COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: **FACILITY USAGE AND RENTAL**

DATE ADOPTED: October 20, 2026

POLICY STATEMENT

The school district believes that school facilities (buildings and grounds) can and should serve as centers for educational, civic, cultural, recreational and other community events provided there is a general understanding throughout the community that:

- School and school-sponsored activities will always be given priority for use of school buildings and grounds;
- School districts cannot subsidize the use of facilities for events and activities not directly related to its primary educational mission;
- Authorization to use school facilities does not imply endorsement or approval of any group or activity;
- The superintendent, or their designee, shall be responsible for maintaining guidelines for the use of the facilities pursuant to this policy.

Based on such understanding, the public use of buildings and grounds by the community is highly encouraged.

I. APPROVED USE OF FACILITIES

Individuals or groups may use the facilities for the following purposes:

A. Meetings by parent-teacher organizations and school booster organizations whose purpose is to support the operations of the schools and school district;
B. Meetings by employee professional organizations comprised of school district employees;
C. Social, civic and recreational meetings, and entertainment, provided the events are open to the public;
D. Civic forums and community centers, provided the events are open to the public;
E. Recreation, physical training and athletics, including competitive athletic contests for children and adults;
F. Academic tutoring or lessons;
G. Meetings, entertainment and occasions where admission fees are charged, when the proceeds are to be spent for an educational or charitable purpose, and the events are open to the public.

Last Reviewed: November 18, 2025
Date Warned: October 2, 2026
First Reading: October 6, 2026
Second Reading: October 20, 2026

Legal Reference: Title 9 § 4501, 4502

II. PROHIBITED USES AND RESTRICTIONS

The superintendent, or their designee, may deny, revoke, or terminate an individual's or group's use of District facilities or grounds for:

A. Uses that are likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to the schools' operations;
B. Uses that could adversely affect the safety and well-being of its students, staff or other users of District property;
C. Hunting or trapping on District property. Firearms, weapons, bows, crossbows, and other equipment may not be possessed or used on District property for the purpose of hunting or trapping, except as specifically authorized by the District in accordance with applicable law;
D. Uses involving the sale, distribution, consumption, promotion, or possession of alcoholic beverages or unlawful drugs;
E. Uses prohibited by federal, state, or local law or by District policy;
F. Uses that interfere with school district maintenance, construction, repair or other operational needs;
G. Uses that could damage District facilities, grounds, equipment or property;
H. Uses that could reasonably be expected to result in a riot, public disturbance, or other significant disruption.

III. REQUIREMENTS AND PRIORITY OF USE

The Superintendent, or their designee, shall establish a fee structure, review it annually, and administer the fee schedule in a manner that does not discriminate based on viewpoint. The School District reserves the right to require proof of liability insurance. Users shall agree to hold the District harmless from any and all liability resulting from their use of District facilities or grounds.

All users shall clearly state in announcements and other public communications that their events and activities are not sponsored by the School District. Authorization to use District facilities or grounds shall not be construed as District endorsement or approval of the activity, group, organization, or purpose represented.

All use of District facilities and grounds shall be consistent with District emergency response procedures, including the District's Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP). Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and other emergency equipment shall remain clearly marked, accessible, and unobstructed during approved use of District facilities and grounds. Facility users shall not remove, relocate, tamper with, or obstruct access to AEDs or other emergency equipment and shall comply with applicable District emergency procedures.

A. PRIORITY OF USE

1. A school's educational, co-curricular and/or extra-curricular activities targeted to its own students and staff shall have priority for use of that particular

school building, grounds, and other facilities. No facility use or rental fees will be assessed.* (Appendix A)

2. School-sponsored activities have second priority for use of school facilities and/or grounds. Such activities largely involve occasional scheduled facility use by a parent or support group-each of which provides some type of direct support for students and/or the school's educational mission. No facility use or rental fee will be charged.* (Appendix B)

3. Colchester Parks and Recreation Department shall have third priority for scheduling purposes for use of school facilities and/or grounds. No facility use or rental fees will be assessed.* (Appendix C)

