



## YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

### ***Policy and Procedure #412.0 Community Use of Schools***

---

The Community Use of Schools policy encourages the community's participation in using its schools and school grounds for the mutual benefits of students as well as the local community.

#### **Who has responsibilities?**

- Board of Trustees
- Director of Education
- Coordinating Council of Superintendents
- Administrative Services
- Plant Services
- Education and Community Services
- Principals
- Caretakers
- Community members
- Permit Holders and Community Field Users

#### **How is this policy and/or procedure related to Board priorities?**

The Community Use of Schools policy addresses the goal of enhancing confidence in public education by increasing civic engagement and providing equitable access to resources and programs.

#### **Related Documents**

[Encouraging Facility Partnerships](#)  
[Human Rights – Code Related Harassment and Discrimination](#)  
[Standards of Conduct](#)  
[Tobacco Free Environment](#)  
[Supporting Community Concerns](#)  
[Distribution of Materials: External Organizations](#)

#### **Department**

Administrative Services  
Education and Community Services  
Plant Services

*It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term “parents” refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.*



# Board Policy #412.0 Community Use of Schools

---

## **Policy Statement**

The York Region District School Board encourages the community's participation in using its schools and school grounds for the mutual benefits of students as well as the local community.

The Board acknowledges its primary responsibility to accommodate all school programs and Board-related activities. It also acknowledges the Board's responsibilities to the community by making the school and school grounds available, where feasible, in accordance with Board policies and procedures.

## **Responsibilities**

*The Board of Trustees is responsible for:*

- annually, receiving information on fee schedule changes and permits;
- approving adjustments to the fee schedule which exceed Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the community use of schools;
- reviewing the Community Use of Schools policy in accordance with the priorities in the [Multi-Year Plan](#) and the approved policy review cycle; and
- understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Community Use of Schools policy, as required.

*The Director of Education is responsible for:*

- implementing and operationalizing the Community Use of Schools policy.

## **Definitions**

### *Community Use*

Community use of schools is generally from 6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on weekdays and from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on weekends and is based upon an agreement entered into between the Board and the user. These agreements are issued through the permitting process. Long-term arrangements, such as, but not limited to, leases, shared use, and multi-use agreements, are negotiated separately.

### *Fee Schedule*

The Board's [list](#) of processing fees and rates for use of school facilities.

### *Special Permits*

Provide use of school facilities to not-for-profit groups delivering programs and/or events for marginalized community members. Reduced processing fees and rates may apply.

## **History**

Approved 1986

Working Document: July 2012, November 2017

Revised 1999 (replaced previous Policy #412.0, Community Schools), 2000, 2007, April 2014, November 2018



# Board Procedure #412.0 Community Use of Schools

---

This procedure outlines how the York Region District School Board works with the community in using schools and school grounds for the mutual benefits of students as well as the local community.

## **Application**

The Community Use of Schools Special Permits Review Committee will consider requests for special permits from not-for-profit groups that provide programs or events for marginalized community members where needs have been identified and supported by data, such as, but not limited to, racialized communities, newcomer-refugees and students/families dealing with mental health issues and/or other forms of discrimination.

Individuals or groups wishing to submit a request for a special permit must complete the [Application for Special Permits](#) by email to: [specialpermits.review@yrdsb.ca](mailto:specialpermits.review@yrdsb.ca).

The application must:

- outline the purpose and description of the program and/or event;
- identify participants;
- outline how the program and/or event supports York Region District School Board students or families;
- include a charitable number, if applicable; and
- demonstrate good standing with the Canadian Revenue Agency.

The Community Use of Schools Special Permits Review Committee will consider the following when making their decision.

- How the purpose of the program and/or activity directly relates to the Board's [Mission, Vision and Values](#), [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) and [Director's Annual Plan](#).
- Participants must be York Region District School Board students or families.
- Participants must not be charged a fee to participate.
- The group requesting a permit must have insurance.
- Facilitators must have a current Vulnerable Sector Screen, where applicable.
- Facilitators must be present at all events.
- Charitable Status and Canadian Revenue Agency standing.
- The applicant is not receiving other Ministry Grants or sources of funding.
- Equitable allocation of special permits throughout the Region.
- Budget.

