

## Community Relations

### Use of School Facilities

As the schools of the community have been built with public funds and are supported by the citizens of the community, it is the desire of the Board of Education to make school facilities available to community organizations when consistent with the provisions of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, ordinances of the Town of New Milford, Internal Revenue Code Requirements for facilities whose construction was funded by tax exempt bonds and good management.

It is the policy of the Board to facilitate and encourage the use of school facilities by the public and to manage the use of school facilities to assure that the use of school facilities does not interfere with or otherwise disrupt the proper operation of the schools.

“School facilities” shall be defined as all school property, including land, buildings, equipment, and systems of and surrounding a facility operated by the Board of Education. The use of school facilities is under the control and supervision of the Facilities Director who shall be responsible to assure the use of school facilities shall be limited to those activities that do not infringe upon or in anyway interfere with the operation of the schools and the best interests of the Board of Education. Exceptions to the standards and regulations of this policy and appeals may be directed to the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education as appropriate.

1. The Board of Education may permit the use of school facilities for the following purposes:
  - a. instructions in any branch of education or the arts;
  - b. holding social, civic, and recreational meetings and entertainment;
  - c. meetings and entertainment purposes where admission fees are charged, provided the proceeds are to be expended for clearly designated educational, civic, or charitable purpose;
  - d. commercially sponsored meetings and entertainment purposes where admission fees are charged, provided that the sponsoring organization shall pay a fee to the Board of Education which fully covers utility costs and building depreciation as well as the usual custodial charges;
  - e. religious services during non-school hours; and
  - f. for voting in accordance with the provisions of Title 9 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

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2. An organization may request use of a particular facility for a period of time not to exceed six (6) months. When more than one organization requests the use of a particular facility at the same time, the Superintendent of Schools shall discuss the matter with the organizations involved in the conflict and attempt to work out a mutually satisfactory compromise. If a compromise cannot be arranged, priority shall be given to:
  - a. the organization that will make best use of the facility in terms of the number of people to be served, and/or the lack of an equivalent program in the community;
  - b. the organizations currently using the facility; and
  - c. the organization wishing to expand existing activities conducted in that facility.
3. Use of school buildings may be denied by the Board of Education to the extent permitted by law. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will represent the Board in granting provisional permission for use of school facilities.
4. Organizations that use school facilities for
  - a. commercial purposes,
  - b. fund-raising activities other than those sponsored by local nonprofit organizations,
  - c. classroom instruction for which tuition is charged, other than those sponsored by municipal, state or local agencies, or
  - d. political/advocacy groups or religious services, including groups engaged in fundraising to support political candidates or issues or religious organizations, will be required to recompense the Town at an established rate to be set annually by the Board of Education which covers expenses incurred for lighting, heating, and general building maintenance. Prepayment of fees will be required. The PTO and other parent and student groups who use school facilities to raise funds for school-related purposes will be exempt from this requirement.
5. When use of a school facility requires overtime pay to a custodian, kitchen worker or other school employee, the organization using the facility will be required to reimburse the school system for the overtime payment, plus any applicable employee benefits. The employee will enter the time worked on his time card and the central office in turn will bill the users for the overtime payment.

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6. The administration has the responsibility to determine that an area is being used efficiently. If participation approaches minimal numbers, the approval may be withdrawn by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
7. Approval of the Application for Building Use may be withdrawn for non-compliance with any of the following rules or for failure to make payment.
  - a. Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the school building. In the event that smoking on stage is part of a program, the applicants will be required to obtain the written permission of the Town Fire Marshall. All organizations using this facility for a public function will announce that, in accordance with Section 31-22 of the NFPA 101 Code, there will be no smoking permitted. Further, notification will be given regarding the location of all emergency fire exits.
  - b. All exit lights must be lit during a program. No exit may be blocked.
  - c. Any organization shall be required to obtain the services of police officers or firemen if the Superintendent or his or her designee deems such services necessary for the safety of participants, school property and/or traffic control.
  - d. It is expected that the facilities will be left clean and neat after use. All organizations will be held responsible for the proper care and use of facilities and will be charged for any damage to buildings or equipment as a result of their usage.
  - e. No school owned equipment may be installed or operated by the using agency but must be operated and under the control of school appointed personnel. Since the use of any school facility may require technical knowledge, it is necessary that an Application for Use of School Facilities form be prepared in quadruplicate. While any of the facilities that are part of the district are available to an approved organization for use, only authorized personnel will be permitted to operate such facilities.
  - f. If the program is primarily intended for children under the age of 18 years, the school administration will require the sponsoring agency to provide adult supervision. The names of supervisors must be submitted in advance. The number of supervisors will be determined by the school administration.

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- g. No nails, screws or other fastening devices may be applied to any part of the school building. This applies to stage floors in particular.
- h. Any group or organization using the school facilities shall be responsible for injury, damage of any kind and theft. Said groups or organizations agree to indemnify and save the Board of Education and the Town of New Milford harmless from any damage, loss, or expense or liability of any kind resulting from or arising out of said use.
- i. Organizations wishing to use school facilities must first present in writing proof of proper insurance which will cover any liability that might be claimed against the Board for any occurrence resulting from said use with a save harmless clause protecting the Board, along with coverage for any damage or theft.
- j. Fixed kitchen equipment may not be used without an employee of the school lunch program in attendance.
- k. Requests for use of a particular facility on a regular basis may not be submitted prior to January 1 for a summer activity or prior to June 1 for a fall, winter and/or spring activity.
- l. The person responsible for the organization shall inspect the areas of planned use before and after their use in the company of the assigned custodian. The custodian will note any problems seen on the pre and post use inspection. Users will be responsible for conditions noted after use which were not present on the pre use inspection.
- m. The use of shower or locker facilities at the middle school and high school will be permitted if the group requesting use can vacate these spaces no later than 10 p.m. If the spaces are not vacated by that time the groups involved will receive additional charges for overtime use.
- n. Any group using the facilities past 11 p.m. will be billed for overtime custodial charges.

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8. The Board shall periodically conduct instructional time and facility usage assessments in order to maximize student learning and community use of facilities. To assist in this process, the Superintendent shall regularly meet with representatives from the New Milford Public Library and the New Milford Parks and Recreation Department to coordinate the availability of facilities.
9. The Board shall not deny equal access to or a fair opportunity to meet, or otherwise discriminate, against any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America (or any other youth group listed as a patriotic society in Title 36 of the United States Code) that wishes to conduct a meeting using school facilities pursuant to this policy.
10. In accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222a, whenever any outside group or individual makes payment for custodial costs for use of school facilities or otherwise for the use of such facilities such payment, less any cost incurred by the Town in providing custodial services, shall be deemed appropriated to the Board for the current fiscal year.

Legal Reference: Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. § 7905  
Patriotic and National Organizations, 36 U.S.C. § 10101 et seq.

#### Connecticut General Statutes:

Title 9 Elections

10-221g Instructional time and facility usage assessment

10-222a Boards to have use of funds from repayment and insurance proceeds for school materials and from payment for custodial services for use of school facilities

10-239 Use of school facilities for other purposes.

Policy adopted: May 7, 2001  
Policy revised: June 9, 2009  
Policy reviewed: October 15, 2013  
Policy revised: August 20, 2019

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
New Milford, Connecticut