

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Policy Code:

5030

The board endorses the goals of the Community Schools Act. The board will make specified indoor and outdoor school facilities available for use by eligible community groups under agreements developed in accordance with this policy. The board also will make some outdoor school facilities available for limited recreational use by the general public when not inconsistent with the board's use of the facilities. Any use of school facilities that disrupts school activities or that damages school property will not be permitted.

~~Temporary Restriction on Community Use of Facilities~~

~~In order to secure the health and safety of school system students and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the requirements of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), school facilities will not be made available to community groups during or after the school day or on weekends in any week in which the school is holding in-person classes on the school campus. Issues regarding the parties' contractual obligations under long-term leases will be referred to the board attorney. This temporary restriction shall remain in effect until repealed by the board or until the applicable guidance from DHHS is rescinded, whichever occurs first.~~

~~Effective July 1, 2015~~

~~A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES~~

~~The board endorses the goals of the Community Schools Act. The use of school facilities by community groups should be consistent with the educational program and the goals and objectives of the board and school system.~~

~~Priority for facility use will be given to community groups as outlined below in Section B.~~

~~Use of school facilities will not be approved for activities that do any of the following:~~

- ~~1. violate federal, state or local laws;~~
- ~~2. violate board of education policies or regulations;~~
- ~~3. advocate imminent violence;~~
- ~~4. damage or have the potential to damage school buildings, grounds or equipment;~~
~~or~~
- ~~5. are in conflict with scheduled school activities.~~

~~A. PRIORITY IN USE/FEE STRUCTURE~~

In accordance with G.S. 163-129, the county board of elections is entitled to use school facilities as a polling place on election days. School-sponsored groups and activities, such as school athletic events, and school drama and choral productions, and meetings of student organizations, including organizations permitted to meet under the Equal Access Act, will have first priority in the use of school facilities.

Priority in the use of school facilities by other groups and the fee structure for such groups will be in accordance with the following user categories. Priority in use among groups within the same user category will not be based upon the viewpoints of the groups. All groups within the same user category will be charged for facility use according to the uniform fee structure.

1. ~~In accordance with G.S. 163-129, as a polling place on election days.~~

1. School-related groups (organizations formed to support the school in some manner, such as the PTA, PTO, teachers' and principals' organizations, and booster clubs).

Fees: Fees for use of kitchens will be charged, **as applicable**, to cover costs. Custodial or ~~other~~ supervisory ~~services~~ **fees** may be charged.

2. In accordance with G.S. 115C-527, political parties for the express purpose of annual or biennial precinct meetings and county and district conventions

Fees: Custodial and utility fees may be charged.

3. Local government and youth organizations, including, but not limited to, scouts and 4-H

Fees: ~~Utility fees for the use of facilities may be charged.~~ Custodial, ~~kitchen~~ and/or supervisory fees will be charged. **Fees for use of kitchens will be charged, as applicable, to cover costs. Utility fees may be charged.**

4. All other ~~not~~ **for-** profit groups (all groups not included in the other categories as well as political parties when meeting for purposes other than precinct meetings or county or district conventions).

Fees: Rental, ~~kitchen~~, utility, **and** custodial and/or supervisory fees will be charged. **Fees for use of kitchens will be charged, as applicable, to cover costs.**

The superintendent shall adopt a schedule of fees for use of facilities, to be set out in Policy 5030R. The superintendent may modify the schedule of fees as needed and shall report any such changes to the Board at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board prior to the effective date of such changes. Fees set out in Policy 5030R are intended to recoup a portion of the personnel, utility and maintenance costs of facility use by community groups and are not intended to result in a profit to Buncombe County

Schools.

C. REQUESTS FOR USE OF FACILITIES

~~An eligible individual or group that wishes to apply for permission to use a school facility must submit a written application to the principal of the school in which the facility is located. This facility use application must be submitted at least 10 (ten) days prior to the actual event. At least 2 (two) day's notice is required for cancellation. Facility use request forms will be available in the school's administrative office.~~

B. FACILITIES AVAILABLE FOR USE

~~The board permits eligible individuals or groups to use the facilities of those schools designated by the board as "community schools." A list of community schools and the facilities at each site that are available for community use will be available to the public at the superintendent's office and each principal's office.~~

The superintendent **or designee shall** ~~is authorized to~~ develop **and make accessible to the public** a list of school facilities available for community use. Among the types of facilities that may be available for community use are auditoriums, athletic fields, dining areas, kitchens, designated classrooms, gymnasiums, media centers and playgrounds. **School facilities not listed as available for community use may be used only in exceptional circumstances based on a justified need and in accordance with terms approved by the superintendent or designee.**