Written requests will be reviewed by the Community use of Schools Special Permits Review Committee quarterly, or as needed.

The Community Use of Schools Special Permits Review Committee will communicate their decision to applicants in writing. The letter will clearly outline the period of time for which the special permit will be issued and identify the appropriate rate.

Where a special permit is being issued at a reduced rate, the Committee will work with the appropriate department(s) to determine who will be responsible for covering the costs related to staff and/or other Board services.

If approved, special permits will be issued for a defined period of time, no longer than one calendar year. Requests for renewal must be made by re-submitting the Application for Special Permits form.

## **Responsibilities**

*The Director of Education shall:*

- allocate staff and resources to support the Community Use of Schools procedure.

*The Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Indigenous Education and Equity and Chief Financial Officer shall:*

- prepare an annual report summarizing the activities of the Community Use of Schools Special Permits Review Committee and fee schedule changes.

*Coordinating Council of Superintendents shall:*

- review and approve fee schedule changes for the community use of schools.

*Community Use of Schools Services shall:*

- require a permit for all community use of schools on school days and weekends;
- not grant permits during the instructional and co-curricular hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. except for Before and After School Child Care programs and Board or Board approved educational programs unless approved by the principal;
- advise permit holders that all of their literature must clearly state that permitted programs are not endorsed by, accredited to or part of the York Region District School Board;
- communicate to all community user groups concerning any damage or waste left behind by the group and, if need be, charge the permit group for the removal of damage or waste;
- provide options for insurance coverage to community groups without their own insurance coverage;
- with regard to payments and charges;
  - determine payment arrangements,
  - ensure that additional charges for incidental costs, including but not limited to, caretaking, supplies, and utilities are estimated on the permit and adjusted periodically during the permit according to actual cost,
  - require the posting of a bond or security deposit with certain applications for the rental of school facilities in order to protect the Board against damage to the facilities and/or any additional expenses incurred by the Board in supervising and cleaning the premises, and
  - return the bond or security deposit, all or in part, following the assessment of damage and expenses;
- with regard to permit allocation and renewals;
  - generally, allocate permits for children and youth using gym space in the preferred time frame of 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.,
  - consider the annual renewal of permits based on the availability of declared space by individual schools, Continuing Education's needs, the changing needs of the community, and the permit holders from the previous year,
  - only consider renewals when all prior fees and/or balances have been paid,
  - revoke permit privileges for violations of Board policies and procedures,
  - have the prerogative to decline the use of its facilities to any person or group,
  - prohibit activities considered by the Board to be injurious to the school grounds and/or facilities, and
  - annually notify permit holders by email, the deadlines to renew a permit;

- with regard to cancellations;
  - maintain the right to suspend or cancel, without notice, any permit if Board policies and procedures are not followed, facilities are misused, if there is inadequate supervision of activities, a lack of cooperation with Board staff, or non-payment of permit fees,
  - have the right to cancel a permit date if the facility is needed by the school,
  - arrange if possible the permit holder's use of the same facility on an alternate day mutually agreed to by both parties if the Board cancels a permit because it is needed by the school or in an emergency such as, but not limited to, a mechanical breakdown, inclement weather, safety, and labour issues,
  - reserve the right to cancel a permit without notice due to but not limited to emergency maintenance, and
  - cancel permits with due notice if the space is required for polling stations;
  
- with regard to block booking;
  - review and process school permit requests and block booking requests which have been authorized by the principal,
  - monitor the block booking nights in neighboring public schools to confirm that not all the schools have picked the same evening during the week as this would disallow the community from accessing the schools during that night of the week,
  - work with the school principal to grant new block booking requests wherever possible,
  - offer community groups alternative nights or locations for their permits whenever possible, and
  - inform the school principal if their requests for block bookings or permits are not possible for the school year requested;
  
- with regard to outdoor facilities;
  - approve permits, for both schools and the community, for use of school outdoor facilities when not permitted by municipalities,
  - charge all community groups according to the permit fees for use of outdoor facilities when not permitted by municipalities,
  - inform the school and community of school soccer fields closures due to climate conditions or unsafe field conditions, and
  - inform Plant Services of all permit requests for school outdoor facilities.

