

SCHOOL DISTRICT - COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Successful education programs require the support of the school district community. The board addresses the importance of the role of the school district community in the school district in this series of the policy manual. The board recognizes this support is dependent on the school district community's understanding of participation in the efforts, goals, problems and programs of the school district.

In this section, the board sets out its policies defining its relationship with the school district community. In striving to obtain the support of the school district community, the board will:

- Provide access to school district records;
- Inform the school district community of the school district's goals, objectives, achievements, and needs;
- Invite the input of the school district community; and,
- Encourage cooperation between the school district and the school district community.

Approved 7/13/2015

Reviewed 7/8/2019

Revised 6/10/2019

PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS

Public records of the school district may be viewed by the public during the regular business hours of the administration offices of the school district. These hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except for holidays and recesses.

Persons wishing to view the school district's public records will contact the School Board Secretary and make arrangements for the viewing. The Secretary will make arrangements for viewing the records as soon as practicable, depending on the nature of the request.

Persons may request copies of public records by telephone or in writing, including electronically. The school district may require pre-payment of the costs prior to copy and mailing.

Persons wanting copies may be assessed a fee for the copy. Persons wanting compilation of information may be assessed a fee for the time of the employee to compile the requested information. Printing of materials for the public at the expense of the school district will only occur when the event is sponsored by the school district.

Pursuant to Iowa law, the board has determined certain records need to be confidential as their disclosure could jeopardize the safety of persons or property and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Security procedures
- Emergency preparedness procedures
- Evacuation procedures
- Security codes and passwords

It is the responsibility of the School Board Secretary to maintain accurate and current records of the school district. It is the responsibility of the board secretary to respond in a timely manner to requests for viewing and receiving public information of the school district.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 21.4; 22; 291.6
1980 Op. Att'y Gen. 88.
1972 Op. Att'y Gen. 158.
1968 Op. Att'y Gen. 656.

Approved 5/14/1990
Reviewed 7/8/2019
Revised 7/13/2015

NEWS CONFERENCES AND INTERVIEWS

The superintendent, on behalf of the board and the school district, may hold a news conference or respond to a request for an interview with the news media.

The superintendent will respond accurately, openly, honestly, and objectively to inquiries from the news media about the school district.

News conferences and interviews planned or pre-arranged for school district activities will include the board and the superintendent. News conferences for issues requiring an immediate response may be held by the superintendent. It is within the discretion of the superintendent to determine whether a news conference or interview is held to provide an immediate response to an issue.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to keep the board apprised of news conferences and interviews.

Legal Reference:

Iowa Code §§ 21.4; 22; 279.8

Approved 5/13/2019

Reviewed 7/8/2019

Revised 5/13/2019

NEWS RELEASES

The superintendent will determine when a news release about internal school district and board matters will be issued. In making this determination, the superintendent will strive to keep the media and the school district community accurately and objectively informed. Further, the superintendent will strive to create and maintain a positive image for the school district. It is the responsibility of the superintendent to approve news releases originating within the school district prior to their release.

News releases will be prepared and disseminated to news media in the school district community. Questions about news releases will be directed to the superintendent.

Legal Reference: Widmer v. Reitzler, 182 N.W.2d 177 (Iowa 1970).
Dobrovolny v. Reinhardt, 173 N.W.2d 837 (Iowa 1970).
Iowa Code §§ 21.4; 22.2
1980 Op. Att'y Gen. 73.

Approved 5/13/2019
Reviewed 7/8/2019
Revised 5/13/2019

LIVE BROADCAST OR RECORDING

Individuals may broadcast or record public school district events, including open board meetings, as long as it does not interfere with, or disrupt, the school district event and it does not create an undue burden in adapting the buildings and sites to accommodate the request.

It is within the discretion of the superintendent to determine whether the request is unduly burdensome and whether the broadcast or recording will interfere with or disrupt the school district event.

Recording of classroom activities will be allowed at the discretion of the superintendent. Parents will be notified prior to recording of classroom activities.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations outlining the procedures for making the request and the rules for operation if the request is granted.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 21.4, .7; 22; 279.8

Approved 5/13/2019

Reviewed 7/8/2019

Revised 5/13/2019

SCHOOL - COMMUNITY GROUPS

The board values the participation and the support of school district-community groups, including, but not limited to, the booster club, fine arts, and parent-teacher organizations, which strive for the betterment of the school district and the education program. The board will work closely with these groups.