~~Other school facilities may be used only in exceptional circumstances based on a justified need and as approved by the superintendent or designee. The superintendent is authorized to determine the fees for the use of facilities in such circumstances.~~

C. RULES GOVERNING USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The superintendent shall develop regulations consistent with this policy. The regulations will include an application process and provisions regarding the supervision of groups using facilities, the care of facilities, prohibited conduct and other issues deemed appropriate by the superintendent. ~~A copy of t~~**The regulations will be made available to the public along with** ~~provided to all applicants at the time they receive the facilities use application form.~~ In addition to the regulations established by the superintendent, users of school facilities must comply with the following rules:

1. Users must comply with all federal, state and local laws and all rules established by the board, the superintendent or designee, and the principal.
2. Users must comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (particularly Subchapter III pertaining to Public Accommodations and Services Operated by Private Entities) and the federal regulations that have been adopted for the implementation of the ADA.

3. Users must comply with board policy and legal requirements forbidding the use of tobacco products in school facilities and on school grounds (see policy 5026/7250, Smoking and Tobacco Products).
4. Users must not consume or possess alcohol or drugs on school grounds (see policy 5025, Prohibition of Alcoholic Beverages).
5. Users must not possess weapons or explosives while on school grounds (see policy 5027/7275, Weapons and Explosives Prohibited).
6. Users must not make any modifications, improvements, or alterations to school facilities without the prior written approval of the superintendent or designee.
7. Users must not display or distribute materials that are vulgar, indecent, or obscene or use vulgar, indecent, or obscene language while on school grounds.
8. Users are responsible for supervising their activities and the people present at their activities. Users are responsible for maintaining order and safety during their activities.
9. Upon departure, users must remove any materials or equipment they brought onto school grounds.

A user's violation of the provisions of this policy or any applicable regulations is grounds for suspending the user's privilege to use school facilities for a period of time deemed appropriate by the principal, subject to the review of the superintendent and the board of education.

D. FACILITY USE AGREEMENTS

A group that wishes to apply for permission to use a school facility must submit an application to the principal of the school at which the facility is located. If a facility use request is approved, the user will enter into a written agreement signed by the user and the superintendent or designee. Absent unusual circumstances, facility use agreements will not be granted for a term longer than one year. An agreement to span more than one year must be approved in advance by the board.

E. DAMAGES AND LIABILITY INSURANCE

Users of school facilities are responsible for the conduct of all persons involved in the users' activities while on school property. Users of school facilities are responsible for all damage to school facilities, property or equipment that occurs while the facility is being used by the group, regardless of who caused the damage. ~~Users also are responsible for the conduct of all persons involved in the users' activities while on school property.~~

All user groups, except school-sponsored groups, must furnish a certificate of insurance for general liability coverage with a total limit coverage of \$1,000,000 for each claim made. Alternatively, the superintendent or designee may require the user group to execute a waiver of liability that states that no liability will be attached to the board of education, individually or collectively, for personal injury or personal property damage by reason of use of the school property.

G. TERM AND ACCEPTANCE OF LEASE

~~The superintendent is authorized to enter into agreements with community groups for the lease of school property for terms of one year or less. All such leases must be reviewed and approved in advance by the board attorney. The superintendent shall inform the board of the execution of any lease at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Leases may be renewed following the same process.~~

~~Absent unusual circumstances, leases will not be granted for a term longer than one year. A lease for more than one year must be approved in advance by the board. Long term exclusive leases are subject to the provisions of policy 9400, Sale, Disposal and Lease of Board Owned Real Property.~~

F. REVIEW OF DECISIONS CONCERNING USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Any person or organization may request a review of any decision made by a school employee pursuant to this policy in accordance with policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.

Legal References: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 4071-4074, 28 C.F.R. pt. 36; Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 7905, 34 C.F.R. pt. 108; 36 U.S.C. 20101 *et seq.*; G.S. 14-269.2; Community Schools Act, G.S. 115C-203 to -209.1; 115C-524, -527; 160A-274; 163-129

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Prohibition of Alcoholic Beverages (policy 5025), Smoking and Tobacco Products (policy 5026/7250), Weapons and Explosives Prohibited (policy 5027/7275), Sale, Disposal, and Lease of Board-Owned Real Property (policy 9400)

Replaces Board Policy 530

History of Policy 530

Adopted – August 6, 1992

Revised – January 9, 2003

NCSBA wording and revisions replacing Policy 530 were adopted: April 10, 2014

Revised: February 5, 2015

Revised: May 14, 2018*

Revised: January 14, 2021

Revised: April 22, 2021**

*Updated information from NCSBA - did not affect content

**Legal references updated- did not affect content