



COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS

Responsibility:	<i>Superintendent, Facility Services</i>
Legal References:	<u>Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2 Section 171 (24); Section 234 (1)</u> <u>Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 26, Sched.3</u>
Related References:	<u>Administrative Procedure 3085 – Safe Welcome Program</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 4230 – Open Flames</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 4360 – Principles of Business Conduct for Board Employees</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 4990 - Community Planning and Facility Partnerships</u> <u>Ministry of Education Memorandum: Community Use of Schools Program</u> <u>Board Policy 1011 – Facility Partnerships</u> <u>Board Policy 4002 – Community Use of Schools</u> <u>Board Policy 6000 – Safe Schools</u>
Revisions:	March 2023
Reviewed:	August 2016, October, 2024

1. Preamble

The Waterloo Region District School Board (“WRDSB”) values and encourages community use of schools for the mutual benefit of students as well as the local community. The procedures that follow provide guidelines and expectations for community members and employees regarding Community Use of Schools.

As per the Ministry of Education directive, school day activities, extra-curricular activities and parent involvement activities organized or administered by the school or school board have priority use of school space during and after regular school hours.

To create affordable access to community facilities, the Ministry of Education provides a Community Use of Schools Grant that allows school boards to charge subsidized rental rates for non-profit groups. The annual subsidies offered are contingent upon Ministry funding. WRDSB reserves the right to allocate the subsidy in such a manner to ensure that the Community Use of Schools Program is offered at no cost to the WRDSB. The WRDSB may change the way the subsidy is allocated year over year and determine the priority to which the subsidy will be applied.

A subsidy for a user group for an event is not a guarantee or commitment that future events will be subsidized in the same manner. Our primary goal is to subsidize local not-for-profit organizations that provide support and programming for local youth (under the age of 18 or under the age of 28 for participants with a disability). The Community Use of Schools Grant will be allocated to support this goal to the extent of the available funds.

The WRDSB has a full cost recovery model for community use of facilities to ensure that student education is not compromised by using our limited education funds to support other activities.

2. Permit Holders

All community members wishing to rent school space are required to submit a permit request through the online booking system.

2.1 Permit holders are required to adhere to all Rules and Regulations. Rules and Regulations are provided with each permit issued and posted at www.wrdsb.ca/community/community-use-of-schools/rules-and-regulations/.

- 2.2 All permit holders are required to provide a valid Certificate of Insurance with a minimum of \$2 million per occurrence, no aggregate is preferred. As an acceptable alternative, a minimum of \$2 million per occurrence with a minimum of \$4 million aggregate will be accepted. The Waterloo Region District School Board must be added as an additional insured. Groups that do not qualify for their own insurance may be eligible to purchase insurance through the WRDSB.
- 2.3 All permit holders are required to adhere to Board policies and procedures.
- 2.4 All permit holders are required to adhere to the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*.
- 2.5 All community use permits must have an on-duty paid custodian present on-site at all times.
- 2.6 Cooking and the use of cooking appliances, (including but not limited to barbecues) is not permitted on WRDSB property.

3. Timelines and Space Availability

School availability is dependent on school and WRDSB needs and custodial availability.

3.1 School Year Permits

- 3.1.1 The school year is defined by the school year calendar as approved by the Ministry of Education for any given school year.
- 3.1.2 Normal weekday permitted Community Use of Schools hours at elementary schools are from 6:30pm to 10:30pm.
- 3.1.3 Normal weekday permitted Community Use of Schools hours at secondary schools are from 7:00pm to 10:30pm.
- 3.1.4 Normal permitted Community Use of Schools hours on weekends are from 8:00am to 10:30pm.
- 3.1.5 Schools are not available for rent during long weekends and holidays.
- 3.1.6 All schools are closed for community use during the December shutdown period, which may vary from year to year. Therefore, renewals will be subject to date availability.
- 3.1.7 School availability during March Break is limited.
- 3.1.8 Blackout period – Schools are not available for community use during the first two weeks of the new school year and may vary from year to year. Therefore, renewals will be subject to date availability varies.

3.2 Summer Permit Requests

- 3.2.1 Summer permits will be granted between July and early August. All schools are shut down for maintenance and clean up during the last three weeks of August.
- 3.2.2 The normal permitted summer hours are from 8:00am to 3:30pm.
- 3.2.3 Permits for summer use may be limited due to maintenance, renovations, major cleaning, and existing agreements with current Community Partner Providers (e.g., child care operators).
- 3.2.4 Summer permit requests may be entered between April 1 and April 30 for the upcoming summer.
- 3.2.5 Summer permits are processed in the following order of priority: School/WRDSB permit requests, Community Partner Providers (e.g., child care operators), renewal permits from the prior year, and all new permit requests.

