



Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts and Youth & Sports

POLICY IN COMMUNITY USE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOL GROUNDS

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1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

This policy provides clear procedures and guidelines on the hiring out of government schools' grounds in Fiji. This will provide assurances that in the hiring out of school grounds all care in maintaining them are considered and no disruptions whatsoever will be made to the school, staff & students.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1 With the exception of school grounds and ablution block it is no longer Government policy that school facilities and resources be made available for use by the community.
- 2.2 Applications for use of school grounds must be approved by the Permanent Secretary for Education (PSE) or its representative, the school principal and formalized through a written agreement signed by the school principal and a representative of the user group.
- 2.3 Principals will consult with the PSE and use the fee structure provided to establish the schedule of fees or charges to be applied for the use of school grounds (Appendix 1.0).
- 2.4 In the case of national elections and conduct of national emergency welfare exercises, all school premises and school grounds should be made available after 2.2 and 2.3 are met.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Community use of school grounds can provide a number of benefits to the school and the community. These include:
 - 3.1.1 the development of positive perceptions about schools and learning;
 - 3.1.2 the development of cooperation and goodwill in school, community and local government relationships;
 - 3.1.3 increased community awareness of school activities;
 - 3.1.4 the opportunity for schools to improve their curriculum and learning programmes through access to a wider range of resources and talents in the community;
 - 3.1.5 improved levels of security for the school through out-of-hours use;
 - 3.1.6 the potential for increased financial returns to the school;
 - 3.1.7 access for the community and efficient utilization of the community's large investment in school grounds
- 3.2 It is important that the community perceives schools as part of the community, and it is more likely that this will occur when schools make available their school ground for community functions and during national elections and conduct of national emergency welfare exercises.

- 3.3 This policy replaces the previous (December, 2007) MoE policy in 'Community use of Government School Facilities and Resources'.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document

4.1 School grounds

School grounds, recreation areas and associated structures; parking areas.

4.2 Associated structures

Include washrooms, toilets and structures beside the ground which are availed for OHS reasons to the approved ground user.

5.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITIES

- 5.1 1997 Circular on Hiring of School Facilities
- 5.2 Finance Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 2005 – Part 4
- 5.3 OHS Act 1996 and OHS Policy 2005
- 5.4 Tobacco Control Act 1998
- 5.5 Illicit Drug Control Act 2004 Part 2: Cap 4 – 10 & Schedule 1 (Section 2)
- 5.6 Ministry of Education, Science & Technology School Code of Ethics 2005
- 5.7 Liquor Act 2006 Cap 87: 2
- 5.8 Social Justice Act
- 5.9 Behavior Management Policy
- 5.10 Child Protection Policy

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 Availability

- 6.1.1 Other than for the conduct of national elections and national emergency welfare exercises, no other community functions shall be held at government schools premises except the grounds.
- 6.1.2 The PSE always has the prerogative on the use of government school grounds and facilities.
- 6.1.3 Application for use of school grounds by the community must be formalized through the school's principal or school management. (Appendix A [2.0])

6.2 Agreement and Approval

- 6.2.1 Copies of document and receipts on agreements and approvals for Use must be kept as a school record to ensure that arrangements are continuous and available for the purposes of audit and data collection.
- 6.2.2 The use of school grounds approved to be hired out annually or for the conduct of national elections and national emergency welfare exercises must be reviewed and/or renegotiated at the end of each year with results kept as a school record.

- 6.2.3 To enable users to make appropriate plans for the future, school heads must advise users, at least one month before the expiry date, whether the use of school grounds can be renegotiated.
- 6.2.4 Discretion must be used in the decision to terminate further use of schools premises by the user. Conditions under which the termination may be invoked are:
 - a. breach of conditions;
 - b. unforeseen essential school need for exclusive use of the facilities and resources concerned; and
 - c. situations where the activity engaged in by the user is detrimental to the school and its students

6.3 School Responsibility

- 6.3.1 Schools must not permit activities which are inconsistent with the educational aims of the school or which interfere with its operations.
- 6.3.2 The Director Secondary / Director Primary will manage grievances about access to and the use of school grounds, recreation areas and associated structures.
- 6.3.3 The security responsibilities of the users of school grounds must be clearly specified to users.
- 6.3.4 In order to ensure that the environment is safe, and to reduce the risk of accident, lighting must be used for access points, the playground and any other designated recreational areas. Consideration must be given to emergency lighting if it is considered necessary.

6.4 Users Responsibility (Appendix A [6.0])

- 6.4.1 It must be made clear to users of school grounds that any damage or accidents occurring during use must be immediately reported to the school head or other authorized person.
- 6.4.2 An appropriate record must be made by users of any report of damage or accidents' occurring during use of school grounds subject to reassessment by a school representative before it is directed to the School head. (Appendix A [5.0])
- 6.4.3 Users must be advised that they shall be responsible for the costs of repair or replacement of equipment or damage to buildings or fixtures. Repairs must be carried out by the school maintenance team or an approved contractor within a time frame and to a standard, which is acceptable to the school head and in the case of structural repair, a building engineer.
- 6.4.4 Where possible, school grounds users are to be incorporated bodies.
- 6.4.5 An individual applicant must provide evidence of being a representative of his/her group and be responsible for ensuring compliance with the conditions of hire of school grounds as set out by the school head.