Prior to any purchase of, or fund raising for the purchase of goods or services for the school district, the group will confer with the superintendent to assist the group in purchasing goods or services to meet the school district's needs.

Funds raised by these groups for the school district may be temporarily kept in separate accounts of the school district.

It is the responsibility of the building principal to be the liaison with the school district-community groups affiliated with the building principal's attendance center.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8

Approved 5/13/2019

Reviewed 5/10/2021

Revised 5/10/2021

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS AND VOLUNTEERS

The board recognizes the valuable resource it has in the members of the school district community. When possible and in concert with the education program, members of the school district community may be asked to make presentations to the students or to assist employees in duties other than teaching. The school district may officially recognize the contributions made by volunteers.

Recruitment, training, utilization, and the maintenance of records for the purposes of insurance coverage and/or recognition of school district volunteers is the responsibility of the superintendent.

Volunteers within the district are held to the same high standards of behavior as school employees and will be subject to background checks prior to interacting with students in a volunteer capacity. It is the responsibility of the superintendent or the superintendent's designee to create regulations necessary to carry out this policy.

Legal Reference:

Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 670

Approved 5/13/2019

Reviewed 5/10/2021

Revised 5/10/2021

VISITORS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT BUILDINGS & SITES

The board welcomes the interest of parents and other members of the school district community and invites them to visit the school buildings and sites. Visitors, which include persons other than employees or students, must notify the principal, or their designee, of their presence in the facility upon arrival.

Persons who wish to visit a classroom while school is in session are asked to notify the principal, or their designee, and obtain approval prior to the visit so appropriate arrangements can be made and so class disruption can be minimized. Teachers and other employees will not take time from their duties to discuss matters with visitors.

Visitors will conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with mutual respect and consideration for the rights of others while attending school events. Visitors failing to conduct themselves accordingly may be asked to leave the premises. Children who wish to visit school must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.

It is the responsibility of employees to report inappropriate conduct. It is the responsibility of the superintendent and principals to take the action necessary to cease the inappropriate conduct. If the superintendent or principals are not available, a school district employee will act to cease the inappropriate conduct.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 716.7

Approved 5/13/2019
Reviewed 7/8/2019
Revised 5/13/2019

PUBLIC CONDUCT ON SCHOOL PREMISES

The board expects that students, employees and visitors will treat each other with respect, engage in responsible behavior, exercise self-discipline and model fairness, equity and respect. Individuals violating this policy will be subject to discipline. Students will be disciplined consistent with the student conduct policies. Employees will be disciplined consistent with employee discipline policies and laws. Others will be subject to discipline according to this policy.

Individuals are permitted to attend school sponsored or approved activities or visit school premises only as guests of the school district, and, as a condition, they must comply with the school district's rules and policies. Individuals will not be allowed to interfere with or disrupt the education program or activity. Visitors, like the participants, are expected to display mature, responsible behavior. The failure of individuals to do so is not only disruptive but embarrassing to the students, the school district and the entire community.

To protect the rights of students to participate in the education program or activities without fear of interference or disruption and to permit the school officials, employees and activity sponsors and officials to perform their duties without interference or disruption, the following provisions are in effect:

- Abusive, verbal or physical conduct of individuals directed at students, school officials, employees, officials and activity sponsors of sponsored or approved activities or at other individuals will not be tolerated.
- Verbal or physical conduct of individuals that interferes with the performance of students, school officials, employees, officials and activity sponsors of sponsored or approved activities will not be tolerated.
- The use of vulgar, obscene or demeaning expression directed at students, school officials, employees, officials and activity sponsors of sponsored or approved activities participating in a sponsored or approved activity or at other individuals will not be tolerated.

If an individual becomes physically or verbally abusive, uses vulgar, obscene or demeaning expression, or in any way interrupts an activity, the individual may be removed from the event by the individual in charge of the event. Law enforcement may be contacted for assistance.

Individuals removed from school premises have the ability to follow the board's chain of command and complaint policies should they choose to do so. The exclusion is in effect should the individual choose to appeal the decision of the

superintendent. The term "individual" as used in the policy also includes students and employees.

