENTATION:** March 1, 2018  
**SPONSOR:** Director, Healthy  
 Organization

**APPROVAL:** Board of Health  
**SIGNATURE:**

#### PURPOSE

To ensure public trust in the Middlesex London Health Unit (MLHU), employees must be, and be seen to be impartial and free of undue political influence in the exercise of their duties and responsibilities. Employees must ensure that their political activity does not interfere with their duties and responsibilities to MLHU, including negatively impacting MLHU's reputational and other legitimate interests. As such, while employees may be politically active, certain limited restrictions may apply as are set out in this Policy.

#### POLICY

In all cases, an employee's right to participate in the political system will be balanced with their duty to act in a manner that is not prejudicial or likely prejudicial to the reputation of MLHU or incompatible with the due and faithful discharge of the employee's duties and responsibilities to MLHU.

#### PROCEDURE

In general, unless otherwise limited by this Policy or applicable legislation, MLHU employees, while off duty, may:

1. Vote in federal, provincial, municipal and school board elections;
2. Privately discuss and express views as citizens;
3. Make a personal contribution to a candidate's campaign;
4. Belong to a political party;
5. Support or oppose candidates for elected office or political party;
6. Canvass on behalf of a candidate;
7. Wear campaign buttons or other promotional apparel;
8. Place campaign signs at their personal residence;
9. Engage in social media political discussions, provided they do not identify themselves as employees of MLHU, subject to this Policy and MLHU's Social Media Policy;
10. Attend candidates' debates or meetings;
11. Attend riding association meetings;
12. Run for elected office, subject to specific limitations as set out in legislation and this Policy; and,
13. Serve in elected office, subject to specific limitations as set out in legislation and this Policy.

The time devoted to any political involvement must not interfere with the employee's ability to perform their duties and responsibilities to MLHU.

**REVISION DATES** (\* = major revision):



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Employees shall not engage in any political activity during working hours, understanding that there are scheduled breaks during the day. Employees shall not utilize MLHU property for election purposes during or outside business hours. They shall not identify themselves as employees of MLHU when engaged in political activity (e.g. including in campaign literature, social media posts, shall not wear clothing with MLHU logo while canvassing for themselves or a candidate).

Employees must not undertake political activities that are prejudicial or are likely to be prejudicial to the reputation or other legitimate interests of MLHU. Employees will be held accountable for any statements, including postings of information and opinions in personal social media accounts or other public forums such as political debates, if the information or opinions could be reasonably interpreted by members of the public as representing the Health Unit, or contravenes professional standards and/or conduct guidelines, or if the viewpoints expressed disparage or undermine the work of MLHU.

#### **Candidacy for Elected Office**

All employees are required to discuss their intentions to run with their direct manager and advise the Director. Employees may be eligible for an unpaid leave of absence to seek nomination as a candidate, and to campaign for public office where the candidacy does not conflict with the interests of MLHU. Employees are encouraged to request a leave of absence in such cases, however, MLHU reserves the right to deny such request where the leave would conflict with operational requirements.

Leave to campaign for public office may not begin prior to the date a federal or provincial/territorial election writ is issued (or, in the case of municipal elections, the date nomination papers may be filed) and must end no later than the polling day or the day that the writ is withdrawn or deemed to be withdrawn by the appropriate elections office and/or legislation (or, in the case of municipal elections, the date of the election).

Employees desiring a leave to campaign for public office are required to submit their request in writing to the Director of Corporate Services.

Employees elected to public office requiring a full-time commitment will generally be expected to resign from their employment with MLHU.

Election to public office requiring a part-time commitment shall not result in the need for resignation where:

- a. the service does not interfere with the performance of the employee's duties; and
- b. the service does not create a real or perceived conflict with the interests of MLHU.

Any questions regarding the scope or application of this Policy must be raised with Human Resources prior to an employee's participation in political activity.

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**Enforcement**

Any complaints of breach of this Policy will be investigated and resolved in accordance with the process set out in the Corporate Code of Conduct.

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