

NEW SALEM/WENDELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The School Committee shall allow for the use of school facilities by the children or adults in New Salem and Wendell. This decision permits the school to serve as a community hub for community activity for limited purposes. The Committee requires that such use will maintain safe conditions and preserve the property for school program use.

The School Committee and the school administration shall establish reasonable rules regarding the type of outside individuals or groups that may be allowed to use the school for “expressive activity” in accordance with the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Any individual or group that qualifies within the rules must be allowed to use the facilities regardless of the content of the message associated with the planned activity.

The School Committee shall limit the use of school premises and facilities to activities that provide a direct benefit to the children and adult residents of New Salem and Wendell.

ELIGIBLE USERS

The School Committee shall limit the use of school facilities by non-commercial or educational groups to those that either:

- Have their primary operations in New Salem or Wendell, Massachusetts or the other towns of Union #28, OR
- Represent the Towns of New Salem or Wendell or are acting on the Towns behalf, OR
- Are sponsored by an official school entity including the School Committee, School Council OR
- Are not-for-profit organizations per Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) or 509(a) and are registered within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

AND

- Provide services/activities to residents of New Salem or Wendell for the benefit of school-aged children and/or their families.

The School Committee shall limit the use of school facilities by commercial groups to those that:

- Provide services/activities to residents of New Salem or Wendell for the benefit of school-aged children and/or their families.

The School Committee shall limit the use of school facilities by individuals to those who:

- Are residents of Union 28 affiliated towns OR
- Are affiliated with Swift River School or Union #28

AND

- Provide services/activities to residents of New Salem or Wendell for the benefit of school-aged children and/or their families.

The School Committee acknowledges that this may create situations where individuals or organizations that are known to discriminate against a federally or state protected class of people are allowed to use the premises or facilities. The School Committee does not condone discrimination and will work to prevent discrimination and promote understanding within the limits of the law.

PRIORITY OF USE

School affairs will always have the first priority for use of the building. The second priority for building use is children's activities. Adult uses of the building will have the third priority. Primary eligibility for use of school premises and facilities will be granted in the following order:

1. School activities
2. Parent-teacher/staff activities
3. Official town public hearings and municipal activities
4. Meetings and activities sponsored by the School Committee, School Council and other school bodies or personnel regarding school-related activities
5. Other allowable activities

The school Principal shall maintain the schedule of building use and has the authority to make such revisions as may be appropriate to ensure that those with the highest priority for building use may have the building available to them.

FEE REQUIREMENTS

The Committee shall approve and periodically review a fee schedule for the use of school facilities.

All activities must be under competent adult supervision approved by the Principal. The school may require the presence of a custodian, cafeteria worker or school employee to be present for an event, in which case the user shall be required to pay the school district an additional fee equal to the current hourly wage of the person whose presence is required. This decision shall be made by the Principal.

PROCEDURES

Requests for use of school facilities must be approved by the Principal. Requests for use of the school facilities are to be submitted in writing at least 7 days prior to the date of use. Requests must include a clear description of the organization, the nature of the organization and proposed activity, any equipment to be used, and the person responsible for building use. Under most situations, the building will not be available for use during vacations so that routine vacation cleaning and maintenance efforts can take place. Groups receiving permission are restricted to the dates and hours approved and to the building area and facilities specified, unless requested changes are approved by the Principal.

Users of the facilities bringing equipment to the school must receive permission for its use. No displays may be attached to walls, curtains or other portions of the building or its furniture or equipment without the approval of the school Principal. No school furniture or equipment may be significantly moved, altered, adapted, modified or adjusted by any user unless with the prior knowledge and approval of the Principal. Such equipment must be returned to its original state by the user at the conclusion of the activity. Users are obligated to clean the area used so that it is at least as neat and clean as it was prior to use.

The School Committee may require users of the building to obtain suitable insurance to protect the Town. Any users who damage school property may be required to pay the cost of repair or replacement of damaged property. Neither the Town nor the School Committee shall be considered responsible for injury to persons or property while the building is used by any outside group. Groups receiving permission are responsible at all times for the observance of fire and safety requirements.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Smoking and alcohol within the building or on school premises is not permitted. No off-road motor powered vehicles are permitted on school property.

Emergency regulations relating to the use of school property may be made by the Superintendent and/or Principal subject to School Committee review.

Additional guidance regarding use of the facilities shall be outlined in procedures developed by the Principal and made available in written form to those seeking use of the facilities. The School Committee reserves the right to cancel any permission granted.

Reference: Constitutional Law

First reading: 04-03-08

Second reading, first vote: 06-05-08

Final vote: 09-04-08