

**METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
POLICY COVERING THE USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

The School Committee is pleased to have public school facilities used for community affairs and programs. However, it must be understood that such usage involves additional cost in maintenance, operation and care.

**SECTION 1. Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

School property may be used in accordance with the General Laws of the Commonwealth, Section 71 of Chapter 71, as follows:

"For the purpose of promoting the usefulness of public school property the school committee of any town may conduct such educational and recreational activities in or upon school property under its control, and subject to such regulations as it may establish, and consistently and without interference with the use of the premises for school purposes shall allow the use thereof by individuals and associations for such educational, recreational, social, civic philanthropic, and like purposes as it deems for the interest of the community. The affiliation of any such association with a religious organization shall not disqualify such associations from being allowed such a use for such a purpose. The use of such property as a place of assemblage for citizens to hear candidates for public office shall be considered a civic purpose within the meaning of this section."

As mandated by the Education Reform Act of 1993 "The possession, or use of all tobacco products within school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds and on school buses, is prohibited."

**SECTION 2. School Committee**

The use of all school property is subject to the restrictions and regulations of the Methuen School Committee, which reserves the right to deny the use of a school facility when it seems such to be detrimental or practical. The School Committee and the Superintendent of Schools reserves the right to rescind a rental when deemed necessary.

**SECTION 3. Applications**

The applicant will obtain an Application for Use of School Property at the Superintendent's Office, 10 Ditson Place, Methuen, MA, telephone (978)722-6001. This application, accompanied by a certificate of insurance liability; refundable damage deposit; and a non-refundable application fee as per APPENDIX A, must be filed at least one week prior to the date of the desired rental unless otherwise provided for by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools and/or School Committee.

**APPLICANT SHALL NOT ADVERTISE THE EVENT UNTIL THE  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS APPROVES OFFICIAL PERMIT.**

The applicant will be advised by mail or telephone of approval or denial of the permit and, if approved, the fees to be charged.

Twenty-four hours' notice will be required in the event of cancellation; otherwise, the applicant will be responsible for any costs incurred by the School Department. If it is necessary for the School

Department to use the facility, twenty-four hour's notice will also be given, whenever possible. If an applicant does not show for a scheduled event and does not call to cancel said event, the applicant will be charged as per Appendix A.

Applications may be made to use such facilities as auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias, kitchens (Section 7, paragraph b), classrooms and school grounds (parking lots, soccer fields, restrooms, etc.) under policies determined by the School Committee.

Applications may not be transferred from one group to another nor sublet from one group to another.

Organizations wishing to bring equipment into school buildings must make arrangements at the time the application is prepared.

It is the responsibility of a permit holder who needs special equipment or arrangements to visit the area and make known their needs before the time the facility is to be used. This conference should be held with the principal/senior custodian of the building.

It is required that renters secure liability insurance of \$ 2,000,000 each incident, \$ 2,000,000 total and provide a binder naming the organization and the City as co-insurers. The City of Methuen assumes no liability for injury to any person present on school property as the result of a permit issued to any organization or person. The City further assumes no liability for damage and loss to equipment, and the holder of the permit shall be responsible and liable for damage and loss to the building or the equipment thereof.

If school is canceled, all functions in school facilities are also canceled. The School Department reserves the right to cancel or suspend any function held at a school facility in the event of inclement weather.

#### **SECTION 4. Permits**

A facilities permit will be granted on a first come first served basis and issued in the following order of priority:

- a. Educational and student use, Nonprofit organizations, and profit organizations or individuals.
- b. When the Building Principals, Food Service Director, Athletic Director, it indicates that the requested date does not conflict in any way with other scheduled programs.
- c. All additional rental charges and custodial fees above and beyond the estimated rental fees will be billed as per Appendix A.
- d. Charges are based on current operating costs.
- e. An administration fee will be charged as per Appendix A for each change made on a permit.

f. Permits will not be issued, under any circumstance, to a minor.

Approval by the School Committee and/or the Superintendent of Schools shall be required for uses unrelated to education or students.

### **SECTION 5. Fees and Charges**

#### **A. Custodial Charges**

The applicant is responsible for paying custodians required as follows: one custodian if attendance will be up to 300; two custodians if attendance is over 300. Under certain circumstances the School Department may require extra custodians and a uniformed police officer regardless of the attendance. Custodial charges will be as per APPENDIX A

If two or more groups are using the same facility on the same date at the same time, the cost may be split between the two groups at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.

In order to make a facility available according to the applicant's specified time, it is necessary that the custodian report a minimum of thirty minutes prior the indicated time and remain a minimum of thirty minutes after the indicated time to clean and secure the premises. Therefore, a minimum allowance of sixty minutes, thirty minutes prior and thirty minutes following the indicated time of usage, will be used in figuring the amount due the custodian. If the event runs fifteen (15) minutes longer than the permit calls for, an additional hour will be charged.

