

CSBA Sample Administrative Regulation

Community Relations

AR 1330(a)

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Note: The following administrative regulation is **mandated** for the management, direction, and control of school facilities, pursuant to Education Code 38133.

Application for Use of Facilities

Any person applying for the use of any school facilities or grounds on behalf of any society, group, or organization shall present written authorization from the group or organization to make the application.

Note: The California Supreme Court has determined that the requirements of Education Code 38135 and 38136 are unconstitutional (ACLU v. Board of Education of City of Los Angeles). Although these provisions have not been repealed, districts are advised not to require any oath affirming that the group does not intend to take actions leading to the overthrow of the government.

Other types of oaths have been held constitutionally acceptable. The California Supreme Court upheld the use of an oath that the individual or group does not intend to use school premises to commit unlawful acts (ACLU v. Board of Education), and the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld affirmative loyalty oaths for public employees, expressing a promise to support the federal and state constitutions (Connell v. Higgenbotham; Cole v. Richardson). The accompanying exhibit provides a sample facilities use statement. The following paragraph is **optional**.

Persons or organizations applying for the use of school facilities or grounds shall submit a facilities use statement indicating that they uphold the state and federal constitutions and do not intend to use school premises or facilities to commit unlawful acts.

Civic Center Use

Subject to district policies and regulations, school facilities and grounds shall be available to citizens and community groups as a civic center for the following purposes: (Education Code 32282, 38131)

1. Public, literary, scientific, recreational, educational, or public agency meetings
2. The discussion of matters of general or public interest

Note: An Attorney General Opinion (79 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 248 (1996)) found unconstitutional the section of Education Code 38131 which provides that a board may grant the use of school facilities to a religious group to conduct services only when the religious group has no other suitable meeting place. Although Attorney General opinions do not carry the force of law, they are given deference by the courts in the case of legal challenge. Therefore, a district should consult legal counsel before requiring a religious organization to establish that it lacks another suitable meeting place for the conduct of its services in order to rent school

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facilities. In that same opinion, the Attorney General also determined that Education Code 38131 does not limit the renewability of the temporary use permit for school facilities by a religious organization. Thus, legal counsel should also be consulted before a district refuses to renew a temporary permit. Item #3 below is consistent with the Attorney General's interpretation of Education Code 38131.

3. The conduct of religious services for temporary periods, on a one-time or renewable basis, by any church or religious organization
4. Child care programs to provide supervision and activities for children of preschool and elementary school age

(cf. 5148 - Child Care and Development)
(cf. 5148.2 - Before/After School Programs)
(cf. 5148.3 - Preschool/Early Childhood Education)

5. The administration of examinations for the selection of personnel or the instruction of precinct board members by public agencies
6. Supervised recreational activities, including, but not limited to, sports league activities that are arranged for and supervised by entities, including religious organizations or churches, and in which youth may participate regardless of religious belief or denomination
7. A community youth center

Note: Pursuant to Education Code 32282, procedures to allow school facilities to be used by public agencies, such as the Red Cross, for mass care and welfare shelters during an emergency must be included in the comprehensive school safety plan. See AR 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan.

8. Mass care and welfare shelters during disasters or other emergencies affecting the public health and welfare

(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)
(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

9. A ceremony, patriotic celebration, or related educational assembly conducted by a veterans' organization

A *veterans' organization* means the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, United Spanish War Veterans, Grand Army of the Republic, or other duly recognized organization of honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, or marines of the United States, or any of their territories. (Military and Veterans Code 1800)

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Note: Education Code 38131 allows the district to grant use of school facilities for other purposes as deemed appropriate. The district may add any other purposes approved by the Governing Board.

10. Other purposes deemed appropriate by the Governing Board

Restrictions

Note: In adopting rules for the management and control of school facilities, districts must be careful to ensure that they do not impose restrictions that may violate constitutionally protected rights. Generally, court decisions have held that districts may not discriminate on the basis of a group's viewpoint, and thus the use of facilities should be granted on a neutral basis. In Good News Club v. Milford Central School, the U.S. Supreme Court held that a district which prohibited a religious club from using school facilities after school hours for activities for which it allowed other community groups to use the school facilities discriminated against the club on the basis of the club's religious viewpoint in violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Because federal and state constitutional free speech issues may be involved when a district denies the use of school facilities to certain groups, it is strongly recommended that a district consult with legal counsel before doing so.