*Plant Services shall:*

- with regard to outdoor facilities;
  - endeavour to maintain a safe turf on all playing fields by,
    - determining in April the opening date for the fields, and
    - determining in September, the closing date for fields,
  - informing Administrative Services when fields will be closed,
  - working with principals on what parts of their school's field areas may be used if necessary during field closure or shut down times,
  - informing Community Use of Schools Department of the outdoor facilities which may be used by the public,
  - having caretakers monitor the facility's outdoor areas during community use and dependant on any violations, report to the permit holder's representative, the principal, 9-1-1, a Plant Services supervisor, and/or the security company,
  - reporting all community infractions to the Community Use of Schools department, and
  - maintaining the fields where community permits are issued;

- with regard to the indoor use of a facility;
  - based on maintenance and renewal project needs, advise the Community Use of Schools Department annually of the indoor availability of facilities,
  - have caretakers monitor the facility's indoor areas during permitted community use and dependent on any violations, report to the permit holder representative, the principal, 9-1-1, a Plant Services supervisor and/or the security company,
  - maintain safe and secure facilities and environments,
  - operate the facilities as per regulated standards and practices, and
  - authorize Caretaking support in an overtime capacity when required.

*Principals shall:*

- check the [e-Base](#) system daily for any updates and communication to permits within their school;
- share with their teaching staff the room locations and days of permit bookings;
- arrange with the permit holder the storage of the permit holder's equipment or supplies, if possible;
- inform permit holders that they may view the asbestos binder in the school they permit if requested;
- follow shared use agreements in schools, where applicable;
  
- with regard to outdoor facilities;
  - follow the opening and closing dates of the fields as determined by Plant Services,
  - not allow any use of fields when Plant Services has made a determination that the field is closed,
  - not allow students to use the field during shut-down periods, but contain the students to the asphalt surfaces and, if need be, allow limited access to the perimeter grass area aside from the field,
  - allow practices, without the use of cleats, outside of the opening date of the field, but only when the field is dry enough to not sustain any damage,
  - ensure that end zones and grass areas around the main field are used only for safety reasons and if the use of cleats is required for sports drills, every feasible step is taken to preserve the main field area,
  - review surveillance equipment, if necessary, to provide documented information about uses on the outdoor facilities,
  - arrange for the lining of corners and the centre lines of a field, order sand for jump pits by submitting a work order taking into account three weeks for delivery,
  - report all field problems to Plant Services as they occur, and
  - arrange and pay for all repairs which may be applied by Plant Services to bring the field up to an acceptable standard approved by Plant Services for any damages which occur to the field *if caused by his/her staff and/or students during school times when the field should not be used;*
  
- with regard to block booking;
  - no later than February 1 of each year, inform Community Use of Schools Department of any block bookings that the school may require for the next school year which will not exceed one night per week,
  - no later than June 1 of each year, inform the Community Use of Schools Department of any permit request by the school for the next school year which cannot be held on the block booking night, and
  - work with Community Use of Schools Department to spread out the school permits to a variety of nights during the week to avoid an interruption of individual community programs.