Certain types of programs or events involve additional clean-up time to ready facilities for school use. In such cases, the additional time necessary will be charged based on the custodian's overtime slip.

#### **B. Food Service Charges**

Cafeteria employee charges will be as per APPENDIX A, with a two (2) hour minimum regardless of whether a manager or full-time employee of the cafeteria is employed.

If a kitchen is designated for use on the permit, a cafeteria employee must be present whose services shall be paid for by the applicant.

The applicant shall be responsible for insuring the sanitation of the food products served at their event even if the School Department equipment is used. School Department employees are present to protect the assets of the School Department and ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE for sanitation of equipment or serving areas when in use by an outside group.

### **SECTION 6. Payment**

A. The non-refundable application fee and the refundable damage deposit as per Appendix A are due with the application. Payment of the application fee and damage deposit shall be separate.

B. All payments must be made by cash, bank check, business/organizational check or money order only.

C. No new permit application shall be accepted until all prior charges are paid in full.

D. Continuous use permits

1. Any continuous use permit holders must pay 50% of the estimated rental fees, custodial fees and cafeteria employee fees no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the start of the initial event. The initial event shall be defined as the first date of use, for whatever reason. Payment must be received in the Superintendent's Office by that date.
2. The remainder of estimated rental fees, custodial fees and cafeteria employee fees must be received in the Superintendent' Office no later than thirty (30) days after the start of the initial event. A late charge as per Appendix A will be assessed after 30 days and monthly thereafter until the balance is paid in full.
3. Alternate payment arrangements, upon a showing of good cause, may be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the start of the initial event. Alternate payment arrangements are solely at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools and /or the School Committee.
4. Unforeseen or unexpected charges will be billed to the permit holder on a monthly basis and payments of such charges are due upon receipt.

E. One-time Permit

Any one-time use permit holder must pay 100% of all the estimated rental fees, custodial fees, and cafeteria fees no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to start of the event.

Alternate payment arrangements, upon a showing of good cause, may be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the start of the initial event. Alternate payment arrangements are solely at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools and /or the School Committee.

Unforeseen or unexpected charges will be billed to the permit holder on a monthly basis and payment of such charges are due upon receipt.

**SECTION 7. Responsibilities of the Applicant**

**All users shall agree to hold the Methuen Public Schools, the City of Methuen, the Superintendent of Schools, their agents, officers, and employees harmless from all property damage or personal injury, including death, resulting from the negligence of users relating to the use of the facilities, grounds, equipment or furniture.**

Only the facilities noted on the permit may be used by the applicant. Custodians shall not be asked to grant special privileges, which are not specifically designated on the permit. If additional services/materials are required, applicant must call the Superintendent's Office during regular business hours. Refreshments may be served only in cafeterias or lunchrooms. No soft drinks or candy may be sold or consumed in school auditoriums and gymnasiums. This restriction does not apply to all-purpose rooms in elementary schools.

Scenery, stage equipment and properties brought into buildings must be removed within twelve hours after a performance. Such items must also be removed sooner if they interfere with school activities scheduled, unless otherwise authorized by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Operation of school lighting equipment, stage curtains and rigging shall be performed only authorized personnel, who will be on duty at all times when the auditorium is in use.

No apparatus using electricity shall be connected to a lighting system of the building without prior approval of Office of the Superintendent.

Decorations, posters, etc., will not be affixed to any part of a building unless specific approval is authorized by the Office of the Superintendent.

All materials used by outside groups during productions shall be certified "flame proof" evidence of which shall be provided to the School Department.

All regulations with respect to tax on admissions under the Internal Revenue Code will be observed.

Failure to assume these responsibilities will jeopardize any future rental requests by the applicant or by the organization represented.

The applicant will be responsible for all party's involved in the function, i.e., participants, observers and/or anyone who enters the building when it is under their control.

Groups renting facilities shall reimburse the School Department for any damages to the buildings or its contents resulting from the group's use that exceeds the damage deposit as per Appendix A.

Playing fields should not be used in inclement weather or at other inappropriate times as determined by the Athletic Director and/or the Supervisor of Support Services.

The sponsoring organization must take responsibility for ensuring that only the facilities noted on the permit are used and that the remaining parts of the building are not entered.

Sponsoring groups submitting permit applications will not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, religion, martial status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, veterans status, or political affiliation, nor will the groups or individuals deny access to the activity based upon any of the above.