School facilities or grounds shall not be used for any of the following activities:

1. Any use by an individual or group for the commission of any crime or any act prohibited by law
2. Any use which is inconsistent with the use of school facilities for school purposes or which interferes with the regular conduct of school or school work
3. Any use which involves the possession, consumption, or sale of drugs or any restricted substances, including tobacco

(cf. 3513.3 - Tobacco-Free Schools)

Note: Pursuant to Business and Professions Code 25608, it is a misdemeanor to possess, consume, sell, give, or deliver any alcoholic beverage to any person in a school building or on school grounds unless a specified exception applies. One such exception is serving alcohol during a special event, pursuant to a license or permit obtained under the Alcohol Beverage Control Act, at district-owned facilities at a time when students are not present. For this purpose, "facilities" include, but are not limited to, office complexes, conference centers, or retreat facilities. Although Business and Professions Code 25608 allows this exception, the district should consult legal counsel and/or risk management personnel when determining whether to allow alcohol on district property pursuant to this exception. When a district allows the use of its facilities or grounds for events that may involve the serving or consumption of alcoholic beverages, it is recommended that rules and/or limitations be established to minimize risks to the district and attendees at such events (e.g., requiring security guards and/or additional insurance, limiting the presence of alcoholic beverages to designated areas, limiting the types of beverages and/or how many drinks can be served at a time, specifying the time period during which alcoholic beverages may be served). Item #4 is **optional** and may be deleted or revised to reflect any limitations imposed on the facility user.

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4. Any use which involves the possession, consumption, or sale of alcoholic beverages, except for special events approved by the Superintendent or designee pursuant to Business and Professions Code 25608 which are covered by a special events permit pursuant to Division 9 of the Business and Professions Code and which will occur at a time when students are not on the grounds. Any such use of school facilities shall be subject to any limitations that may be necessary to reduce risks to the district and ensure the safety of participants, as determined by the Superintendent or designee. Applicable limitations shall be clearly stated in the facility use agreement to be signed by the user's representative.

Note: Districts may exclude certain facilities from community use for safety or security reasons. Such facilities might include (1) offices or computer rooms containing records and confidential information and (2) science rooms and other rooms containing hazardous chemicals or equipment that cannot be used safely without special knowledge or skills. The following paragraph is **optional** and may be revised to specify excluded facilities.

The district may exclude certain school facilities from nonschool use for safety or security reasons.

Damage and Liability

Note: Pursuant to Education Code 38134, a district is authorized to take the actions specified in the following **optional** paragraph when damage to school facilities or grounds occurs from use by a nonprofit group, organization, club, or association that promotes youth and school activities.

Groups, organizations, or persons using school facilities or grounds shall be liable for any property damage caused by the activity. The district may charge the amount necessary to repair the damages and may deny the group further use of school facilities or grounds. (Education Code 38134)

Note: Education Code 38134 distinguishes the liability and insurance obligations of nonprofit groups, clubs, and associations that promote youth and school activities from those of the district. The district is liable for any injuries resulting from its negligence in the ownership and maintenance of its facilities and grounds and must bear the cost of insuring against these risks and defending itself from related claims.

Any group or organization using school facilities or grounds shall be liable for any injuries resulting from its negligence during the use of district facilities or grounds. The group shall bear the cost of insuring against this risk and defending itself against claims arising from this risk. (Education Code 38134)

Groups or organizations shall provide the district with evidence of insurance against claims arising out of the group's own negligence when using school facilities. (Education Code 38134)

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Note: Pursuant to Education Code 38134, groups that promote youth and school activities cannot be required to sign hold harmless and indemnification agreements agreeing to defend and indemnify the district against liability arising during the group's use of school facilities to the extent that the agreement requires the group to assume liability for the district's negligence. The statute is unclear as to whether the district can require non-youth-related groups to indemnify the district from any and all injuries resulting from the use of the facilities. Districts wishing to create such an agreement should consult legal counsel.

Because hold harmless agreements are only as strong as the groups' credit, districts should generally require proof of insurance in addition to such agreements. When a hold harmless and indemnification agreement appears necessary for any specific school facilities or a specific event, the district's risk manager, insurance carrier, or legal counsel should tailor it to the situation.

As permitted, the Superintendent or designee may require a hold harmless agreement and indemnification when warranted by the type of activity or the specific facilities being used.

(cf. 3515.21 - Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones))

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