If an individual has been notified of exclusion and thereafter tries to enter a school building or attends a sponsored or approved activity, the individual will be advised that his/her attendance will result in prosecution. The school district may obtain a court order for permanent exclusion from the school building or from future school sponsored or approved activities.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8, .66; 716.7

Approved 7/13/2015

Reviewed 7/8/2019

Revised 9/9/2019

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

The board recognizes that students, employees, parents or citizens may want to distribute materials within the school district that are noncurricular. Noncurricular materials to be distributed must be approved by the building principal and meet certain standards prior to their distribution.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the building principals to draft administrative regulations regarding this policy.

Legal Reference: U.S. Const. amend. I.

Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).

Bethel School District v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986).

New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325 (1985).

Tinker v. Des Moines Ind. Comm. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

Bystrom v. Fridley High School, 822 F.2d 747 (8th Cir. 1987).

Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 280.22

Approved 5/13/2019

Reviewed 7/8/2019

Revised 5/13/2019

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS IN PRIVATE VEHICLES

Generally, transporting students for school purposes is done in a vehicle owned by the school district and driven by a school bus driver. Students may be transported in private vehicles for school purposes. It is within the discretion of the superintendent to determine when this is appropriate.

Individuals transporting students for school purposes in private vehicles must have the permission of the superintendent and meet all applicable requirements set by the district. Prior to transporting students in private vehicles, the district may require the following:

- The vehicle used to transport the student(s) is in good condition and meets all applicable safety requirements;
- The driver transporting the student(s) possesses a valid drivers' license;
- Proof of insurance has been supplied to the superintendent and the insurance satisfies the minimum coverage requirements for driving personal vehicles in the State of Iowa ; and
- The parents of the students to be transported have given written permission to the superintendent.

The school district assumes no responsibility for those students who have not received the approval of the superintendent and who ride in private vehicles for school purposes. If transportation is not provided by the school district, or if transportation provided by the school district is declined by the student or parent/guardian, then the responsibility and corresponding liability for transportation for school purposes shall rest solely with the student and parent/guardian.

This policy statement applies to transportation of students for school purposes in addition to transporting students to and from their designated attendance center.-The superintendent may develop an administrative process to implement this policy.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 285; 321.
281 I.A.C. 43.

Approved 5/13/2019
Reviewed 5/10/2021
Revised 5/10/2021

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

The use of students, the school district name, or its buildings and sites for advertising and promoting products and/or services of entities and organizations operating for a profit is not allowed except with prior board approval. Nonprofit entities and organizations may be allowed to use students, the school district name, or its buildings and sites if the purpose is educationally related and prior approval has been obtained from the board.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code § 279.8

Approved 5/13/2019

Reviewed 7/8/2019

Revised 5/13/2019

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT BUILDINGS AND SITES

The school board supports the philosophy that the schools belong to the public, and should be available for public use under reasonable guidelines. The facilities and equipment of the schools will be open free of charge under these conditions:

- a) The group must be a public body or non-profit organization in the Mount Vernon School District.
- b) A staff member of the school district or a designated member of the using group must be in the building.
- c) The group will provide close supervision of the participants to ensure the security of the facilities and the safety of the participants.
- d) Consumable supplies will not be used without special arrangements.
- e) All facilities and equipment will be left at least as neat and clean as they are found. Special arrangements should be made if staff help is needed in cleanup.
- f) Requests for building use should be made to the building principal well in advance. The Superintendent and school board retain final authority over the use of the building.
- g) The school board reserves the right to charge an organization for the use of a building.

Requests for use that do not meet the above guidelines should be directed to the Superintendent who will either act on them or refer them to the school board.

Approved 5/13/1974
Reviewed 7/8/2019
Revised 11/10/2008

TOBACCO/NICOTINE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco and nicotine use is prohibited on school district facilities, school district grounds, and in school district vehicles, including the use of look-a-likes where the original would include tobacco or nicotine. Look-a-likes may be used for student activity purposes with prior approval by the superintendent or their designee. This requirement extends to students, employees and visitors. This policy applies at all times, including school-sponsored and nonschool-sponsored events. Persons failing to abide by this request are required to extinguish their smoking material, dispose of the tobacco, nicotine or other product or leave the school district premises immediately. It is the responsibility of the administration to enforce this policy.

