



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL SUPERVISION

1. Policy Title

Policy on the Use of Schools by External Agencies

2. Policy Statement

Educational facilities under the management of the Ministry of Education will be made available for use of the community when these activities either complement the programmes of the respective schools or support the normal activities of the community. This policy will be effected in a transparent manner that treats all parties equitably.

3. Rationale/Background

The Ministry of Education recognises the involvement of the community as one of the key priorities in its Corporate Plan 2008-2012. This emphasis supports enhanced relationships between the school and various communities which are home to our students, their parents, NGOs and community organisations. The Ministry of Education recognizes that public schools are created and supported by the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and the utilization of its facilities for educational, cultural and civic community activities is encouraged. In all such partnerships, the safety of the students and school property is paramount to Ministry of Education.

This policy is intended to be used by school principals and school administrators to guide the use of school facilities by organizations and persons outside of the Ministry of Education who wish to use the school facilities on a short-term or one-time basis for specific non-commercial activity. In order to protect these educational facilities, regulations for their use have been provided.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all schools and educational institutions under the purview of the Ministry of Education, including all government owned Early Childhood centres and all government owned primary and secondary schools.

This policy applies to all external training providers, inclusive of craft, remedial and adult education programmes, that wish to use the school and its facilities to conduct classes outside of regular school hours.

The policy also applies to non-educational and non-commercial uses of the school by any external party whatsoever, for community activities, and includes but not limited to camps, national elections, sporting events, fetes, concerts, exhibitions and for national emergencies, where the school facilities may be used as shelters.

The policy does not apply to the school administration in the conduct of normal activities of an educational nature nor does it apply to the activities of students sanctioned by the administration.

5. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the term “school” is defined as the physical school compound, and all grounds.

The term “school facilities” is the buildings/classrooms on the school compound, washrooms and laboratory facilities, and all furniture and equipment that may be housed in these buildings.

6. Goals

The goals of this policy are to enhance the relationship between the school and the various communities and to encourage the utilization of the facilities of the Ministry of Education for educational, cultural and civic community activities.

7. Related Documents/Policies

Circular Memorandum No. 8 dated January 21, 1987 – Subject: Guidelines for the Use of Government School Buildings and Grounds.

8. Policy

The Ministry of Education reserves the right to grant or not to grant approval for use of school facilities for activities that contribute value to the community and where there are no other suitable alternative venues or accommodations within the community.

Facility usage will be granted only if it does not interfere with the activities scheduled by the school. Further details on the procedures for obtaining approvals for the use of the facilities are provided in Appendix I – Policy Implementation Guidelines.

9. Roles/Responsibilities

Users shall comply with the directions/advice given by the Principal.

10. Implementation

Approval for the use of government school buildings and grounds remains the prerogative of the Permanent Secretary who may delegate such authority to any officer or officers as he/she may see fit.

The School Supervisor III, in coordination with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this policy.

11. Monitoring and Review

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education shall monitor the implementation of this policy. A monitoring mechanism shall be formulated to provide regular and up-to-date information on the progress of its implementation.

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated annually and revised as necessary in the light of changing conditions and the findings of surveys/studies conducted.

12. Effective Date

This policy is effective as of the date of approval indicated below.

13. Review Date

This policy will be reviewed at the end of every school year, or at any earlier time as deemed necessary by the Minister of Education or the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education.

14. Appendices

Appendix I – Policy Implementation Guidelines

Appendix II – Application for use of a Government School Buildings and Grounds

Appendix III – Priority and Fees for the Use of Government School Buildings and Grounds

Appendix IV – Letter of Approval

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

1. General Principles

The Ministry of Education assumes no liability for injury to persons authorized to use the facilities and further assumes no liability for loss or damage to equipment, materials or other individual property. External parties will be required to effect public liability insurance for their events.

Facility usage will be granted only if it does not interfere with the activities scheduled by the school.

The Ministry of Education reserves the right to waive or adjust the rates in any situation which is in the best interest of the Ministry. A schedule of rates will be established. A refundable caution fee will be applicable to each user.

The Ministry of Education reserves the right to request sufficient time for full investigation, notice and arrangements of all requests for the use of school facilities/building to be communicated to the appropriate persons.

2. Procedure for Obtaining Use of Facilities

Application for the use of a Government school building or grounds shall be made to the Permanent Secretary through the principal of the school on the approved form (Appendix II) obtained at the school, at least one (1) month before the building or grounds are required. If more than one date is requested, each must be listed.

