



**Community Use of Schools**

**Board Received:** May 25, 2020 **Review Date:** June 2024

**1. Policy Statement**

The Grand Erie District School Board believes in supporting its communities by making school board facilities available to the public and supports the Community Use of Schools Program that fosters partnerships and community relationships.

**2. Accountability**

- a. Frequency of Reports - As needed
- b. Criteria for Success
  - Community use of facilities is enhanced
  - School-designated activities take precedence
  - Community use shall not be subsidized with funds provided by the province for the education of the Board’s pupils.

**3. Guiding Principles**

The Grand Erie District School Board will permit approved applicants to use its school facilities outside regular school hours, in accordance with the following principles:

- a. The School Board shall determine operating procedures to protect its property and to manage the community use of school facilities.
- b. The School Board will subsidize any community group activities with funds provided by the province for this purpose. Funds provided for educational purposes will not be used to subsidize the Community Use of Schools Program.
- c. Official school activities scheduled outside regular school hours shall take priority over community use activities. Board staff will be given the opportunity to book facilities for after hour Board activities before the facilities are made available to community groups.
- d. The Use of Grand Erie District School Board facilities for Community Use must enhance mental, physical and social well-being through a safe and inclusive environment.
- e. The Community Use of Schools program is a cooperative program through the mutual support of board administration, principals, custodians, school staff and the community at large.
- f. Board staff shall follow the Community Use of Schools Policy when using school space for non-school sponsored events.
- g. Community Use of Schools Fees are reviewed annually and adjusted when required with Board approval.
- h. Schools are available any weekday after 6:00 p.m. and on weekends during the school year, excluding non-instructional periods. Exceptions may be applied where governed through an agreement.

#### 4. Definitions

- a. Community Users  
Community Users include anyone who attends a Community Use of Schools event at a Board facility, including participants, leaders of the group and or audience.
- b. Community Use Event  
A Community Use event is any event held at a Board facility that is applied for through the Community Use of Schools program and for which a Community Use Permit has been issued.
- c. Community Use Permit  
A Community Use Permit is issued by the Board and is the authority for the use of a school for all Community Use events.
- d. Applicant  
The Applicant is the person who creates a Community Use of School account.
- e. Permit Holder  
The Permit Holder is the person and or Organization named on the Community Use of School Permit.
- f. Event Supervisor  
The Event Supervisor is the person designated by the Permit Holder to be the representative at the Community Use Event.
- g. Historical Bookings  
Booking from any permit type that have been booking with the Grand Erie District School Board for five or more consecutive years in the same facility and time.
- h. Non-Instructional Periods  
Times where school is not operating including Christmas, March/Summer Breaks, P.A. Days, Board designated holidays and statutory holiday weekends. Non-instructional periods include the weekends leading up to and after the school holidays.
- i. Permit Types  
The following permit types are defined in order to understand the priority of bookings and fee structure:
  - i) IUFA & Affiliates-Type 1  
Joint Use of Facility Agreement partners or Non-profit, volunteer organization approved for affiliation by a municipal recreation authority (where applicable) for the purpose of offering recreational and/or cultural programs on behalf of the municipality available to all residents of the local community. This does not include tournament events.
  - ii) Non-Profit Youth and Other-Type 1-A  
The non-profit entities or other public agencies that use the school facilities whose primary purpose is to provide programs and/or services that are designed and operated to advance the academic success and healthy lifestyles of youth in the community. I.e. Cubs, Scouts, Brownies or groups donating to GEDSB in the amount greater than the fee charged for the use of the facility and custodial cost. School Alumni Activities sanctioned by the school administrator. Not for Profit Groups will be required to show proof of status or provide an affidavit letter indicating that the organization is a not for profit organization.
  - iii) Non-Profit, Non-Youth-Type 1-B  
The non-profit entities or other public agencies that use the school facilities whose primary purpose is to provide programs and/or services that serve the local neighborhood or community, but are not explicitly designed and operated to advance the academic

