

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES OF THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 7.19 STUDENT - INITIATED STUDENT GROUPS

(1) K-8 SCHOOL STUDENT GROUPS

(a) When students within a non-secondary school (i.e., a school not comprising only pupils enrolled in any combination of grades K-8 want to form a group and use school facilities, the principal shall have the right to require them to have a faculty advisor and to follow reasonable rules regarding such things as times of meetings and use of facilities.

(b) Membership in all student groups must be open to all students, and club activities may not interfere with the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

(2) 9-12 SCHOOL STUDENT GROUPS

(a) Definition. A non-curriculum-related student group is one that does not directly relate to the body of courses offered by the school. A student group directly relates to the curriculum if any one of the following applies:

1. The subject matter of the group is actually taught in a regularly offered course;
2. The subject matter of the group concerns the body of courses as a whole;
3. Participation in the group is required for a particular course; or
4. Participation in the group results in academic credit.

(b) The federal Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 4071-4074 (1988), provides that a public secondary school that allows one or more non-curriculum-related student groups to meet on school premises during non-instructional time must not discriminate against — must make the same opportunity, on the same terms, available to — student groups that wish to pursue religious, political, or philosophical ideas. The principal shall have the right to require that an MPS staff member monitor the meetings of a non-curriculum-related student group so long as the same requirement is applied to all other non-curriculum-related student groups, regardless of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings.

(c) Any Milwaukee Public School with grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 shall do all of the following if that school permits one or more non-curriculum-related student groups to meet at the school during non-instructional time:

1. Grant equal access and a fair opportunity to all non-curriculum-related student groups that wish to meet on school premises during non-instructional time regardless of the religious, political, philosophical or other content of the speech at such meetings. The student meetings may include a prayer service, Bible reading, or other worship exercise. The school shall not discriminate against a non-curriculum-related student group because of the limited number of pupils in the group.
2. Grant non-curriculum-related student groups acting under this policy the use of school media — including the public address system, the school newspaper, and the school bulletin board — to announce their meetings on the same terms as other non-curriculum-related student groups are allowed to use the school media.
3. Grant non-curriculum-related student groups acting under this policy the opportunity to meet on school premises during the same non-instructional periods as other non-curriculum-related student groups. If other non-curriculum-related student groups are permitted to meet during their lunch periods, before the commencement of the school day, or after the completion of the school day, the same permission shall be granted to pupils meeting under this policy.

4. Ensure that the meeting is not sponsored by the school or any of its employees.
 - a. Any school employee who attends a religious meeting under this policy shall do so only in a non-participatory capacity.
 - b. The school shall not compel any employee to attend a meeting if the content of the speech at the meeting is contrary to the beliefs of the employee.
 - c. The school shall not influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity.
 - d. The school shall not require any person to participate in prayer or other religious activity.
 - e. The school shall not expend public funds beyond the incidental cost of providing space for the student-initiated meetings and use of school media.
 - f. Schools may inform students that student-initiated meetings under this policy are not school-sponsored.
5. Require non-curriculum-related student groups that wish to meet on school premises during non-instructional time to comply with the following terms:
 - a. All meetings must be voluntary and student-initiated.
 - b. Meetings must not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school.
 - c. Non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of the non-curriculum-related student group.
 - d. Any non-curriculum-related student group violating one or more of these terms shall be informed of the violation and given one opportunity to correct the violation(s).

History: Adopted 6-30-75; reaffirmed 2-22-95; revised 6-26-03; 2-27-25

Previous Coding: Admin. Policy IGDA, prior to May 1995; Admin. Policy 9.19, May 1995-August 1996

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