*AT NO TIME should custodians, food service employees, or any employee be paid in cash.*

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR OPEN FLAME DEVICES**

No open flame devices or pyrotechnic devices shall be used in any public assembly occupancy. Governing Regulations Mass General Laws - Chapter 148, Section 28 527 CMR 10.00 - Prevention of Fires in Buildings 527 CMR 10.03 – General Provisions (6) Open Flame Devices NFPA 101-8-7.2 - Open Flame Devices Permission Granted to:

Event Location:

Event Date:

Today's Date:

Applicants Signature:

All State and local fire safety laws and regulations must be followed.

### **SECTION 8. Responsibilities of School Department**

The Office of the Superintendent of Schools will grant permits. One copy shall be given to the building principal, one copy to the senior custodian of the building to be used and one copy to be kept on file in the Superintendent's Office.

The senior custodian shall approve the assignment of school personnel.

The custodian on duty has full authority to see that the applicant observes the provisions of the permit.

An Administrative Secretary in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools will be required to maintain a current record of rental of school buildings and grounds and shall report such uses periodically to the Superintendent of Schools.

The School Committee and/or Superintendent of Schools may make the schools' facilities available to the community in cases of emergency or catastrophe.

### **SECTION 9. Use of School Buildings by Youth Groups**

Permits will NOT be in effect on days when school is canceled.

Interruptions may be necessary to take care of school activities. In such cases, 24 hour notice will be given, whenever possible.

When changes in the scheduled use of facilities are made, the Office of the Superintendent of Schools must be notified (72) hours IN ADVANCE.

No one will be admitted to a school building BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF AN ADULT SUPERVISOR, WHO MUST BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE, nor to remain in the building without such supervision. Custodians have been given special instructions to enforce this regulation strictly. Applicants must submit to the Office of the Superintendent a list of adult supervisors for approval.

It is expressly understood that use of school buildings by youth groups does not allow for admission fees. When an admission fee is charged, application must be made in the regular way and charges and all other regulations will pertain.

Custodians have been notified that they shall see that all organizations comply strictly with these regulations.

## **SECTION 10. Use of the High School Auditorium**

A. The auditorium of the High School has been constructed for the primary purpose of being an integral part of the secondary educational program and as such shall be scheduled for use of the High School by the Principal or his agent with his approval for all events which logically would occur in this unit of the High School Building during the entire year.

1. A copy of the above scheduled events shall be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools on or before September 1 of each school year and shall be subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Schools and/or the School Committee. Revisions may be made as conditions warrant.

B. The scheduling of events requested by local community associations and organizations shall be subject to the approval of the Principal of the High School and the Superintendent of Schools.

1. The policy of the School Committee is that school facilities may be approved for use by recognized organizations, departments and boards of the City of Methuen.

C. It shall be understood that the use of the auditorium is inclusive of the use of the stage, dressing rooms and other appointments that are considered normally as a part of the auditorium unit. Such facilities must be cleaned up nightly since part of this area is regular classroom space and used daily.

D. Use of the stage and related facilities:

1. When the stage is used for special events (plays, musicals, debates and similar affairs) where the use of stage lights, spotlights, special lighting equipment and sound system including the stereophonic equipment is deemed necessary for adequate production, it shall be understood that a qualified person only shall be in full charge of this operation.

2. An approved list of qualified personnel will be on file in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. Stage personnel fees must be paid in accordance with their approved salary schedule.

3. No stage equipment including lights may be moved without the approval of the High School Music Director.

4. Any tape or marking materials applied to the stage must be removed upon completion of the event.

E. The use of the auditorium shall require the assignment of one or more custodians as considered necessary by school authority. Custodians assigned this responsibility shall perform all duties associated with the adequate care of this school unit including appropriate cleaning after each scheduled event.

F. At least one custodian shall be required to be on duty, as considered necessary by school authority, whenever the above facilities are used for rehearsals.

G. Restroom facilities will be assigned as needed.

The use of the auditorium is subject to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Rules and Regulations of the State Department of Safety, local fire and police regulations and codes and the Rules and Regulations of the School Committee.

**SECTION 11.**

**Any previous policies on the use of school facilities shall be superseded by this document.**

**APPENDIX A: RATES FOR USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

One time use Continuous Use Application Fee \$100.00, Damage Deposit \$100.00 refundable, No-Show Fee \$50.00, and a Late Payment Charge \$10.00/month.

Regular Rate Holiday Rate

Custodial and Cafeteria will be in accordance with Union contracts

Non-Profit Profit

Auditorium \$800.00/hr., Cafeteria \$200.00/hr., Library/Media Center \$150/hr., and Classroom \$ 150.00/hr.

Gymnasiums:

High School/Elementary Schools \$300.00/hr.

***Each request will be reviewed by the Superintendent and the School Committee to determine the needs of the group and district.***

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Methuen Public Schools, Methuen, MA