4. Youth and Adult Organizations (Not-For-Profit) which primarily serve the community of Colchester shall have fourth priority for scheduling purposes for use of school facilities and/or grounds. Any youth or adult community program must be comprised primarily of Colchester residents. No facility use or rental fees will be assessed. * (Appendix D)

5. Other Groups: With the exception of the groups described above, all other groups, organizations and individuals will be charged a facility use fee, as well as any labor costs, both calculated to reflect as accurately as possible the added cost for the district. (Appendix E)

(*) Unless incremental expenses are incurred as a result of the facility or grounds usage.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE

The superintendent, or their designee, has the responsibility to:

A. Approve or deny use of school facilities and grounds;
B. Charge facilities-use fees, services, penalties and restrictions for such fairly and in strict accordance with the school board-approved guidelines provided in this policy;
C. Rescind previously approved requests for use of buildings and/or grounds that in their judgment is in the best interests of the school district provided they promptly informs the organizations/individuals of the action.

V. IN-KIND SERVICES

The school board shall authorize the superintendent, or their designee, to determine whether in-kind service will be allowed in lieu of the facility user fee. (Example: Repair to the baseball field, building of dugouts, etc.).

VI. GROUP DETERMINATION

The school board shall authorize the superintendent, or their designee, to determine which priority group an organization falls within. The school district may request membership information, residency status, nation/state/local affiliations, or other information related to their organization's purpose and connection to the community.

VII. GUIDELINES

The following guidelines shall be administered:

A. Complete a facilities use application before any and all access to the facilities.

B. Receive approval/denial of the facility use application. No verbal or hand written approvals constitutes district approval.

C. School activities always take precedence over any other use of school facilities. The condition of the facilities and the schedule for maintenance also takes precedence over other uses of the facilities.

D. No events will be approved that violate any federal, state or local laws or regulations and licensing requirements.

E. Facility use is limited to the function and area described on the facilities use application. Changes in plans or usage will constitute a separate request. There shall be no third-party use of the facilities.

F. Payment in advance is expected and due when the event is scheduled. If the activity is cancelled at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the scheduled building/facility use, the user will receive a full refund of their payment less any related expenses incurred by the school district. If the activity is cancelled with less than forty-eight (48) hours remaining before the scheduled building/facility use, the user will receive a half refund of their payment less any related expenses incurred by the school district.

G. In compliance with school district policies, smoking on school grounds and possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited at all times. The renting organization is responsible for complying with this policy.

H. Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, and legal costs associated with non-compliance, will be the responsibility of the using organization or group.

I. Decorations must be used in such a manner not destructive to school property. Decorations are subject to the approval of the principal or their designated representative. Approval may be denied based on content as well as structure of the decorations including banners and pennants.

J. The use of any materials (including tape) on floors or other parts of the building is strictly prohibited without specific written approval from the district maintenance manager.

K. The user will be fully responsible for all loss, damage, or abuse of school property, including property of students and employees, during the time the building is in use.

L. All equipment and facilities to be used must be listed on the application and left in the same condition as found.

M. The user shall ensure the number of attendees does not exceed the authorized capacity of the facility.

N. Set-up and clean-up may be performed by members of the group using the facility, provided it is approved in advance by the principal or designated representative. Custodial services will be paid by the using group for work not done satisfactorily.

O. The user shall ensure that participants' vehicles are parked only in areas designated for parking.

P. Facilities may be rented to groups during school vacations or holidays, providing the event does not conflict with facility cleaning and renovating programs and providing there is district personnel available for supervision.

Q. The person in charge as noted on the facilities application shall be present during the scheduled event. The application may be denied if, in the opinion of the principal, there is insufficient supervision, or the event exceeds the capacity of the facility.

R. A school custodian will be on duty whenever a facility is being used except as exempted by the superintendent, or their designee, and so noted on the application. The custodian will provide assistance in handling furniture and equipment and will be responsible for seeing that the facility is left in good order after the activity is over. The custodian's overtime, including clean-up time, will be charged to the group or organization by the Chief Financial and Operations Officer.