- success and healthy lifestyles of the children in the school and where zero or nominal admission or participation fees are charged. Not for Profit organizations that are not specifically for youth. I.e. Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance, Approved Health Unit Activities, short term use by municipal emergency services.
- iv) Non-Profit (Other)-Type 2  
Fundraising Events, Church Group meetings, Service Club meetings, Amateur Drama Clubs, Non-Affiliated Community Groups, Local Cultural Groups, Other Educational Groups I.e. Colleges and Universities, Tournaments, Union/Federation events, School Alumni Activities NOT sanctioned by school administrator and Non-Affiliated Adult Recreation.
  - v) Commercial/Private User-Type 3  
Commercial enterprises, professional theatre groups, Church Services, Private individuals, Political Groups, Private Fitness, Dance Instructional Groups and Film Production Companies.
  - vi) Grand Erie District School Board/School Use-Type 4  
Student and staff events sanctioned by the school administrator, school Clubs and School Council Meetings, Administrative or other staff meetings and sports teams.
  - vii) Non-Profit Priority Schools-Type 5  
Not for profit youth related Community Groups, Not for profit Children's Recreation Providers (not including tournaments or special events) as defined by the Ministry of Education. The permit type is dependent on funding received by the Ministry of Education. If funding is paused or retracted, permits will be processed following the other permit types.
  - viii) Reciprocal Groups-Permit Type 6  
Non-Profit Childcare, EarlyOn Child and Family programs and Before and After School Children's Recreation Providers as outlined by an agreement. These do not include tournaments or special events, or spaces not outlined in their agreement.

## 5. Responsibilities

- a. School Principals or designates are required to submit a permit for any activity after school hours or for any larger event during the instructional day but beyond regular school events.
- b. The Board is responsible to inform the Permit Holder or Event Supervisor of any scheduling changes and administer any applicable refund.
- c. Community Users, Permit Holders and/or Event Supervisors are solely responsible for personal injury and/or damage, loss or theft of clothing and equipment, of anyone attending a Community Use Event anywhere on Board property, including all grounds and parking lots.
- d. The Permit Holder or Event Supervisor is liable for all damages and injuries due to their Community Use activity.
- e. The Permit Holder, Event Supervisor agree to indemnify and save harmless the Board from any action or claim being brought against it as a result of the use of the school facilities by the community user.
- f. Community Users are not covered under the Board's liability insurance policy.
- g. All Community Use of Schools permits shall provide or purchase a valid liability insurance certificate with their Application.
- h. The Permit Holder or Event Supervisor shall be responsible for the security and safety of Board facilities while they are using the facility.

- i. All persons admitted to the Board facility for a Community use event agree to abide by all policies and procedures of the Board.
- j. All Community Users must adhere to the Board's Codes of Conduct and demonstrate respectful behaviour at all times. The permit Holder and/or Event Supervisor is responsible for conduct, supervision and the preservation of order for the scheduled event.
- k. Violation to the Community Use Permit or misconduct by Community Users and /or Permit Holders may result in immediate cancellation of the Community Use Permit.
- l. Permit Holders or Event Supervisors are responsible to inform the Board of any scheduling changes at least three business days prior to the date of the Event.

## 6. Procedures

- a. Community Use of Schools staff is responsible for approving the use of school facilities for activities taking place on non-school days or after 6:00 p.m. on school days, subject to availability.
- b. The Principal is responsible for approving the use of school facilities for school related activities which take place on school days between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- c. Schools within the jurisdiction of the Grand Erie District School Board shall be given priority for the use of school facilities on non-school days or after 6:00 p.m. on school days.
- d. School administrators must submit permit requests for use on non-school days or after 6:00pm and changes must be completed with no less than five days' notice. If bookings are submitted after June 30, Principals must make every effort to avoid times where there is an approved permit.
- e. School administrator must respond to internal permit discussions within three (3) business days so that the time frame of processing permits can be met.
- f. The Superintendent of Business and Treasurer reserves the right to waive rental fees, provided there is no extra expense to the Board.
- g. Historical users may be given the opportunity to renew the facilities and times they have reserved in the past, providing the Board does not require the space/time for its own purposes.
- h. When two or more community use events request the same time and space, preference for accommodation will be given to the sport that is in season over the sport that is off season.
- i. Bookings are based on the following Priority:
  - Grand Erie District School Board
  - Historical Groups
  - Municipal Direct Programs governed through Joint Use of Facilities Agreements
  - Affiliated Groups identified through Joint Use of Facilities Agreements
  - Others
- j. Child Care programs, EarlyOn Child and Family Centres and Before and After School Program Providers, will require contract approval or a lease agreement as determined by Senior Administration in addition to approval by the school principal.
- k. Schools as Election Polling Stations:

