

## **Policy Code: 5020 Visitors to the Schools**

The Wake County Public School System believes parent and community involvement should be encouraged in our schools. At the same time, student and staff safety and protection of instructional time must also be maintained.

Parents and other community members shall be encouraged to visit schools. Parent conferences, volunteer activities, and visits shall be by appointment.

Visitors are parents, family members, and other members of the community who are permitted on school grounds on a limited basis to participate in educational programs or school events. Visitors are not permitted to supervise students and must be under the direct supervision of school personnel. Typical examples include, but are not limited to, visitors coming to speak, present, attend a school event, have lunch with a child, or read to a child or group of children. The principal has the discretion to ask a visitor to register as a volunteer based upon frequency on school property or the nature of interactions with students.

Volunteers are visitors who are approved following a background check and may provide assistance to the school on a regular basis, may accompany students away from school grounds, or supervise students. Typical examples include, but are not limited to, volunteers who chaperone field trips or overnight activities, provide ongoing help in the front office, coach sports, or sponsor clubs. See the policy on School Volunteers for additional information.

Rental use of facilities is governed by the existing Community Use of Facilities policy and Community Use of Facilities R&P.

### **A. Opportunities to Visit the Schools**

To encourage involvement, the following opportunities are provided to visit the schools.

1. Visitors are welcome to observe and learn about the educational program at each school subject to reasonable rules developed by school administrators.
2. Visitors are invited to attend school events that are open to the public, such as athletic events, musical programs, and dramatic productions.

### **B. Requirements of Visitors to the Schools**

While the Board welcomes visitors to the schools, the paramount concern of the Board is to provide a safe and orderly learning environment in which disruptions to instructional time are kept to a minimum. The superintendent and each principal shall establish and enforce reasonable rules to address this concern.

1. All parents, volunteers, and school visitors during the school day shall enter the school through the main administrative entrance and must report immediately to the administrative office to provide the reason for their presence in the school and request and receive permission to be in the school before proceeding to their destinations. Each principal shall ensure that signs are posted in the school to notify visitors of this requirement.
2. Commercial visitors, including but not limited to sales representatives and delivery workers, must report directly to the front office or other area designated by the principal. If the principal or designee grants a commercial visitor access to another part of the school campus, school staff must accompany the visitor at all times, and access should be strictly limited to the purpose of the visit. In addition, sales representatives must comply with the Board policy on Collections and Solicitations.
3. All school visitors shall wear school-issued identification badges at all times during visits.
4. Conferences, volunteer activities, and visits shall be scheduled at a mutually agreed-upon time, when instructional time will not be compromised.
5. School visitors are expected to comply with all [applicable](#) school rules and Board policies, [including but not limited to those](#) regarding Prohibition of Alcoholic Beverages, Smoking and Tobacco Products, and Weapons and Explosives Prohibited. [In addition, virtual school visitors must comply with all Wake County Board of Education policies regarding technology use and interaction with students.](#)
6. Persons who are subject to the Registered Sex Offenders policy must comply with the provisions of that policy.
7. The principal or designee may place reasonable limits on the frequency or conditions of school and/or classroom visits or communication by parents or other visitors to avoid disruptions and to ensure that a positive, safe, and constructive educational environment is maintained.
8. Staff may suspend conferences that are deemed by staff to be unproductive.

### **C. Additional Requirements of Probation Officers**

To minimize disruption to student learning and school operations, the Board establishes the following additional requirements for visits by probation officers during the school day:

1. Probation officers may not visit students on school property during school hours unless the visit is conducted through the Section of Community Corrections' School Partnership Program.
2. Visits by probation officers must be authorized in advance by the school principal or designee or be the result of a request for assistance by a guidance counselor or school resource officer. The principal or designee at each school shall coordinate with probation officers to plan and schedule visits to occur at times least disruptive to the student's academic schedule and to school operations.
3. To protect the privacy of students, the principal or designee shall designate a private area for probation officers to meet with students away from contact with the general student population. Initial contact with the student will be made by a school administrator or other designated school employee, who shall direct the student to the private area to meet with the probation officer.
4. Probation officers may not initiate direct contact with any student while the student is in class or between classes.
5. All visits must be conducted in accordance with this policy and any additional guidelines developed by the superintendent or designee.

#### **D. Unauthorized, Disruptive or Dangerous Visitors**

No individual shall by use of passive resistance, noise, threat, fear, intimidation, coercion, force, violence, or other form of conduct cause the disruption of any lawful function, mission, or process of the school. Individuals who fail to follow this policy shall be subject to the restriction or revocation of visiting privileges.

Specifically, the following conduct shall be prohibited at all times on school property and at all school-related events:

1. Profane, lewd, obscene or offensive conduct, including the use of profane, lewd, obscene or offensive language.
2. Conduct that creates a material and substantial disruption of school activity, the operation of the school, or the rights of students.
3. Disorderly or assaultive conduct.
4. Defacing public property.
5. Commission of any nuisance.

6. Threatening the health or safety of others.
7. Harassment as prohibited in Board policy 1710/4021/7230 Prohibition against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying.
8. Any other conduct that violates any applicable laws or policies of the Board.

Under this policy, "school property" includes school system parking lots, auditoriums, gymnasiums, athletic fields, buildings, school buses, and school bus and carpool drop-off and pick-up locations, as well as all lands surrounding such places that are owned by or leased to the school system.

If a school employee becomes aware that an individual is on a school property without having received permission or that an individual is exhibiting unusual, threatening or dangerous behavior, the employee must either direct the individual to the administrative office or notify the principal, designee, or school resource officer, depending on the circumstances.

If a school employee suspects that an individual is on school property in violation of the Registered Sex Offenders policy, the employee must immediately notify the principal, designee or school resource officer.

Students will be instructed to notify a school employee of any unusual or suspicious behavior by visitors. School employees shall inform the principal or designee immediately of a student's report of suspicious behavior on the part of a school visitor.

Staff or any other individuals who engage in prohibited conduct are subject to immediate expulsion from school property or from a school-related activity. Where appropriate, individuals engaging in such conduct may be subject to arrest and prosecution.

When an individual disrupts the educational environment, acts in a disorderly manner, damages school property, or violates Board policy or the law, the principal or designee has authority to:

1. order the individual to leave school property;
2. notify law enforcement;
3. invoke state trespassing laws; or
4. take any other action deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Failure to comply with a request to leave school grounds may result in the filing of trespass charges or other charges as appropriate against the offending individual.

The superintendent or designee may deny an individual permission to come onto school grounds or enter a school facility if the individual demonstrates disruptive or dangerous behavior on school grounds. After 12 months, the individual may request a review of the denial.

Nothing in this policy creates any right of access for visitors to engage in expressive activities on school system property or otherwise reflects the intent to create a public forum.

Legal References: [G.S. 14-132](#), [-132.2](#), [-159.11](#), [-159.12](#), [159.13](#), [-208.18](#); [115C-46.2](#), [-523](#), [-524](#), [-526](#)

Adopted: January 7, 2020

Revised:

**Wake County Board of Education**