S. Corridors, exits, and stairways must be free of obstructions at all times.

T. Facilities will normally be opened ½ hour before the schedule program time and close ½ hour after the scheduled end of the program unless other arrangements are requested and approved on the application.

U. The school district reserves the right to require proof of liability insurance for any organization using the facility. The using organization shall hold the school district harmless with respect to any claim of loss, injury or damage because of negligence of the user or user's employees or agents, including damage to school district property or property for which the school district is liable.

V. Any infraction of the above rules, or violations of common behavioral decorum consistent with the approved event, may be grounds for immediate dismissal of the group or organization and for refusing to grant subsequent requests for use of school facilities.

W. If security or police coverage is required, the applicant shall make such arrangements at their expense. The applicant shall inform the Colchester Police Department and the building principal of the building/facility being used. This will be reviewed as part of the facility use request.

APPENDIX A:

- A classroom, cafeteria, and/or other room by a student club or student organization such as math, drama, student council, etc.
- The gymnasium for interscholastic and intra-mural athletics
- The Performing Arts Center or music room(s) by various student musical ensembles, choral groups, bands, and orchestras
- The cafeteria for student dances
- The cafeteria, library or Performing Arts Center for faculty meetings, plays, school report nights, staff trainings, board meetings, committees, school sponsored public forums
- All homework clubs

APPENDIX B:

- A classroom, cafeteria or library by Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- A classroom, cafeteria or library by the CHS Athletic Boosters or Athletic Clubs
- A cafeteria or library by the CMS Parent Forum

APPENDIX C:

- Only Colchester Town Recreation Department sponsored activities and programs

APPENDIX D:

- Use of fields and gymnasiums by Colchester athletic programs (youth soccer, basketball, lacrosse, baseball, etc.)
- Use of art rooms, music rooms or cafeteria by Boy Scout, Girl Scout and 4-H programs
- Use of music rooms by the choral group from Colchester

APPENDIX E:

- Use of fields or gyms by area (non-Colchester) athletic programs (baseball, soccer, basketball, etc.)
- Use of cafeteria, Performing Arts Center by a for-profit business or group
- Use of classrooms, library, Performing Arts Center by religious affiliated organization

BUILDING AND GROUNDS RATES AND FEES

CLASSIFICATION OF USE:

Group I All student activities, teacher groups, PTO, the Town or any other agency of government or any voluntary non-sectarian and non-political organization directly contributing to education, or fund raising for the Colchester School District and non-fund-raising events of senior citizen groups.

Group II Town non-profit community organizations including political groups comprised primarily of Colchester residents, teaching staff, or residents offering instruction to Colchester residents for a fee.

Group III Out-of-town non-profit organizations.

Group IV Commercial groups, except those hired by the School District.

SCHEDULE OF RATES AND FEES

In addition to the amount charged in accordance with the following rate schedule, groups will be charged expenses incurred by the district for overtime and any other expense caused by the building usage. Note that for any support staff member (custodian, maintenance, cafeteria worker, etc.) to come in on a weekend or holiday requires wages at the overtime rate for a minimum of four (4) hours. Therefore, the minimum weekend/holiday charge is for four (4) hours at the rate of $35.00 per support staff person, a minimum of $140.00 per day for any group.

PER HOUR	GROUP I	GROUP II	GROUP III	GROUP IV
Classroom	$0.00	$10.00	$20.00	$30.00
CHS/CMS/MBS Cafeteria	$0.00	$20.00	$40.00	$60.00
PPS/UMS/CMS/MBS Gym	$0.00	$20.00	$40.00	$60.00
CHS Mini-Gym	$0.00	$20.00	$40.00	$60.00
CHS Gym	$0.00	$25.00	$50.00	$75.00
Performance Art Center w/ Tech	$0.00	$100.00	$150.00	$200.00
Performance Art Center w/o Tech	$0.00	$25.00	$75.00	$125.00
Concession Stand	$0.00	$10.00	$20.00	$40.00
Athletic Field	$0.00	$10.00	$30.00	$50.00
Computer Devices (per device/per hour)	$2.50	$5.00	$7.50	$10.00