

Student clubs may be permitted in the schools subject to the terms of this policy. All student activities in the schools, whether formally organized as a club or not, are subject to the approval of the principal and must be conducted in accordance with all Board of Education policies and procedures, all school policies and procedures, and all applicable laws and regulations.

All adults must have a background check and be approved by the principal or principal's designee before being allowed to attend or participate in any student club activities.

All student clubs shall be open to students without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, or disability.

A. CURRICULUM RELATED CLUBS

Curriculum related clubs are those which have a direct relationship to the curriculum of the Watauga County Schools. Examples include science clubs, DECA, HOSA, FFA, student council, math clubs, and robotics clubs. Membership in curriculum related clubs is limited to students enrolled in the Watauga County Schools.

All curriculum-related clubs require the sponsorship of one or more school system personnel authorized by the school principal or the principal's designee. At least one adult approved by the principal or principal's designee will be present at all meetings and activities of curriculum related clubs.

Information about curriculum related clubs may be shared with the students, parents/guardians, and faculty of a given school by any means approved by the principal or principal's designee.

B. STUDENT INTEREST CLUBS

Student interest clubs are those which do not have a direct and consistent relationship to the curriculum of WCS. Examples of student interest clubs include those related to student hobbies, recreational activities, and advocacy, including but not limited to advocacy for religious or political purposes. Student membership and participation in student interest clubs shall be voluntary.

Student interest clubs shall be initiated and organized solely by high school students enrolled in Watauga County Schools; provided, however, this rule shall not prevent affiliation of a student interest club with parent, state, or national organizations. No person who is not a student of Watauga County Schools shall direct, conduct, or control any student interest club.

At least one adult approved by the principal or principal's designee will be present at all meetings and activities of student interest clubs.

Use of school facilities by student interest clubs at Watauga High School shall be subject to the advance approval of the principal or principal's designee. This limitation shall not be construed to prohibit brief, informal gatherings of club members at school within thirty minutes before or after instructional hours or during non-instructional time within the school day. All student interest clubs shall be provided the same access to meeting space at Watauga High School, the same access to listings in the student newspaper, yearbook, bulletin boards, and Student Policy Handbook, and the same right to advertise their purposes and meetings.

WCS personnel may supervise or participate in student interest clubs only on their own time and only if it does not conflict with the timely completion of their professional duties. WCS personnel will notify their supervisor of their attendance and participation in any student interest club.

Information about student interest clubs may be shared with students, parents/guardians, and faculty of a given school by posting copies of printed information and/or by making copies of printed information available for pick up in central locations approved by the principal or principal's designee. Information to be posted or made available at school must receive prior approval from the principal or principal's designee.

The Board of Education finds that students of K-8 age cannot effectively and consistently direct and control their own meetings without adult guidance. Therefore, student interest clubs will not be formally recognized in the K-8 schools. However, in the absence of formal recognition, similar student groups are welcome to request approval for use of school facilities in accord with the Board policy for Community Use of Facilities.

C. APPLICATIONS AND APPROVAL FOR STUDENT CLUBS

The formation and operation of any student club requires the prior written approval of the principal or the principal's designee. A form for this purpose will be made available on the school website and in printed form from the school office. The content of the form is subject to the approval of the superintendent or superintendent's designee.

Cross References: School Volunteers (policy 5015), Visitors in Schools (policy 5020), Registered Sex Offenders (policy 5022), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030), Distribution and Display of Non-School Material (policy 5210), Advertising in Schools (policy 5240)

Legal References: The Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. §§4071-4073 (2015)

Adopted: December 14, 2015

Replaces: Board policy 5.04.20, Formation and Operation of Student Clubs at Watauga High School