3.3 Renewal Permit Requests

- 3.3.1 Renewal permits are defined as permit requests entered by a group or organization for the same day of the week, time slot, school and space as used in the previous school year.
- 3.3.2 Replacement permits or permits that have been cancelled are not considered renewal permits.

- 3.3.3 Renewal permits are only considered as renewals when all prior fees and outstanding balances have been paid.
 - 3.3.4 Renewal permit requests must be entered between May 1st and June 15th. New permit requests may also be entered during this time frame; however, renewal permits will be processed first.
 - 3.3.5 Permit requests entered after June 15th will be considered new requests and processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 3.4 New Schools
- 3.4.1 New schools are not available for community use during the first year of operation to ensure that any issues or deficiencies can be addressed after hours or on weekends.
 - 3.4.2 In the first two years of community use, permits are non-renewable to allow time for local neighbourhood groups to organize and develop community programming.
 - 3.4.3 This process also applies to schools which have had a major addition or gym renovation. (i.e. gym size increases from single to double gymnasium)
- 3.5 Spaces Not Available
- 3.5.1 Due to potential and inherent risk, the following spaces are not available for community use:
 - The Education Centre
 - Specialty rooms which include but are not limited to: fitness/cardio rooms, weight rooms, science labs, art rooms, music rooms, tech rooms, automotive shops, wood shops, drama rooms
 - Staff rooms
 - Kitchens
 - Special Education rooms

4. Permit Charge Categories

The WRDSB recognizes that a schedule of fees and cost recoveries should reflect the varying nature and purpose of community use of its school facilities and property. The WRDSB operates with a full cost recovery model for community use of facilities to ensure that student education is not compromised by using our limited education funds to support other activities.

- 4.1 All permit requests will fall under one of the following charge categories
 - No Charge: School and WRDSB activities. School activities must have a curriculum focus and directly benefit the students of the school. Activities of a personal nature or connection and/or for personal gain are not considered school or WRDSB activities.
 - Youth/Child: All programs where the activities are intended for participants under the age of 18 (or under the age of 28 for participants with a disability). Activities must be carried out by not-for-profit organizations.
 - Adult: Adult recreation organized by not-for-profit organizations, not-for-profit educational organizations providing adult programs, not-for-profit groups providing community services free of charge or for cost recovery. Activities must be carried out by not-for-profit organizations.
 - Community: Community events including but not limited to charitable events and fundraising events, craft sales, cultural events, weddings, birthday parties, baby or wedding showers, and tournaments.
 - Other: Including but not limited to activities provided by; for-profit organizations, religious services and activities (except youth programs), film productions, political organizations, religious events, and theatrical presentations.
- 4.2 The WRDSB reserves the right to request supporting documentation to verify the not-for-profit status of an organization in order to determine the appropriate charge category. The WRDSB reserves the right to request supporting documentation annually.

- 4.3 The Non-Refundable permit fee applies to a permit once it has been placed on Hold and Approved.

5. Permit Processing

- 5.1 Permits are processed on a first-come, first-served basis but subject to priority ranking.
- 5.2 The Rentals Department requires a minimum of 10 business days to process a permit.
- 5.3 Payment and insurance (if not purchased) must be received 5 business days prior to the first booking date on the permit.

6. Employee Use of WRDSB Facilities

- 6.1 To minimize the risk to the WRDSB and community users, all employees requesting the use of school facilities for personal use or on behalf of an organization they represent, will be required to submit a permit request in their name or the organization. The employee or organization will still be responsible for all applicable charges associated with the permit, including rentals fees, custodian fees and insurance (if eligible).
- 6.2 WRDSB staff use of school space that falls outside of the bell times of the school will be considered a community use event and will require a permit. This may include but is not limited to any event that does not have a curriculum-based focus, does not directly benefit students in the school or is of a personal nature or connection.
- 6.3 To minimize liability and risk to the WRDSB, any WRDSB staff requesting community use space will not be considered as "WRDSB on duty" staff and will be required to pay applicable custodian fees.
- 6.4 Employee use must comply with *Administrative Procedure 4360 – Principles of Business Conduct for Board Employees*.

7. Responsibilities of School Administration

- 7.1 School staff shall plan their after regular school hours facility needs in advance of the school year and ensure all school bookings are in place so as not to cause unnecessary late cancellation of community use of school permits after they have been issued.
- 7.2 School staff should fill out the School Booking Form for the coming year with dates and times of all known school events (athletic events, school meetings, gym equipment set up, concerts, and school events). The schedule should be submitted to the Rentals Department by July 7 for entry. After July 7, school administrators are asked to enter school booking requests directly in the booking system.