

Students

Student-led Demonstrations

A. Policy Statement

The School Board is committed to constructive exercise of student rights related to speech and assembly permitted by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and applicable law. This Policy establishes consistent expectations and procedures for student demonstrations in a manner that is fair, and supportive of civil discourse, while maintaining safe and orderly school operations.

B. Definitions

1. **Student-led:** Planned, organized and carried out only by students
2. **Civil Discourse:** Respectful exchange of ideas intended to promote understanding and constructive dialogue.
3. **Demonstration:** An organized assembly of students peacefully expressing a viewpoint or raising awareness of an issue. ~~such as vigils, rallies, marches, sit-ins, walk-ins, observances or similar collective action.~~
4. **Disruptive Conduct:** Conduct that materially interferes with school operations or instructional time, endangers health or safety, infringes on the rights of others, or violates the Student Code of Conduct. Examples include interference with instruction, blocking access, threats or intimidation, and property damage.
5. **Third Party:** Any individual or organization not affiliated with Virginia Beach City Public Schools, elected officials, parents or family members, or employees ~~,elected officials~~ who are not assigned to the host school or who have not been assigned to assist with events at the host school. ~~or site of a demonstration.~~ School Board members may observe student-led demonstrations provided there is no appearance of endorsement on behalf of the Board. Any School Board member observing shall not take any action that would appear to support or oppose the subject of the demonstration.

C. Student Rights

Students have the right to:

1. Express opinions and beliefs respectfully.
2. Organize peaceful demonstrations with prior approval.
3. Engage in civil discourse and peaceful activism, as permitted under this Policy, the Code of Student Conduct, and applicable law, without retaliation.

D. Permitted Student Expression:

The following activities are allowed and are not governed by this policy:

1. Wearing buttons, badges, wristbands, or clothing that follows the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Individual religious expression, including prayer during non-instructional time and wearing religious clothing or symbols.
3. Peacefully sharing personal viewpoints during non-instructional time.
4. Distributing non-school-sponsored materials before or after school in approved areas.
5. Participating in approved student clubs or organizations.
6. Non-disruptive symbolic expression.

D.E. Student Responsibilities

Students organizing or participating in demonstrations must:

1. Student demonstrations must be initiated and led by students.
2. Submit a request in advance.
3. Conduct themselves respectfully and peacefully.
4. Follow school rules and directions of staff.
5. Ensure participation is voluntary and non-coercive.
6. Avoid disrupting instruction or school operations.
7. Clean up any materials or items brought for the demonstration.

EF. Request and Approval Process

1. Students must meet with the principal or designee to present:
 - a. Purpose and topic of demonstration.
 - b. Date ~~and~~ time, ~~and location~~.
 - c. Anticipated number of participants.
 - d. ~~Staff sponsor, if applicable~~
 - d. Materials to be distributed (if any).
2. Meetings should be scheduled in advance, and demonstrations may not take place until administrative review is completed. This policy does not allow spontaneous demonstrations during instructional time.
3. Upon approval of a demonstration, the principal/designee will work collaboratively with student organizers to support student expression while ensuring:
 - a. Safety and supervision.
 - b. ~~Minimal~~ No disruption to instruction.
 - c. Appropriate time and location.
 - d. Communication with staff and students as needed.
 - e. The principal/designee reserves the right not to approve demonstrations that ~~if it determines~~ are not consistent with School Division Policies and Regulations and/or which may be disruptive.

4. The principal/designee will provide an explanation why the demonstration is denied.

GF. School Responsibilities

School administrators will:

1. Provide reasonable guidance regarding time, place, and manners.
2. Apply this policy consistently.
3. Communicate expectations to staff and students in advance.
- ~~4. Support opportunities for constructive civic learning connected to the event when applicable.~~
4. NoEnsure school resources or employees/agents will be not used to promote student-led demonstrations.
5. Each building principal shall have a written plan and dispersal statement for dealing with non-peaceful assemblies of students.

HG. Third-Party Involvement

Third parties may not be involved in or attend student-led demonstrations.

IH. Prohibited Conduct

Demonstrations may not:

1. Disrupt instruction or school operations.
2. Block access to school facilities or transportation.
3. Threaten, harass, or intimidate others.
4. Damage property.
5. Compel participation by others.
6. Interfere with the safety, privacy, or rights of individuals.

J. Consequences

Students who violate this policy or engage in disruptive conduct maywill be subject to discipline consistent with the Student Code of Conduct. Participation in student-led demonstrations will not excuse students from any portion of class/instructional time. Students shall not be disciplined solely for expressing political or social viewpoints in a lawful, non-disruptive manner.

KJ. Non-Endorsement

Approval of a demonstration does not constitute endorsement by the School Board, school administration, or staff of the content or viewpoints expressed.

~~Amended~~Adopted by the School Board: February 24, 2026