*Caretakers shall:*

- check the [e-Base](#) system daily for any updates and communication to permits within their school;
- provide Community Use of Schools Department with a copy of the permit facility caretaking timesheets on a monthly basis;
- check that all gym storage rooms are locked and not accessible by the community;
- ensure that equipment for permit holders is available in the reserved rooms;
- assess problems and/or damages to rooms, equipment and any other items being used by permit holders, immediately before and after the permit use and inform Community Use of Schools Department of any damages/missing equipment and identify the permit holder by using the occurrence report form;
- be on duty during permitted times and be in charge of the facility;
- not give the keys of any Board facility to anyone;
- orient the permit holder to the facility;
- ensure that the permit holders are notified that the fire routes and pedestrian walkways are to be kept clear; and
- take action to ensure that all internal and external fire routes and pedestrian walkways are kept clear.

*The Community Use of School Special Permits Committee shall:*

- review completed requests for consideration of special circumstances;
- seek clarity from the applicant if the information contained in the Application for Special Permits Request is not complete or clear;
- inform the applicant, Permit Department and any other impacted department of the outcome of the committee's decision, with rationale;
- determine the period of time for the special permit, not to exceed one-year;
- track all applications and their disposition; and
- prepare an annual report summarizing the activities of the Community Use of Schools Special Permits Committee for submission to the Chief Financial Officer and Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Indigenous Education and Equity.

*Community members requesting a permit shall:*

- understand and agree to post a bond or security deposit upon request of Community Use of Schools Department;
- be responsible for ensuring that the facilities and grounds, as is, are suitable for the permitted activities;
- review site suitability by booking an appointment in advance with either the principal or caretaker;
- ensure that online applications are received by Community Use of Schools Department by the required dates and understand that if the application is received after this date, priority for placement will not be guaranteed;
- understand that rental of a class room includes furniture and fixtures;
- request any additional furniture and equipment at the time of application; and
- ensure that advertisements, released prior to formal approval of the permit request by the Community Use of Schools Department, include notification that the location has not been approved and that their permitted programs are not endorsed by the Board.

*Permit holders shall:*

- with regard to payments and charges;
  - abide by the fee schedule for the rental of school facilities and equipment/furniture established annually by the Board including Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) except insurance which is subject to Provincial Sales Tax (PST),
  - pay all fees before commencement of the permit by one of the following options,
    - credit card (payments will be charged monthly),

- cheque (postdated payment may be arranged for permits over \$540), or
    - cash,
  - understand that all fees for one-time use permits must be paid in full prior to the start date;
  - incur an additional fee(s) determined by the Community Use of Schools Department to any permits after three changes have been made by the permit holder;
  - pay a charge determined by Community Use of Schools Department for all Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) cheques or declined credit cards;
  - be responsible for the payment of estimated additional incidental charges which include, but are not limited to, caretaking, supplies and utilities which may be adjusted periodically during the permit according to actual cost for those times when a school is not regularly staffed by caretakers;
  - be responsible for any caretaking costs which may be applied during the week if there was excessive set up and take down of requested equipment, or if the school was left in an untidy manner;
  - understand that caretaking time, if charged, is estimated and may be adjusted periodically during the span of permit;
  - be responsible and accountable for any and all damages arising out of the use of the facilities by any participants, guests or speakers, and for enforcing the terms on which the permit has been granted;
  - vacate the facility within 15 minutes after the exit time or extra fees may be applied;
- with regard to insurance;
    - understand that the Board's insurance coverage **does not** protect users or user groups,
    - save harmless the Board from any claims for loss of income or damages that may arise out of the use of the facility or for the loss or theft of any articles belonging to the permit holder,
    - provide proof of \$2,000,000 of liability insurance with the Board named as insured, and
    - hold the York Region District School Board harmless to any claims or rights to compensation;
- with regard to cancellations by the Community Use of School Department;
    - understand that the Board maintains the right to suspend or cancel, without notice, any permit,
    - understand that the Board will give notice of cancellations in the event the building is required for school purposes but in emergencies, such as, but not limited to, a mechanical breakdown, inclement weather, safety, and labour issues, the Board reserves the right to cancel without notice,
    - understand that, in addition, the Board may suspend or cancel a permit if Board policies and procedures are not followed, facilities are misused, if there is inadequate supervision of activities, a lack of cooperation with Board staff, or non-payment of permit fees,
    - understand that the Board may cancel a permit date if the facility is needed by the school,
    - understand that a permit may not be refunded due to inclement weather,
    - understand that should the direction of the caretaker on duty and/or his/her designate not be followed, the permit may be cancelled without notice, and
    - in the event that the building is required for school purposes, have the option of requesting the use the same or alternate facility on an alternate day mutually agreed to by both parties;
- with regard to requesting cancellations;
    - give notice in writing to Community Use of Schools Department prior to the permit date in the event that the permit holder requests a cancellation, and
    - requests to amend or cancel weekend or statutory holiday permits must be made to the Community Use of Schools Department on the Tuesday prior to the permit to avoid any additional charges, and
    - understand that if the caretaking costs were paid for under government funding then the permit holder shall be responsible for the full caretaking costs if insufficient notice was given;



