

VISITATION TO SCHOOL BUILDINGS/GROUNDS

Purpose

For various legitimate reasons, persons routinely visit school facilities. Such persons include but are not limited to parents/guardians of students, grandparents and other relatives of students, public officials, board of education members, the press, community members and other persons with school-related business to conduct. This policy sets forth the terms and conditions of such visitation.

Uninterrupted on-task instruction time is essential for student learning and achievement. To that end, interruptions, disruptions, and distractions to the learning environment must be kept to a minimum. The unscheduled and unexpected presence of persons in the schools can interrupt and disrupt the learning environment and present barriers to student learning and achievement. The unscheduled and unexpected presence of persons in the schools may also present a danger to the safety of students and school employees.

In order that student learning and achievement be maximized, and the time and efforts of school employees be focused upon the task of serving the educational needs of the school children of McDowell County, visits to school facilities for the purpose of communicating with school employees must be regulated.

Each building principal may determine to what degree parents/guardians who are entering school buildings solely for the purpose of dropping off or picking up a child in connection with the instructional school day need to comply with this policy. However, persons who remain or intend to remain in the school building or on school grounds for any purpose other than to pick up or drop off a student in connection with the instructional day must comply with this policy.

Definitions

As the term is used herein, "school facilities" shall mean all buildings and real property owned and/or leased by the Board of Education.

As the term is used herein, "building principal" and "principal" shall mean the principal or other administrator in charge of a particular school facility, and/or his or her designee.

General Rules

- A. Except as otherwise provided herein, all persons who desire to visit school facilities during the instructional day/working hours and remain there for any length of time must contact the school's administration or secretarial staff to give advanced notice of the intended visit and its purpose. Secretarial staff receiving such notice shall immediately inform the building principal of the same.
- B. All persons who enter school facilities must proceed first to the school office to register their presence and purpose, and also comply with all written visitor rules in place at that particular school facility, which rules shall be made available upon request.
- C. Persons who fail to register their presence and purpose upon entering a school facility, or otherwise fail to comply with the visitor rules of the school facility, or otherwise violate any portion of this policy shall be considered a trespasser and may be subject to law enforcement action including but not limited to removal from the school facility/grounds and arrest and prosecution.

- D. Except as otherwise provided by law, only parents/guardians of students and those persons specifically authorized in writing by a student's parents/guardians may request to meet with and/or observe and/or visit and/or otherwise have any in-person contact with a student.
- E. Emergencies. If an emergency arises that requires: a) a visit to school facilities during the instructional day/working hours and b) contact with a student without advanced notice as required herein by any person, the visitor claiming an emergency need to contact the student must: 1) comply with section III, B above, 2) explain the nature and purpose of the emergency visit to the building principal immediately upon entering school facilities, and 3) make a specific request to visit and remain within a specific area of the school building/grounds. In the case of a visit by a person other than a parent/guardian of a student and those persons specifically authorized in writing by a student's parents/guardians to visit the student, a school employee shall be present at all times during any interaction between the student and said person claiming an emergency need to see the student.
- F. A building principal may approve or deny any and all requests regarding visitation in his/her school building and shall be responsible for the same.
- G. Students are not permitted to bring guests to school facilities during the instructional day/working hours without prior written permission from a school administrator.
- H. No school employee may transact business with any visitor to a school facility who has not: a) complied with the relevant portions of this policy and b) received authorization to be present at the school facility for the purpose of conducting business.

Classroom Visits

- A. Classroom visits will not be permitted during examinations or during any in-school suspension period, or any other time deemed inappropriate by the building principal.
- B. Classroom visits shall not exceed 45 minutes. Any exception to this limitation must be authorized by the building principal.
- C. No more than two visitors may be permitted to participate in any classroom visit at any one time. Any exception to this limitation must be authorized by the building principal.
- D. Classroom visits shall be permitted to take place only on two days of the school week. Building principals may determine on which two days classroom visits will be permitted during any given school week. Any exception to this limitation must be authorized by the building principal.
- E. Classroom visits for any one person shall be limited to no more than two visits per grading period. Any exception to this limitation must be authorized by the building principal.
- F. Classroom visitors shall be silent during their visit, unless otherwise directed by the classroom teacher, and shall not create or participate in any form of disturbance or disruption to the learning process. The building principal shall determine what constitutes a "disturbance or disruption to the learning process" under the particular facts and circumstances of any incidents brought to his/her attention.
- G. Classroom visitors are strictly prohibited from making any electronic recording, audio or video, of any kind during his/her classroom visit.

Penalties

Any person violating any portion of this policy while at or on a school facility shall be considered a trespasser and may be subject to law enforcement action including but not limited to arrest and prosecution.

Nothing herein is intended to or shall be interpreted to conflict with other requirements of State and federal law.