

Use of Portsmouth School Facilities

I. STATEMENT of PURPOSE

The Portsmouth School Board recognizes that school facilities are a community resource and establishes a facilities use policy intended to make school buildings generally available as outlined below for community use.

The City of Portsmouth Public School Buildings and Athletic Fields are dedicated to the municipal government's use for public school education of children from kindergarten through 12th grade. Public school property is not an open public forum for expressive content for members of the public who are not students, except as provided under these terms and conditions. Public access to School Facilities, as defined below, is permitted only during times when the student instructional periods are over and school is not formally in session. Rental Fees apply and are listed in the School Usage Rental Agreement form.

II. APPLICATION

Members of the public may request to use School Facilities by completing an Application for School Facility Use Permit and School Usage Rental Agreement. These forms must be completed at least 10 working days before the date of the event. Forms may be downloaded from: www.cityofportsmouth.com/school or picked up at the front desk of the Portsmouth School Department, 1 Junkins Avenue, Suite 402, Portsmouth NH 03801. Requests for use of gymnasiums and athletic fields are made to the Athletic/Recreation Director. All other requests are made to the Facilities Director.

III. DEFINITIONS

“Event” is the specific purpose for which an organization rents the School Facilities. The Event may include set up, rehearsal, or more than one performance over one, two or several days.

“Limited Open Forum” exists when non school related groups meet on school premises during non-instructional time.

“Local Community Organizations” are organizations of which greater than 75% of the members are Portsmouth residents.

“Portsmouth Public School Athletic Fields” are the school athletic fields owned by the City of Portsmouth and associated with the Portsmouth Public School Buildings.

“Portsmouth Public Schools” are the school buildings for the following public schools: Portsmouth High School, Portsmouth Middle School, Robert J. Lister Academy, and the Portsmouth Elementary Schools of Dondero, Little Harbour and New Franklin.

“Public” refers to people who are not kindergarten through 12th grade students attending Portsmouth Public Schools.

“Regular Use” refers to use of a School Facility by an organization that meets repeatedly at regular intervals, such as weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.

“School Facilities” is the collective term for the Portsmouth Public School Buildings and Portsmouth Public School Athletic Fields that are expressly identified in the Application for School Facility Use Permit and School Usage Rental Agreement.

“School Sponsored Groups” are activities offered only to students, families and staff members of the public schools.

“Youth-related Organizations” are organizations that are not School Sponsored Groups and are created primarily for the benefit of youth under age 21.

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL FACILITY USE by the PUBLIC

A. Portsmouth Public School Buildings: Limited Open Forum

1. Small Group Meeting Spaces

Each of the schools listed below will make up to three (3) classrooms available as a limited open forum for small group meetings:

Portsmouth High School

Portsmouth Middle School

Dondero Elementary School

Little Harbour Elementary School

New Franklin Elementary School

Robert J. Lister Academy

All requests will be granted subject to room and custodian availability as well as the parking demands of scheduled school activities.

School Facilities are available during non-instructional time to School Sponsored Groups; Youth- related Organizations and Local Community Organizations for an Event or for Regular Use subject to room and custodian availability.

No group or organization may reserve a room more than three (3) months in advance or more than eight times in a calendar year.

2. Large Group Meeting Spaces

The following larger spaces are available as a limited open forum during non-instructional time for members of the Public for an Event:

Portsmouth High School: Auditorium Cafeteria Little Theatre Library Gym

Portsmouth Middle School: Cafeteria Library Gymnasium

Dondero Elementary School: Café/Gym Multipurpose Library

Little Harbour Elementary School: Café/Gym Multipurpose Library
Amphitheatre

New Franklin Elementary School: Cafeteria Gymnasium Library

All requests will be granted subject to room and custodian availability as well as the parking demands of scheduled school activities.

School Facilities including, but not limited to, the Portsmouth High School Auditorium are available during non-instructional time to School Sponsored Groups; Youth- related Organizations and Local Community Organizations for an Event subject to room and custodian availability.

No group or organization may reserve a room more than three (3) months in advance or more than eight (8) times in a calendar year.

3. Outside School Grounds

There district will make available outdoor spaces at each of the school buildings for community use, including, but not limited to: Playgrounds, parking lots and general open space.

All requests will be granted subject to space and custodial availability as well as the parking demands of scheduled school activities.

B. Portsmouth Public School Athletic Fields

Portsmouth Public School Athletic Fields are dedicated to school related activities and are not an open public forum for expressive content. When not in use by the schools, these School Facilities are available to School Sponsored Groups; Youth-related Organizations and Local Community Organizations for an Event or Regular Use subject to availability. Athletic Fields will be scheduled under the direction of the Athletic/Recreation Director.

The Athletic/Recreation Department shall have the right to cancel use of the athletic field directly before or during the Event when, in the exclusive judgment of the Athletic/Recreation Director or designee, weather or other conditions warrant cancellation.

V. INSURANCE

All organizations other than School Sponsored Groups must issue a certificate of insurance naming the Portsmouth School District on the declaration page as an additional insured prior to the use of any School Facilities. Coverage limits are determined by the City of Portsmouth.

VI. CANCELLATIONS

- a) Failure to provide 24 hours notice of cancellation will require payment of rental fees.
- b) The renting organization shall be responsible for any staffing costs incurred as a result of inadequate notice of cancellation.
- c) In the event of a cancellation of School Facilities use due to emergencies or inclement weather, the district will notify the organization. The event may either be rescheduled by the organization, or reservation and rental fees will be returned.

- d) Public information regarding the cancellation or rescheduling of an event is the responsibility of the renting organization.

VII. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- a) The use of alcoholic beverages and smoking is forbidden in and on school premises at all times.
- b) All organizations must comply with applicable national, state and local regulations and ordinances, including and not limited to requirements of the Portsmouth Police and Fire Departments.
- c) Applicable permits are the renting organization's responsibility.
- d) All organizations must supervise and conduct an event in a responsible manner which leaves the School Facility in the same condition as it was before the Event, excluding normal wear and tear.
- e) The Board of Education of the Portsmouth School District, through the Superintendent of Schools reserves the right to limit or revoke the reservation of any organization upon a finding that the organization breached the Terms of Use of the School Facilities Rental Agreement at any time.

VIII. FEES

- a) Annually, the School Board will establish a fee schedule for the use of school buildings and facilities.
- b) No rental fee shall be charged for any "school sponsored activity."
- c) No fee shall be charged for the use of small group spaces or the use of outside grounds by any group unless additional custodial coverage is required.
- d) Fees will be charged for the use of large group spaces as follows:
 - 1) Use by any organization where no fee, admission, collection or other charges will be assessed the Category I rate.
 - 2) Use by charitable organizations who provide evidence of IRS 501c(3) status or evidence or an organization approved by the NH Registrar of Charitable Trusts may charge fees, admission or other charges and will be assessed the Category I rate.

All other uses that charge fees, admission, collection or other charges will be subject to the Category II rental fee schedule.

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