- with regard to supervision;
  - ensure that the members of any group or organization, including spectators, are under the immediate supervision and control of competent and trustworthy adults, 18 years of age or older, who shall personally be responsible for the observance of the Board's requirements,
  - provide at least one adult supervisor for each room in use if the program requires the use of more than one room,
  - identify to the caretaker those adults taking part in supervising activities,
  - ensure that those adults taking part in supervising activities be present in her/his designated space at all times, and
  - have a "floating" supervisor if school use includes other space, such as, but not limited to, washrooms and corridors;
  
- adhere to all Board policies, procedures and protocol including, but not limited to;
  - being accountable to the school principal or her/his designate,
  - following the direction of the caretaker on duty or his/her designate,
  - reviewing and abide by the contents of the facility's Fire/Emergency Plan prior to commencing any activity within the facility,
  - ensuring that every occupant participates in accordance with the facility's Fire/Emergency Plan, if the fire alarm is sounded,
  - working with the caretaker to ensure that all internal and external fire routes and pedestrian walkways are kept clear,
  - ensuring that vehicles are only parked in approved parking spaces and not on playing fields, or grass areas,
  - advising participants and spectators that school parking is limited and understand that although parking space will be provided as available, on-site parking cannot be guaranteed,
  - using plastic blades and shafts for all floor hockey permits,
  - using appropriate indoor equipment for all sports,
  - not consuming alcoholic beverages at any time in any school or on any school or Board site (exceptions may be made for religious reasons or shared use agreements),
  - not smoking in any Board-operated buildings or on any Board property,
  - not engaging in gambling in any form in any school,
  - not bringing animals onto Board property without the explicit permission of Community Use of Schools Department unless these animals assist in the Accessibility and Access of the Permit Holder,
  - not removing any furniture or equipment from Board facilities and return all furniture and equipment back to its original place,
  - making arrangements to store permit holder equipment or supplies in schools only with the permission of the principal,
  - not using the name "York Region District School Board", "YRDSB", the logo of York Region District School Board, past or present, as well as the related names and graphics in advertisements related to the permit holder's activities or organization,
  - not suggesting in any advertisement, any endorsement of the permit holder's activity by the York Region District School Board,
  - not including in any advertisement, such as, but not limited to tickets, leaflets, newspaper advertisements, radio or television announcements, the telephone number of the school or Community Use of Schools Department, and
  - keeping the facility clean from garbage and follow the Board and site environmental and waste management practices; and
  
- read the terms governing use of school facilities printed on the permit and;
  - make arrangements through Community Use of Schools Department for transferring of contact or permit information,
  - not sublet or assign their permit,
  - be responsible for providing their contact information to their participants and resolve any issues with their participants,
  - submit all permit revisions in writing using [e-Base](#) discussion tab,

- ensure that all relevant information is provided with your [e-Base](#) permit request to ensure that your request is not delayed, and
- have access to review the asbestos binder in the school they permit if requested.

