

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

I. Introduction

- A. The Board of Education encourages the use of public school facilities for community purposes. When written application has been made to the Superintendent of Schools, the Talbot County Board of Education shall provide for the use of the public school facilities for the presentation and discussion of public questions, public speaking, lectures, or for other civic, educational, social, recreational or church affiliated civic purposes, provided, however, that (a) such gatherings or meetings shall be open to the public; and (b) the Board may refuse the use of any school facility for the purposes stated above if it appears that such use may be likely to provoke or add to a public riot or breach of the peace, or create a clear and present danger to the peace and welfare of the county or the state. (Section 7-108 of the Public School Laws)
- B. Organizations requesting the use of the buildings/or grounds shall fill out an Application-Agreement form approved by the Board of Education and available at each school office and the Talbot County Public Schools website.

II. School Schedule - Priority

- A. School facilities are not for "rent" in the usual sense of the word, but it is hoped that a school building can serve its community for civic purposes. However, the schools' own interest must have top priority. School facilities may be used only at times that will not interfere with regular school sessions or other bona fide school activities.

III. Basic Policies

- A. Organizations within the community may request the use of buildings, or parts thereof, for meetings or for activities in the civic interest. Application-Agreement forms must be signed by a resident taxpayer or an individual who is an officer of the requesting organization. The forms are available from the respective school office.
- B. The organization using the building shall agree to maintain general liability insurance coverage during the duration of the event. Coverage shall be at least a combined single limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence. The user also agrees to have the Talbot County Public Schools named as an additional insured on that policy.

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- C. Talbot County Public Schools may permit a partisan political organization that has polled 10 percent or more of the entire vote cast in this State in the last general election to use public school facilities for programs and meetings that relate to a political campaign for nomination or election of a candidate to public office.
- D. Talbot County Public Schools may permit the use of public school facilities for religious or other not for profit lawful purposes.
- E. School buildings, facilities, and equipment, shall not be made available for the purpose of financial gain by any individual or commercial group.

Examples:

- Private organizations -- closed memberships
- Professional sports
- Private profit-making business

Exceptions are permitted only when individually approved by the Talbot County Board of Education.

1. Financial gain by an individual or commercial group that is normally an integral part of an activity scheduled by a non-school, non-profit making organization may be the exception if approved by the Board of Education.
 2. Financial gain by an individual or commercial group that is normally an integral part of a scheduled activity for a non-profit, school related organization may be the exception if approved by the school administration/or school fundraising committee.
- F. Any organization using the building shall provide adequate supervision to insure good order. The adequacy and/or extent of supervision shall be determined by the Principal or designee.

The use or possession of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in the building and on school grounds.

1. Notice will be provided with the Building Use Form whenever food or drinks of any kind are to be consumed, provided, sold, or prepared in conjunction with the event.
- G. Those using the building shall comply with local rules, including those related to smoking regulations, use of rest rooms, remaining in designated areas, etc.

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Building principals should prepare and distribute a copy of these local rules to all organizations using their school facilities.

- H. The user is obligated to observe the maximum room capacity set by the fire marshal. The user must ascertain that the proper exits are unlocked and unobstructed. It is required that this announcement be made orally or printed on the program: "LOOK FOR THE NEAREST EXIT. IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, WALK -- DON'T RUN, TO THAT EXIT."

IV. Regulations

The Superintendent is directed to develop regulations pertaining to fee structure, proper supervision and security, breakage, damage, maintenance, and liability insurance

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