Individuals participating in an FDA approved nicotine cessation program are encouraged to contact a MVCSD nurse to discuss an exemption from penalties outlined in this policy.

Legal Reference: Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Pub. L. No. 103-227, 108 Stat. 125 (1994).
House File 2212, Iowa General Assembly (2008)
Iowa Code §§ 142D; 279.8, .9; 297

Approved 1/10/1994
Reviewed 5/10/2021
Revised 5/10/2021

WEAPONS IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The board believes weapons, other dangerous objects and look-a-likes in school district facilities and at school district-approved events cause material and substantial disruption to the school environment or present a threat to the health and safety of students, employees and visitors on the school district premises or property within the jurisdiction of the school district.

All weapons, dangerous objects and look-a-likes are prohibited to be carried, possessed, transported or otherwise stored on school district property and to school district-approved events. Exceptions to this policy include weapons carried by the following individuals in performance of their official duties:

- law enforcement;
- military personnel;
- corrections officers and;
- students and individuals approved in writing by the Superintendent who are actively engaging in a school district approved firearms safety course, hunter education course, shooting sports activity, school musical, school play, and other approved student activities.

Individuals found to be in violation of this district policy will be required to immediately remove the weapon, dangerous object or look-a-likes from the school district property or event. Students found to be in violation of this policy or any other board policies related to weapons will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Legal Reference: 18 U.S.C. § 921
Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 280.21B; 483A.27(11), 724
281 I.A.C. 12.3(6)

Approved 10/11/2021
Reviewed 10/11/2021
Revised 10/11/2021

UNMANNED AIRCRAFTS – DRONES

The following policy applies to the extent not preempted by federal or state regulatory jurisdiction regarding unmanned aircrafts. For purposes of this policy, the term “unmanned aircraft” means an aircraft that is operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

The Mount Vernon Community School District believes in maintaining the safety, security, and privacy of students, employees, and visitors. In keeping with this belief, the use or possession of unmanned aircrafts is prohibited on district property or in the space above the property that reasonably can be considered part of the district property.

The superintendent may make an exception to this policy in specific cases where the circumstances warrant such exception. In such situations and prior to approval, unmanned aircraft operators shall:

- Supply proof of insurance meeting liability limits established by the district;
- Present appropriate registration and authorization issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA);
- Sign an agreement holding the district harmless from any claims of harm to individuals or damage to property; and
- Meet additional requirements as determined appropriate by the district.

If the unmanned aircrafts are operated as part of the district curriculum, prior to adoption into the curriculum, district employees shall work with district administration to ensure the appropriate insurance, registration, and authorizations are in place.

Unmanned aircrafts shall be operated in accordance with Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union policy.

Failure to abide by this policy may result in local, state, and federal penalties if applicable.

Approved 6/13/2016
Reviewed 7/8/2019
Revised 6/13/2016

DISTRICT OPERATION DURING PUBLIC EMERGENCIES

The district believes that student learning is the heart of its core mission. While traditional in-person teaching continues to provide the greatest learning opportunity to all students, there may be rare and unusual circumstances that prevent the school community from convening in traditional in-person settings. At times of a public emergency declared by federal, state or local officials, the district will seek guidance and recommendations from federal, state and local agencies to assist in determining the safety of convening traditional in-person learning.

During a declared public emergency, the school board delegates to the superintendent the authority to determine whether to close school buildings to traditional in-person learning if the superintendent determines in-person learning would hinder the health and safety of the school community. The district will instead utilize remote or hybrid learning opportunities permitted by law.

Following guidance and recommendations from federal, state, and local agencies when reasonably possible, the administration will create regulations related to district operations during a public emergency, including, but not limited to, student, employee and visitor safety and security; the use and safeguarding of district property; public meetings and events, and when applicable, measures to prevent or slow the spread of infectious disease.

These measures will be enforced for the period of time of the public emergency, or until the superintendent, in consultation with federal, state and local agencies determine it is appropriate for the safety measures to end.

Legal Reference: Senate File 2310
Iowa Code ch. 279.8

Approved 9/15/2020
Reviewed 9/15/2020
Revised 9/15/2020