The principal shall forward the application immediately to the Schools Supervisor III, with recommendations.

Where the user falls within Category A, the principal may grant approval for use, and forward this information to the Schools Supervisor III as required.

3. Approval

The Schools Supervisor III shall advise the Principal of the decision and all the relevant fees to be paid. The Principal shall inform the applicant of the decision and the fees to be paid, where applicable (Appendix III). On the payment of the recommended fees to the school, a receipt of payment shall be given to the user.

All fees are payable in advance of the activity.

4. Priority of Requests

All requests for the use of school facilities will be granted in accordance with the order of priority established by the Ministry of Education (Appendix III). The Schools Supervisor III shall have the authority to resolve any conflict which may arise.

5. Fees

Fees may be required for the use of the school and its facilities and shall be itemized to reflect the estimated cost per activity hour for the use of furniture, electricity, equipment and their estimated maintenance cost. Equipment to be used by any outside agency should not include photocopiers, computers or any such items. No consumable materials will be made available to the user. Additional security, janitorial and other services, where these services are required in excess of normal daily school provision, shall be at the expense of the user.

Payments for the use of Governmental school buildings, institutions and grounds are set out in the Appendix III: Priority and Fees for the use of Government School Buildings and Grounds.

Fees collected by the school shall be in accordance with the guidelines established and approved by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education. In the case of continuous use, the user shall enter into a formal lease arrangement with the Permanent Secretary or anyone delegated by him/her.

6. Conditions for the Use of School Facilities

[Reference is made to Circular Memorandum No. 8 dated January 21, 1987 – Subject: Guidelines for the Use of Government School Buildings and Grounds]

Any agency/ person to which permission is granted for use of a government-owned building, institution or grounds is required to make proper arrangements with the principal with respect to the cleaning of those areas of the school that were occupied or utilized for the approved activities.

In every case where permission is granted for use of a Government school or grounds for a purpose other than a school-related activity, the organiser shall be required to obtain public liability insurance coverage.

In addition to the above, the organisers shall be required to indemnify the Ministry of Education against any loss or damage of whatever nature arising out of the event. The organisers of fund-raising functions shall provide sufficient security as recommended by the Schools Supervisor III or court of law.

Any licence or permit required by the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago shall be the responsibility of the applicant.

Activities should be generally restricted to the Assembly Hall, to the grounds and the toilet area. Special permission may be granted for the use of other areas for specialised programmes. The applicant and the principal must agree on the terms and conditions and these must be stated on the application.

School furniture shall not be made available for public fund raising functions but their use may be allowed for concerts, meetings, seminars, and the like organised by school related groups, voluntary and service organisations and cultural community groups.

Activities involving the use of open fires shall not be permitted on the premises of government owned schools without the approval of the Permanent Secretary. Application for such permission must be accompanied by a statement indicating appropriate safety measures which have the approval of the Fire Services.

The approval of the Permanent Secretary must be obtained beforehand for the use and consumption of alcoholic beverages on government school premises.

7. Damage and Property Loss

Each approved applicant shall be required to pay a refundable deposit to the principal as a Caution Fee. In the event of damage to or loss of property, or failure to return the property in a sanitary and acceptable condition, the tenant/agency agrees to defray the expenses incurred by the school in restoring the premises to its state of repair and condition prior to its use.

8. Considerations (Re: School Rules and Regulations)

The conditions of use shall be subject to the school's official rules and regulations, in particular, behavioural and dress code policies, and shall include the following:

8.1 Restrictions on Use

- Approved users are restricted to the dates and hours approved and to the building area and facilities specified, unless requested changes are approved;
- Approved food and beverage will be served and consumed only in designated areas;
- The following activities are prohibited:
 - Sub-leasing or shared use
 - Any deliberate activity that shall directly result in the damage and/or loss of property to the school

- Any activity that may violate the terms and conditions of approval for use of the school and its facilities
- The promotion of any activities that are subversive to the laws of Trinidad and Tobago

8.2 Fire and Safety Regulations

- Police or security monitoring consistent with policy guidelines
- Approved users are responsible for complying with all local and national fire and safety regulations at all times.

8.3 Cancellation of Events

No Government buildings, institutions or grounds are to be used for immoral or illegal purposes. Prior to the event the Ministry of Education reserves the right to cancel any approved use of facilities for any infraction of the stated regulations of the school, or for the interest of public safety and campus security or for other sound business reasons and without notice in the event of national emergencies.

Where the cancellation is as a result of an action of the applicant, no refund or deferral of fees will be permitted.