

SECTION K: COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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1. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee, in an effort to ensure and enhance the education of our children in a free society, presents and endorses this statement of policy on school and community relations because of its conviction that (a) the public schools belong in every sense to the people who created them by consent and support them by taxation; (b) the schools are only as strong as the intelligent and informed support of the people of the community and never any stronger; and (c) the support of the people must be based upon their knowledge of, their understanding about, and their participation in the aims and efforts of the public schools.

The School Committee, therefore, reaffirms and declares its design and intent to:

- Keep the citizens of the community regularly and thoroughly informed through all the channels of communication on all the policies, programs, and planning of the school system and to carry out this policy through its own efforts and those of Office of the Superintendent of Schools.
- Invite the advice and counsel of the people of the community at all times and especially at all regular meetings of the Committee, within the guidelines established for School Committee meetings and except at executive sessions.
- Solicit the sound thinking and studied counsel of the people through standing committees and advisory committees selected from the community and appointed by this Committee to consider those problems which affect the future of our children.
- Respond to the concerns of the School Councils.

Public Information & Communication

The Beverly Public Schools engage in public relations initiatives designed to provide for effective communications with the students, the staff, the parents and the citizens of the City and has the following characteristics:

- Utilizes appropriate channels for communication
- Communicates pertinent information for an understanding of the school district to the public
- Provides two-way communication with all elements of the community as well as with the students, staff and parents within the school district
- Contributes toward the development of better understanding among all groups in the community.

| Adopted: May 19, 2004
Revised: September 3, 2008

2. PUBLIC CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

Complaints, suggestions and comments of parents and/or residents of the community should be processed through proper channels.

- If a parent has a question relating to a classroom matter, communications should initiate at the teacher level.
- If a problem cannot be solved at that level, the complaint may be referred to the building principal, program director or designees.
- The administrator to whose attention the issue was first referred reports unresolved complaints immediately to the Superintendent of Schools.
- The School Committee may consider complaints that cannot be resolved by the Superintendent of Schools.
- Questions relating to building-wide or system-wide operations or similar areas of activity should be brought to the attention of the appropriate administrator.

Any complaint to a Committee member shall be presented or reported to the Superintendent of Schools. However, nothing in any of these regulations shall be construed as taking away the right of appeal to the School Committee in any matter.

Cases of student discipline should be reported to the School Committee under conditions and in accordance with procedure as approved by the Committee.

Adopted: December 14, 2005

3. MEDIA RELATIONS

The School Committee encourages a policy of sound relations with the press and other communication media in the community and surrounding geographic area. The Superintendent shall plan for periodic releases to the press and other communication media that will provide information to the community concerning its schools and various phases of the school program.

The School Committee and the school administration will cooperate in furnishing information on the operation of the Beverly Public Schools to all news media to the extent that such news releases may further the understanding of the public school program.

No information shall be released to the news media by any member of the School Committee without prior notification to the entire School Committee. Although the School Committee President normally speaks as the representative of the Committee, no individual member speaks for the Committee. Moreover, no information be released to any news media which will, in any way, demean the character or intentions of any School Committee member or school employee, nor shall such communication violate the privacy of any individual.

Adopted: May 19, 2004

Revised: September 3, 2008

4. VISITORS TO SCHOOLS

Non-Parental Visitors

While the Beverly School Committee encourages visitors to the schools, it is the policy of the Committee that:

- All visits are at the discretion of the building principal. All persons wishing to visit the school should make prior arrangements with the principal and/or the principal's designee.
- All people entering the schools, for any reason, will be required to check in with the school's main office. If the visitor is unknown to the office staff, he/she will not be allowed to conduct such visit and/or leave the office area until the person being visited has been notified. If the visitor refuses to remain in the office area pending such notification, the visitor will be asked to leave the building, and the matter will be reported to the Superintendent immediately.
- Students visiting from other schools will not be allowed to remain on campus unless granted permission by the principal. Students wishing to bring a visitor to school must receive prior permission from the teacher and building principal at least 48 hours in advance of the proposed visit.
- All school buildings will have clearly marked main entrances and offices of the principal. All schools will have signs informing visitors of the requirement to report to the office upon entering the building. Furthermore, each building will utilize a "visitor's badge" and guest log showing arrival and departure times.
- All non-parental visitors shall be accompanied at all times by a school staff person, except with the specific authorization of the building principal.
- If a visitor without the appropriate "visitor's badge" is discovered in the building, staff will call the office immediately and redirect the visitor to the school's main office; where possible, staff will escort the visitor to the office to obtain appropriate clearance to be in the building. If a visitor is discovered in an area of the building where he or she does not belong, staff will determine the visitor's business, if necessary, ask the visitor to leave, and then report the matter to the principal immediately. If the visitor does not exit the building, the staff member should ask another adult to go to the office and call the police to come to the building to remove the trespasser.