*Community Field Users shall:*

- apply for use of the field through the online [e-Base](#) permit system;
- pay an hourly fee for use of the field which will include the costs of maintenance on the field which will include grass cutting, aerating, fertilizing, over seeding, and topdressing;
- be responsible for lining the field or may request this service through the Board as a separate fee;
- reserve permits for all organized events;
- respect all field closures;
- not consume alcoholic beverages at any time, on any school sites or on any other Board site (exceptions may be made for religious reasons or shared use agreements);
- not smoke on any Board property;
- not engage in gambling in any form on any Board property;
- not allow any use of the soccer field if ten (10) millimeters of rain falls within an eight-hour period or 30 millimetres of rain falls within one week and for a sixteen-hour period after the rain has stopped or when the field is deemed unsafe;
- take direction from all Board staff or delegates;
- take responsibility for damage or waste clean-up expenditures caused by inappropriate play or poor housekeeping during their event;
- keep the facility and grounds clean from garbage and follow Board environmental and waste management practices;
- be responsible for supplying soccer nets which must be secured in the ground according to Board standards, and;
- supply portable toilet facilities where necessary or by request from Community Use of Schools Department.

*Administrative Services is responsible for:*

- annually proposing changes to the fee schedule for the community use of schools;
- encouraging proposals to be developed by municipalities interested school and community groups which benefit students and the local community;
- scheduling the use of all school buildings and school grounds; and
- co-operating with municipalities in negotiating shared-use agreements for parts of a school building and the school grounds.

*Education and Community Services is responsible for:*

- development student programs which use community facilitators other than Board facilities, on a reciprocal basis, in conjunction with the authority under those jurisdictions the facility belongs.

## **Definitions**

### *Block Booking*

A reservation in a school which has been initiated by the principal to use all or part of the school during the school year for a maximum of one night per week. Block booking is used by the school to hold the majority of events which happen during the school year on one particular evening.

### *Community Use of Schools Special Permits Review Committee*

This committee will consider requests for special permits and include the following staff members or designates;

- a Teacher Liaison,
- the Community Program Developer,
- the School Settlement Service Liaison Coordinator,
- the Advisor, Inclusive School and Community Services, and
- the Manager, Administrative Services.

The Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Indigenous Education and Equity, will provide oversight and guidance to the committee.

### *Field Shut Down*

A time when the field is closed due to:

- inclement weather where rainfall exceeds;
  - 10 mm of rain within an eight-hour period,
  - 30 mm of rain within one week, and
  - for the 16-hour period after the rain has stopped; and
- unsafe conditions or maintenance, repairs or a period of rest lasting no more than six hours per day for a maximum of five days per week.

### *Outdoor Facilities*

Soccer pitch, play fields, hard play areas, basketball courts, baseball diamonds, tracks or any other property within the schools' physical boundaries.

### *Payment Arrangements*

The frequency and timing of payments against the client's account.

### *Permit Requests by Schools*

An [online request](#) for certain dates and rooms in their school for an event that cannot be held on a block booking dedicated date.

### *Permits – Operating Dates during the School Year*

School year permits will be granted for the use of school facilities. Start and end dates will be determined by the Community Use of Schools Department between September and ending in June. Permits are not scheduled during the December break, March break and on all statutory holidays unless special permission is granted. Permits continue on Professional Development Days.

### *Permits – Summer Programs in School Facilities*

Summer permits will be granted between July and mid-August as determined by the Community Use of Schools Department. The normal operational hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Permits for summer use may be limited due to maintenance, renovations and major cleaning projects.

#### *School Year*

The [calendar](#) approved by the Ministry of Education for any given school year.

#### *Soccer Pitch*

The field which may have the upright goal posts used for soccer, football, rugby or other like sports.

#### *Play Fields or Practice Fields*

Any grassy areas that do not have goal posts.

### **History**

Approved 2003

Working Document: July 2012, November 2017

*Replaces Standing Memo 22, Damage to Outdoor Physical Education Facilities – Early Field Use*

Revised: 2007, 2009, April 2013, November 2018