



Lakehead University Orillia Bottled Water Policy

Category: General;

Jurisdiction: Principal, Lakehead Orillia;

Approval Authority: Executive Team;

Established on: January 2, 2019;

Amendments: December 6, 2022, January 26, 2026;

Most Recent Review: January 26, 2026;

Policy Statement

Effective January 2, 2019, the purchase, sale, and distribution of single use bottled water on the Lakehead Orillia campus locations are not permitted.

Preamble

Indigenous worldviews recognize the sacred nature of water, and it is important to recognize the impact colonialism has had, and continues to have, on water rights and the commodification of water itself (<https://www.afn.ca/honoring-water>).

Lakehead University is committed to enabling access to drinking water on campus, while strengthening our commitment to sustainability. As such, Lakehead University joins other post-secondary institutions in the pledge to ban bottled water at its Orillia campuses. This decision was made for the following reasons:

1. Access to clean, safe drinking water is a basic human right (see The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, [un.org](https://www.un.org)). Selling water treats it as a commodity, thereby infringing on this right;
2. Bottled water production is unsustainable, requiring considerable energy and water use during extraction, pumping, bottling, transportation, and refrigeration - processes largely absent from municipal tap water systems. Consequently, producing one litre

of bottled water requires substantially more energy than supplying an equivalent volume of tap water. Additionally, for every litre of bottled water, 3 litres of water are used during the bottling process, creating thermal and chemical water pollution. (see <https://bcmj.org/cohp/bottled-vs-tap-water>; <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/4/1/014009/pdf>; <https://web.archive.org/web/20161225142929/http://www.bottledwater.org/public/IBWA%20Water%20and%20Energy%20Use%20Benchmarking%20Report%20-%20Exec%20Summary%20%28Revised%20May%2018%202016%29.pdf#overlay-context=reports-studies>);

3. Bottled water creates a considerable amount of waste. While statistics vary on the percentage of water bottles recycled each year, many water bottles find their way into rivers, lakes, and forests, where they take centuries to break down.

Definition of Single-Use Bottled Water

Water that is pre-packaged in single-use containers (e.g., plastic or glass bottles, cartons) with the purpose of being sold and/or distributed for human consumption.

Scope

The ban shall cover all buildings and property located within the University's Orillia campus locations, including Heritage Place, and will extend to official Lakehead Orillia-hosted or sponsored events off campus, where possible. This ban applies to bottled water sold at all University stores and cafeterias, in vending machines, or at University events.

Policy Requirements

To eliminate bottled water on the Orillia campuses, easy and free access to water must be maintained in all facilities. This includes access to drinking water fountains, bottle filling stations, and the provision of reusable containers and cups by events services.

All future on-campus buildings will incorporate, to the greatest extent possible, tap water delivery for students, faculty, and administrators in high-traffic areas. Further measures will be taken to ensure water is accessible to people with special needs.

Any new or renewed contracts covering the sale of food or beverages shall reference this Policy.

Policy Monitoring

Under the dual auspices of the University's Office of Sustainability and Administrative Services, an Orillia Sustainability Working Group (OSWG) is hereby struck to provide broad-based oversight on both this Policy and future sustainability initiatives at the Orillia Campus.

The OSWG is composed of students, staff, faculty, and senior administrative representatives, as defined by the OSWG's Terms of Reference Document (Appendix A). The OSWG will monitor this initiative and its progress. The OSWG will, with the assistance of Physical Plant, review and, where appropriate, recommend upgrades to ensure safe tap water is accessible to all campus space users.

Amendments will be made to this policy as required by the OSWG from time to time. This Policy will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure continued effectiveness.

Exceptions

While the sale of bottled water has been discontinued at all Orillia venues, it is important to note that exceptions to this Policy may be made when the OSWG finds it appropriate. These exceptions will include emergency preparedness and other procedures vital to safety on campus.

In addition, this Policy does not restrict or otherwise interfere in an individual's decision to bring their own externally purchased single-use water bottle onto campus.

Review Period: 5 years

Next Review Period: 2031-2032

Related Policies and Procedures: None

Policy Superseded by this Policy: None

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format.

Office of the University Secretariat

Hours: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002

Phone: 807-343-8010 ext. 7929

Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca

APPENDIX A

Orillia Sustainability Working Group (OSWG) - Terms of Reference

Advisory in nature – The OSWG is primarily an advisory body that will provide guidance and support to the Office of Sustainability while ensuring its engagement at the Orillia Campus. Recommendations from the OSWG will operate within the broader guidelines of the University’s Sustainability Action Plan.

Authority – The following Terms of Reference shall apply to the Orillia Campus under the dual auspices of the University’s Office of Sustainability and Orillia Administrative Services. The Office of Sustainability will work in tandem with the Associate Vice-President of Administrative Services, to ensure the timely and effective operation of the OSWG.

Membership – Membership on the OSWG shall be comprised of the following “core” members. The OSWG may, at its sole discretion, invite one or more guests to any meeting requiring specialized information or educational support:

1. Lakehead Sustainability Coordinator (Chair)
2. Associate Vice-President, Administration (Co-Chair - Senior Administration)
3. LUSU Orillia Executive / or designate (Student Representative)
4. LUSU Orillia Board Rep / or designate (Student Representative)
5. Orillia Faculty member
6. Manager of Physical Plant - Orillia
7. Manager of Residence, Food, and Conference Services
8. Student Accessibility Services designate
9. Indigenous Initiatives designate

Meeting frequency – The OSWG will meet at least once in the Fall term, once in the Winter Term and once in the Spring/Summer Terms to review Orillia’s sustainability initiatives. Upon

the request of any two members, the Chair may be asked to call a special meeting to discuss an item of immediate concern.

- Unless otherwise noted, all meetings shall be promoted and otherwise open to students, staff, and faculty with an interest in Sustainability issues.

OSWG Logistics – The Office of the Associate Vice-President (Administration) will aid in the scheduling of all OSWG meetings and the assignment of a note-taker who will share meeting summaries with those in attendance.

Consensus based – To the fullest extent possible, the OSWG will operate with a professional but informal manner where consensus will be used as the primary decision-making process.

Dispute Resolution – In the case of any significant disputes, members of the OSWG will make reasonable efforts to resolve their issues through collaborative solutions-focused dialogue. Should a mediated solution not be found, grievances may be presented to the Principal of the Orillia Campus for consideration.