

Community Relations

Use of School Facilities

As school buildings and grounds are public property, when school buildings and grounds are not in use for school purposes, the Board of Education shall make them available for reasonable use by the Town of Waterford for purposes other than education, in accordance with the provisions of this policy. The Board may also make school buildings and grounds available for use by other entities, as described in this policy.

Approval of the use of school buildings and grounds by non-school groups shall only be granted when such use meets the following criteria:

1. Such use does not interfere with the use of school buildings and grounds for school purposes for programs and activities approved by the Building Principal, Superintendent of Schools or Board of Education.
2. Such use does not present a health, safety or security risk to students, staff or members of the public utilizing the school buildings or grounds.
3. Such use will not disrupt the educational or other programs of the district.

In accordance with Memorandum of Agreement between the Waterford Board of Education and the Town of Waterford, the Board has delegated responsibility for setting the fee structure and scheduling non-school related community activities in Board of Education buildings and on their grounds to the Town of Waterford, acting through its Recreation and Parks Commission. The Town of Waterford Parks and Recreation Commission shall make available a "Property Request" Form for Waterford school facilities for approval.

If a community group is denied use of Board facilities by the Recreation and Parks staff, the group may appeal that decision to the Recreation and Parks Commission.

If a Waterford Board of Education Building Principal or the Superintendent of Schools disagrees with a decision of the Recreation and Parks Commission about community groups meeting at a particular school, where they are meeting, and/or when they are meeting, he or she may appeal that decision to the Superintendent and further to the Board. The Board shall have the final decision regarding the use of school facilities.

The form provided by the Recreation and Parks Commission will require the entity requesting the use of school facilities to be specific in requesting exactly what facilities are desired. Approval will be for those specific facilities and rooms only.

Generally, not more than three (3) classrooms will be allocated at one time for community use in any elementary school. In the event a Town agency needs more than three classrooms and it is in the best interest of the Town and the townspeople, the Recreation and Parks Commission will grant permission for school use, in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

All school equipment on the premises shall be in the charge and control of the Building Principal or his/her designee, and arrangements for the approval of on-site equipment use shall be made directly with the Building Principal or his/her designee by organizations using school facilities.

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The Building Principal will submit a written preliminary schedule of school-sponsored activities to the Recreation and Parks Commission's program coordinator three weeks after the beginning of each school year, and shall amend such schedule during the school year as needed to reflect approved school programs and activities.

Prior community use will be allowed as long as such use is not in conflict with school activities, this policy and any applicable regulation, and is not otherwise contrary to the mission of the Waterford Public Schools.

The Town of Waterford Recreation and Parks Commission shall not permit the use of school facilities if the Board has closed the schools due to inclement weather or other safety concern.

The Town of Waterford Recreation and Parks Commission and the Waterford Board of Education reserve the right to review all school use for compliance with all Town and Board use policies and regulations.

Use of School Equipment or Property

School equipment or property may be loaned to community groups for an educational, civic, or charitable purpose when:

1. The group borrowing the equipment agrees to accept responsibility for repairing or replacing any equipment damaged or lost while in its possession.
2. The equipment is not unusually expensive or subject to easy damage.
3. The equipment is in good condition.
4. The group will provide a competent operator for equipment loaned.

Fee Policy For Community Use of School Facilities

The Recreation and Parks Commission shall be responsible for setting all fees associated with community use of school buildings and grounds.

It shall be the general policy of the Board to grant use of facilities to all Waterford community-based groups without charge. This does not, however, relieve the user from any associated costs incumbent upon proper use of those facilities, i.e., police for security, kitchen staff for cooking, lifeguards for swimming, custodians, etc. Such costs shall be the responsibility of the user and shall be the current contractual or prevailing rate, whichever is applicable.

It shall further be the policy of the Board to allow the use of school facilities to out-of-town nonprofit or charitable organizations and to consider requests for use by any other business by the Board (see accompanying schedule). All other charges shall be determined by the day and date of use; the amount of space, the equipment, and the utilities used.

In cases of activities sponsored by Town-based groups that are fund raising in nature, the user group shall incur associated costs if the activity runs beyond eight (8) hours duration, provided all proceeds of

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such activity are directed only and totally to Town-based activities or services.

Such fund-raising groups shall incur associated costs if the activity runs beyond four (4) hours duration, if the proceeds of such activity are directed in total or partially to other than Town-based groups, i.e., American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Red Cross, etc.

Any charges or fees may be waived by Recreation and Parks or its designee if the use is deemed to be in the best interests of the Waterford School System and/or the Town of Waterford.

However, in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement between the Waterford Board of Education and the Town of Waterford, the Board of Education shall receive an annual budgetary appropriation from the Town of Waterford for Board of Education costs associated with community use of schools (custodial salaries, overtime, and benefits; heating, lighting, and other utilities; maintenance and repairs; instructional, maintenance, and custodial supplies; and equipment).

Health And Safety Protocols

In order to use school district facilities, any organization or individual requesting such use must agree to abide by all health and safety protocols in place by the school district at the time of use, including but not limited to protocols relating to cleaning of the facilities, signage, and health screenings of individuals requesting access to the facilities.

Legal Reference:

- Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-239
- Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-215f
- Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-221q Conn. Gen. Stat. Title 9
- Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. § 7905
- Patriotic and National Organizations, 36 U.S.C. § 10101 et seq.

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WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Waterford, Connecticut