



PROCEDURE

FA-004

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS

Superintendent Responsible: Superintendent of Business & Treasurer	Initial Effective Date: 2006/05/29
Last Updated: 2025/12/19	Next Review Date: 2029/12/19

Purpose

To provide guidelines, principles, responsibilities, and expectations regarding Community Use of Schools. The Community Use of Schools program is a cooperative program through the mutual support of Senior Administration, Administrators, Custodians, Employees and the community at large.

Guiding Principles

- 1.0 The Grand Erie District School Board (Grand Erie) will permit approved applicants to use its school facilities outside regular school hours, in accordance with the following principles:
 - 1.1 Provincial subsidies may be provided for applicable community group activities. Funds provided for educational purposes will not be used to subsidize the Community Use of Schools Program.
 - 1.2 Sanctioned school activities scheduled outside regular school hours shall take priority over community use activities. Employees will be given the opportunity to book facilities for after-hour activities before the facilities are made available to community groups.
 - 1.3 Grand Erie employees will follow the Community Use of Schools expectations as indicated when using school space for non-school sanctioned events.
 - 1.4 Community Use of Schools fees are reviewed and adjusted annually, as required.
 - 1.5 Schools are available any weekday after 6:00 p.m. and on weekends during the school year, excluding non-instructional periods. Exceptions may be applied where governed through an agreement, which must be approved by the Superintendent of Business and Treasurer or designate.
- 2.0 **Responsibilities for Grand Erie Employees:**
 - 2.1 Administrator(s) or designate must submit a permit for any activity after school hours or for any larger event during the instructional day that is beyond the scope of regular school events.
 - 2.2 Grand Erie is responsible to inform the permit holder or event supervisor of any scheduling changes and administer any applicable refund.
- 3.0 **Responsibilities for Users:**

The Permit Holder and/or Event Supervisor:

 - is liable for all damages and injuries as a result of to their Community Use activity
 - agrees to indemnify and save harmless Grand Erie from any action or claim being brought against it as a result of the use of the school facilities by the community user
 - will be responsible for the security and safety of Grand Erie facilities while in use
 - will ensure persons admitted to the Grand Erie facility for a Community Use event agree to abide by all Grand Erie policies and procedures
 - will ensure persons admitted to the Grand Erie facility will demonstrate respectful behaviour at all times

- is responsible for conduct, supervision and the preservation of order for the scheduled event
- is aware violating the Community Use Permit or misconduct may result in immediate cancellation of the Community Use Permit

4.0 **Process**

- 4.1 Community Use of Schools employees are responsible for approving the use of school facilities for activities taking place on non-school days or after 6:00 p.m. on school days, subject to availability.
- 4.2 The Administrator(s) is responsible for approving the use of school facilities for school related activities which take place on school days between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- 4.3 Administrator(s) must submit permit requests for use on non-school days or after 6:00pm and changes must be completed with no less than five days' notice. If bookings are submitted after June 30, Administrator(s) must make every effort to avoid times where there is an approved summer permit.
- 4.4 Administrator(s) must respond to internal permit discussions within three (3) business days so that the time frame of processing permits can be met.
- 4.5 The Superintendent of Business and Treasurer reserves the right to waive rental fees.
- 4.6 When two or more bookings request the same time and space, preference for accommodation will be given to the sport that is in season over the sport that is off season.
- 4.7 Bookings are based on the following Priority:
 - a) Grand Erie District School Board
 - b) Historical Groups
 - c) Municipally directed Programs governed through Joint Use of Facilities Agreements
 - d) Affiliated Groups identified through Joint Use of Facilities Agreements
 - e) Others
- 4.8 Child Care programs, EarlyON Child and Family Centres and Before and After School Program Providers will be required to enter into a contract or lease agreement as determined by Senior Administration in addition to approval by the Administrator(s).
- 4.9 Schools as Election Polling Stations:

Grand Erie will co-operate in providing the necessary accommodation for polling booths for municipal, provincial, and federal elections, and in accordance with applicable legislation. All permits or agreements governing the use of Grand Erie facilities as election polling stations will be required to comply with Grand Erie procedures.
- 4.10 School Councils, Parent Groups, Home and School Associations, Alumni Associations:

Groups and associations wishing to host a school-sanctioned event must have the consent of the Administrator(s) and request the Administrator(s) submit the application in the school's name on behalf of the organization. Applications for events by groups and associations that do not apply through the Administrator(s) will not be considered a school-sanctioned event and will be subject to the usual rental and service charges of Grand Erie and required insurance.
- 4.11 The *Smoke Free Ontario Act* for public places prohibits smoking/vaping on Grand Erie property and applies 365 days per year and 24 hours per day. Community Use permit holders and/or event supervisors must ensure that patrons move off of Grand Erie property 20 meters for smoking/vaping purposes, not just outside the facility.