The Board will co-operate in providing the necessary accommodation for polling booths for municipal, provincial, and federal elections, and in accordance with applicable legislation. All permits or agreements governing the use of board facilities as election polling stations will be required to comply with Board's procedures.

- l. Parent Groups, Home and School Associations, Alumni Associations:  
Groups and associations wishing to host a school-sanctioned event, must have the consent of the school principal and request the Principal to submit the application in the school name on behalf of the organization. Applications for events by groups and associations who do not apply through the Principal will not be considered a school-sanctioned event and will be subject to the usual rental and service charges of the board and required insurance.
- m. The Ontario Smoke Free Act for public places prohibits Smoking/Vaping on Board Property and applies 365 days per year and 24 hours per day. Community Use permit holder and event supervisors must ensure that patrons move off of Board property 20 meters for smoking/vaping purposes, not just outside the building.
- n. Depending on the size and nature of the event, supplementary security and/or custodial services may be required, the cost of which will be the responsibility of the permit holder.
- o. All events must have sufficient adult supervision, one of whom has been appointed and/or designated by the Permit Holder.
- p. Permission for the community use of school facilities is granted solely at the discretion of the Board.
- q. Permits submitted less than two weeks from the booking date will be denied.

#### **7. Film Production Company Requests:**

- a. All requests for use of facilities for film purposes are to be referred to the Community Use of School and Partnership Officer.
- b. All activities on Board property must be of a lawful nature and in keeping with the Board's values.
- c. Film Production Company requests will be required to complete a Film Application Form and provide additional information as part of the approval process.
- d. Requests will fall outside of the Priority of placement sequencing as
  - i) No previously approved CUS permit will be cancelled owing to a film request, however
  - ii) Film permits are provided multiple exemptions not afforded to other permit types.
- e. Film Production Company Requests will not be approved to film during the school week.
- f. Requests are subject to the satisfactory completion and signing of a Board Licensing Agreement signed by the Superintendent of Business and signing authority for the film production company.

#### **8. Restrictions and Limitations**

- a. The Grand Erie District School Board does not permit overnight bookings as a Community Use Event. For Grand Erie Use, permit requests for overnight bookings will only be approved for events that are not requesting to provide sleeping accommodations.
- b. Bookings are initially limited to two bookings per week per rental facility to ensure that all rental groups have an opportunity to book space. Additional bookings can be submitted after September 15.
- c. Permits will be cancelled when buildings are closed because of inclement weather, strike, or other cause beyond the control of the Board. Unless the permit holder is governed by an agreement/lease that permits access when a facility is closed.