Parent Visitations

It is the goal of the Beverly Public Schools to foster relationships with parent(s)/guardian(s) that encourage cooperation between the home and school in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

Parental involvement in the schools is encouraged through regular communication with the Principal and staff, the parent-teacher organizations, school volunteer programs, and other opportunities for participation in school activities and District programs.

With respect to parent visitations, it is the policy of the Committee that:

- The Principal must approve all parental requests for classroom visitations. Requests for visitations must be made at least forty-eight hours in advance to allow for appropriate consideration of the request, as well as proper arrangements to be made.
- Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms as part of planned activities (i.e., American Education Week, reading festivals, etc.).
- All parents entering the schools, for any reason, will be required to check in with the school's main office. If the parent is unknown to the office staff, he/she will not be allowed to conduct such visit and/or leave the office area until the person being visited has been notified. If the parent refuses to remain in the office area pending such notification, the parent will be asked to leave the building, and the matter will be reported to the Superintendent immediately.

- All school buildings will have clearly marked main entrances and offices of the principal. All schools will have signs informing parents of the requirement to report to the office upon entering the building. Furthermore, each building will utilize a “visitor’s badge” and guest log showing arrival and departure times.
- If a parent without the appropriate “visitor’s badge” is discovered in the building, staff will call the office and redirect the parent to the school’s main office; where possible, staff will escort the parent to the office to obtain appropriate clearance to be in the building.

This policy shall be construed in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Specifically, parents shall have the right to observe any program(s) proposed for their child if the child is identified as eligible for special education services. Moreover, parents may also have an evaluator observe the program for them or in their place in such circumstances. All such observations and visitations, however, require 48 hours notice to the building principal and/or appropriate program administrator(s).

Adopted: May 11, 2005

5. DONATIONS AND SOLICITATION IN SCHOOLS

Donations

The Superintendent and/or his designee shall have the authority to accept or deny the donation of academic materials and equipment sponsored by outside agencies and proposed for use in the schools.

Solicitation

The Superintendent of Schools must approve all solicitation of funds before any such activities can be conducted in schools. Participation by students and staff shall be on a voluntary basis. Individual donations or school donations are not publicized.

Teachers are not to receive any agent or to examine any books, apparatus, or other articles presented by agents upon the school premises unless duly authorized by the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent and may not allow any agents or business representatives to intrude upon the regular duties of the school under any circumstances.

Unless authorized by the Superintendent of Schools, a teacher shall not permit the subscription or collection of money on school premises or allow any article to be exhibited thereon for the purpose of sale or otherwise, or securing the names of students or transacting any private business.

Unless authorized by the Building Principal, teachers may not permit any person to enter for the purpose of photographing students.

Adopted: August 24, 2005

6. ADVERTISING IN SCHOOLS

No posters, notices, or bills shall be distributed at any time or in any manner within the school premises or adjacent territory or posted upon the walls or fences on school property unless duly authorized by the Superintendent of Schools. Furthermore, any outside organization not related to the Beverly Public Schools must receive approval from the Superintendent of Schools to display any poster or notice in the building.

Teachers are not to allow the schools to be made a medium for communicating any kind of advertisement. Specifically, no teacher shall communicate or distribute or permit another person to communicate or distribute to any school or class any notice relating to other than school matters without obtaining the Superintendent's permission.

Adopted: August 24, 2005

7. COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

General

The Beverly School Committee recognizes that school facilities are valuable community resources and should be available for use by responsible, organized local groups when no conflict with school needs exists.

All groups interested in utilizing the school facilities of the Beverly Public Schools must certify that their educational and non-academic programs, activities and employment opportunities are offered without regard to race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or any other class or characteristic protected by law.

Beverly-based Groups

The Superintendent is authorized to grant non-school groups permission to use facilities and waive rental fees when he/she is reasonably certain that the group is Beverly-based and comprised mainly of Beverly residents. The group should have worthwhile intentions and not abuse the facilities or cause a public disturbance in conducting a non-profit function.

Groups Outside the Community

Groups based in outside communities may be granted permission to use facilities; however, the rental fee will not be waived.

Fund-raising Groups

Involvement of professional fund-raising organizations charging a fee or percentage arrangement shall prohibit waiver of the rental fee.

Custodians

Custodial fees will not be waived.

Liability

It is the policy of the Beverly School Committee that no outside agency, group, business, or association will be permitted to use any school building and/or school facilities without first signing an agreement exempting the City of Beverly and the School Department from any liability claims which may arise as a result of building or facility use.

Limited Use

The Superintendent of Schools shall have the authority to deny any individual or group the use of the playing fields and/or facilities.

M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 71& 71B; Chapter 272, Section 40A

Adopted: August 24, 2005
Revised: December 8, 2010