- 4.12 Depending on the size and nature of the event, supplementary security and/or custodial services may be required, the cost of which will be the responsibility of the Permit Holder.
- 4.13 Permission for the Community Use of School facilities is granted solely at the discretion of the Grand Erie.

5.0 **Film Production Company Requests:**

- 5.1 All requests for use of facilities for film purposes are to be referred to the Community Use of School Coordinator.

6.0 **Restrictions and Limitations**

- 6.1 Overnight bookings are not permitted as a Community Use Event. For Grand Erie use, permit requests will be denied when overnight accommodations are sought.
- 6.2 Permits will be cancelled when facilities are closed because of inclement weather, strike, or other causes beyond the control of Grand Erie. Unless the permit holder is governed by an agreement/lease that permits access when a facility is closed.
- 6.3 Use of facilities during non-instructional periods is only through special agreement with Grand Erie.
- 6.4 Libraries/Learning Commons and classrooms may be used only for activities that are not physical, meetings conducted by approved groups and are subject to final approval of Administrator(s).
- 6.5 Permits submitted less than two weeks from the booking date will be denied.
- 6.6 Alcohol Events: Community Use Events planning to serve alcohol must adhere to Grand Erie's Alcohol Event requirements that include, detailed event plan, Special Occasion Permit, procured Party Alcohol Liability insurance, designated driver program, signage that warns of drinking and driving and no smoking/vaping on Grand Erie property, certified smart servers and a minimum of two (2) police officers.
- 6.7 Schools where the water is supplied by a well must be tested daily by a qualified Grand Erie employee on any day that children under 18 years of age will be present in the facility.
- 6.8 High-risk activities and/or machines (e.g., fireworks or pitching machines) that may cause injury to people and/or may damage school property are not permitted in any school.
- 6.9 The use of any school equipment by the permit holder is solely at the discretion of the Administrator(s).
- 6.10 Peanuts, tree nuts and other nuts are some of the most common triggers of anaphylaxis, and the most likely of all food allergens to trigger a full-blown anaphylactic reaction. As a result, all Grand Erie facilities are "nut aware" and foods containing peanuts, tree nuts or other nuts are not to be brought into the facility.
- 6.11 Grand Erie does not permit food in the gymnasium/library/learning commons however Permit Holders can apply for use of the cafeteria or classrooms to serve food.
- 6.12 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service dog will be welcomed on Grand Erie premises with their service dog and may be accompanied by the service dog while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures. This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of Grand Erie facilities where the public does not have access. Grand has the right to inquire about the animal and ask for documentation to confirm the person's requirement.
- 6.13 Field use is subject to the conditions of the field, the nature and frequency of the activities and may be impacted by the weather and soil conditions. Start

dates for field use may be disrupted or prohibited until the field conditions are restored. In general, field use permits will be approved after May 15th of each year or until the field's conditions are appropriate. The conditions are determined by Facility Services Department.

7.0 Fees

- 7.1 Service charges to community user groups are subsidized under the Community Use of Schools Grant provided by the Ministry of Education (Ministry).
- 7.2 The rate of subsidy will be determined annually based on the grant provided to Grand Erie.
- 7.3 Overtime rates paid to Grand Erie employees who assist with Community Use of Schools will be adjusted according to contractual obligations Grand Erie has negotiated with its employees.
- 7.4 Service charges will be levied to recover costs for the use of school facilities by other educational institutions, such as universities and colleges.
 - 7.4.1 The Fee Schedule outlining all fees to be paid will be established and may be adjusted annually or sooner based on contractual obligations.
 - 7.4.2 Fees will be based on a cost-recovery model.
- 7.5 Type 4 Internal Permits, including school fundraising and alumni events scheduled on weekends, will be charged for custodial costs when there is no custodian scheduled. Exceptions may be considered for teams/groups preparing for a higher level of competition/event.

8.0 Cancellation of a Permit

- 8.1 A Permit Holder may cancel a Community Use event without cost (except for the non-refundable permit fee and insurance fees if purchased) provided that written notice (email accepted) and a phone confirmation be provided to the Community Use of Schools Clerk (or designate) at least three business days prior to the date of the event.
- 8.2 If a Permit Holder does not give or provide adequate time for Grand Erie to cancel, Community Use Permit incurred costs (e.g., custodial overtime, rental fees, technicians and administration fees) may be charged.
- 8.3 Permits are non-transferable.