- d. Groups which might reasonably be expected to have their own accommodation will be limited to one year's use. i.e. Church Services
- e. Use of facilities during Non-Instructional periods is only through special agreement with the board.
- f. Libraries/Learning Commons and classrooms may be used only for activities that are not physical, meetings conducted by approved groups and are subject to final approval of school administrator.
- g. Priority Schools: The intention of this funding is to make specific community programs more accessible to certain groups by reducing the operating cost to agencies.
- h. Alcohol Events: Community Use Events planning to serve alcohol must adhere to the Board's Alcohol Event requirements that include, detailed event plan, Special Occasion Permit, procured Party Alcohol Liability insurance, designated driver program, signage that warns of drinking and driving and no smoking/vaping on Board property, certified smart servers and a minimum of two (2) police officers.
- i. Schools where the water is supplied by a well must be tested daily by a qualified Grand Erie District School Board staff member on any day that children under 18 years of age will be present in the building. Affiliates and Reciprocal groups may enter into agreement with, and training for water flushing from the Board.
- j. High risk activities and or machines (e.g. fireworks or pitching machines) that may cause injury to people or may damage school property are not permitted in any school.
- k. The use of any school equipment by the permit holder is solely at the discretion of the school Principal.
- l. Peanuts, tree nuts and other nuts are one of the most common triggers of anaphylaxis, and the most likely of all food allergens to trigger a full-blown anaphylactic reaction. As a result, all schools in Grand Erie facilities are "nut aware" and foods containing peanuts, tree nuts or other nuts are not to be brought into the facility.
- m. Grand Erie District School Board does not permit food in the gymnasium/library/learning commons however permit holder can apply for use of the cafeteria or classrooms to serve food.
- n. Service animals and guide dogs are permitted for persons with a disability that require assistance and must keep the animal with them at all times as defined by the Animal Welfare Act. Grand Erie District School Board has the right to inquire about the animal and ask for documentation to confirm the persons requirement.
- o. Field Use: Field use is subject to the conditions of the field, nature of the frequency of the activities and may be impacted by the weather and soil conditions. Start dates for field use may be disrupted or prohibited until the field conditions are restored. In general, field use permits will be approved after May 1st of each year or until the field's conditions are appropriate

## 9. Fees

- a. Service charges to community user groups are subsidized under the Community Use of Schools Grant provided by the Ministry of Education.
- b. The rate of subsidy will be determined annually based on the grant provided to the Board.
- c. Overtime rates paid to board staff who assist with Community Use of Schools will be adjusted according to contractual obligations the Board has negotiated with its staff.

- d. Priority Schools are designated by the Ministry of Education and are made available at no cost to those organizations who qualify under the definitions set out by the Ministry for the duration of the funding.
- e. For schools who have water supplied by a well and require testing daily, a charge for this service will be levied to groups requesting non-school day use of board buildings.
- f. Education Services-Service charges will be levied to recover costs for the use of school facilities by other education services, such as universities and colleges.
- g. The Fee Schedule outlining all fees to be paid, shall be established by the Board and may be adjusted annually or sooner if contractual obligations are required. Fees will be adjusted annually based on Board expenses and the cost recovery model.
- h. Type 4 Internal Permits, including school fundraising and alumni events scheduled on weekends will be charged for any custodial costs when there is not a custodian already scheduled. Exceptions may be considered for teams/groups preparing for a higher level of competition/event.

#### **10. Cancellation of a Permit**

- a. A Permit Holder may cancel a Community Use event without cost (except for the non-refundable permit fee and insurance fees if purchased) provided that written notice (email accepted) and a phone confirmation be provided to the Community Use of Schools Clerk or designate at least three business days prior to the date of the event.
- b. If a Permit Holder does not give or provide adequate time for the Board to cancel, Community Use Permit incurred costs (e.g. custodial overtime, rental fees, technicians and administration fees) may be charged.
- c. Permits are non-transferable.
- d. The Board reserves the right to revoke a Permit at any time.

#### **11. Insurance**

- a. All permit holders, including municipal affiliates are required to provide the Community Use of Schools with a Certificate of Insurance in the amount of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence, with the School Board named as additional insured. Failure to provide such a Certificate prior to the first date of the event(s), shall result in cancellation of the permit.
- b. Any group not able to provide a Certificate of Insurance as outlined shall make application to purchase insurance through the Community Use of Schools third party provider. Such application will be subject to the approval of the insurance carrier. Premium costs are the responsibility of the permit holder and are non-refundable.

#### **12. Adjudication**

- a. In the event a user group wishes to formally dispute any terms or conditions or the application of any terms or conditions when applying to the rental of school facilities, an Appeal may be made to the Grand Erie District School Board by following the Community Use of Schools Appeal process outlined in the handbook.