9.0 Insurance

- 9.1 All Permit Holders, including municipal affiliates, are required to provide the Community Use of Schools with a Certificate of Insurance in the amount of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence, with Grand Erie District School Board named as additional insured. Failure to provide such a Certificate prior to the first date of the event(s), shall result in cancellation of the permit.
- 9.2 Any group not able to provide a Certificate of Insurance as outlined shall make application to purchase insurance through the Community Use of Schools third party provider. Such application will be subject to the approval of the insurance carrier. Premium costs are the responsibility of the permit holder and are non-refundable.

10.0 Adjudication

- 10.1 In the event a user group wishes to formally dispute any terms or conditions or the application of any terms or conditions when applying to the rental of school facilities, an appeal may be made to Grand Erie by following the Community Use of Schools Appeal process outlined in the Community Use of Schools handbook.

Definitions

Community Users: include anyone who attends a Community Use of Schools event at a Grand Erie facility, including participants, leaders of the group and or audience.

Community Use Event: an event held at a Grand Erie facility that is applied for through the Community Use of Schools program and for which a Community Use Permit has been issued.

Community Use Permit: issued by Grand Erie and is the authority for the use of a school for all Community Use events.

Permit Holder: the person and or Organization named on the Community Use of School Permit.

Event Supervisor: an adult designated by the Permit Holder to be the representative at the Community Use Event.

Historical Bookings: from any permit type that have been booking with the Grand Erie for five or more consecutive years in the same facility and time slot.

Non-Instructional Periods: Times where school is not operating including Winter/March/Summer Breaks, P.A. Days, Grand Erie designated holidays and statutory holiday weekends. Non-instructional periods include the weekends leading up to and after the school holidays.

Permit Types: The following permit types are defined in order to understand the priority of bookings and fee structure:

i) **JUFA & Affiliates-Type 1**

Joint Use of Facility Agreement partners or Non-profit, volunteer organization approved for affiliation by a municipal recreation authority (where applicable) for the purpose of offering recreational and/or cultural programs on behalf of the municipality available to all residents of the local community. This does not include tournament events.

ii) **Non-Profit Youth and Other-Type 1-A**

The non-profit entities or other public agencies that use the school facilities whose primary purpose is to provide programs and/or services that are designed and operated to advance the academic success and healthy lifestyles of youth in the community. I.e., Cubs, Scouts, Brownies, or groups donating to Grand Erie in the amount greater than the fee charged for the use of the facility and custodial cost. School Alumni Activities sanctioned by the Administrator(s). Not for Profit Groups will be required to show proof of status or provide an affidavit letter indicating that the organization is a not-for-profit organization.

iii) **Non-Profit, Non-Youth-Type 1-B**

The non-profit entities or other public agencies that use the school facilities whose primary purpose is to provide programs and/or services that serve the local neighborhood or community but are not explicitly designed and operated to advance the academic success and healthy lifestyles of the children in the school and where zero or nominal admission or participation fees are charged. Not for Profit organizations that are not specifically for youth. I.e., Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance, Approved Health Unit Activities, short term use by municipal emergency services.

iv) **Non-Profit (Other)-Type 2**

Fundraising Events, Church Group meetings, Service Club meetings, Amateur Drama Clubs, Non-Affiliated Community Groups, Local Cultural Groups, Other Educational Groups I.e., Colleges and Universities, Tournaments, Union/Federation events, School Alumni Activities NOT sanctioned by Administrator(s) and Non-Affiliated Adult Recreation.

v) **Commercial/Private User-Type 3**

Commercial enterprises, professional theatre groups, Church Services, private individuals, Political Groups, Private Fitness, Dance Instructional Groups and Film Production Companies.

vi) **Grand Erie District School Board/School Use-Type 4**

Student and employee events sanctioned by the Administrator(s), school Clubs and School Council Meetings, Administrative or other employee meetings and sports teams.

vii) **Reciprocal Groups-Permit Type 6**

Non-Profit Childcare, EarlyON Child and Family programs and Before and After School Children's Recreation Providers as outlined by an agreement. These do not include tournaments or special events, or spaces not outlined in their agreement.

Reference(s):

- Community Use of Schools Policy (FA-04)
- Community Use of Schools Handbook (FA-04-R)
- Animals in Schools, Including Student Use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals Policy (SO-33)
- Animals in Schools, Including Student Use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals Procedure (SO-033)
- [*Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019*](#)
- [*Smoke Free Ontario Act, 2017*](#)