6.5 Alignment to Acts and Instructions

- 6.5.1 The school head and users of school grounds must be aware of their responsibilities under OHS. The OHS provides that where any apparatus provided by, or with the consent of the school is used, then the performance of any work is presumed to be made by the occupier (i.e.; school head). The onus is on users to sign a duty of care statement.

(Appendices A [4.0, 5.0 & 6.0])

- 6.5.2 Following the Financial Management Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 1982, on trust money and trust fund accounts, fees generated from the use of school grounds must be transferred to Consolidated Revenue. (Appendix A [1.0]).
- 6.5.3 In accordance with the Tobacco Control Act 1998 section 12 and 14, Illicit Drug Control Act 2004, the Liquor Act 2006 and the Drugs and Substance Abuse in Schools Policy, smoking, and consumption of illicit drugs and alcohol is prohibited in government premises.

7.0 GUIDELINES

7.1 Community Awareness

Schools are encouraged to inform the community about the grounds that they have available for use. Potential users will need to know the nature of the facility, the benefits it can offer and how the facility can meet specific needs as a community-based learning (and recreation) centre.

There are a number of ways of advertising and promoting the use of a school grounds. These include:

- i. word of mouth advertising, through the very effective network that exists among students, parents and staff members and the general community;
- ii. use of school newsletters and other school publications which will reach existing or potential user groups;
- iii. preparation of a special newsletter, designed for promoting use of the school's facilities;
- iv. use of local and community newspapers to place general and/or specific advertisements, and feature articles;
- v. inclusion of materials in the newsletters and publications of the various target groups, such as sporting and recreation associations, local governments and community service organizations;
- vi. promotion on radio and television programmes; and
- vii. school adoption of a positive attitude enabling community use of grounds

7.2 Risk Management

There are four principal factors that will guide the assessment of risk:

- i. age of the participants;
- ii. nature of the proposed activity;
- iii. duration of the proposed activity;
- iv. quality of supervision;
- v. facilities/equipment to be used;

In addition, the following factors could be taken into account:

- (a) whether the group is local;
- (b) whether the group is known to the school;
- (c) the ability of the group to provide evidence of satisfactory use of school grounds;

- (d) whether the activity is one that should be permitted without insurance if the group has none;
- (e) whether the activity involves consumption of alcohol, yaqona;
- (f) for activities involving children, group awareness of the dangers of child abuse, sexual and otherwise, and the management procedures put into place by the group to cater for these dangers. (Principals should encourage users to be alert to the possibility of such incidents, and to seek their own legal advice regarding the adequacy of their supervisor screening and of their insurance to cover legal costs in the event of an incident occurring)

7.3 Determining the Cost of Hire

Cost components of the fees could include power consumption, water, cleaning, insurance, administration, additional wear and tear and the use of specific items of equipment. As a minimum requirement, fees should at least meet the additional recurrent operating costs incurred through use of the facilities and resources. Further additional fees may be levied after the use of the facility. For example, a fee would apply where additional cleaning is necessary, or when security or other personnel are called out to secure the school buildings because the user has failed to lock up the premises. When setting a fee, account should be taken of the following factors:

- a. significance of the activity to the community and school;
- b. nature of the intended use, including degree of impact on the facility and/or use of equipment and resources;
- c. access times required;
- d. set up and restoration time;
- e. opening and closing fees;
- f. size of the user group;
- g. ability of user to pay;
- h. storage of special equipment;
- i. comparability of fees charged by other providers within the local community;
- j. any additional administrative staff time which may be necessary; and
- k. category of user, e.g. commercial or charitable (as per categories outlined in the next section)

In addition, professional development to assist schools and community members in organizing wider community use of grounds may be made available, and it is strongly advised that schools consider this cost in determining fees.

7.4 Fees and User Categories

(Refer to Appendix A [1.0])

Item	Rate
School Ground or Pool	\$100.00 per day
Sports equipment	\$30.00 per day (refundable)
power consumption, toilet, water, cleaning, insurance, administration, additional wear and tear	\$50

7.5 Checklist for Schools

The agreement and approval for use sets down terms and conditions for use of school facilities but many schools will have their own specific requirements to be met by user groups. These should be made clear when arrangements for use are being made. The following checklist has been devised as a ready reference guide for schools in the management of community use of school grounds. It provides reminders and prompts and is intended to act only as a guide.

1. Is the proposed use in line with school policy?
2. Does the user group meet school policy with regard to issues like supervision; are they known to the school, local group, past history of use, etc?
3. Will the group be fee paying?
4. Has the user group been informed about the rules governing use?
5. Does the group have special furniture needs?
6. Should the group be providing its own insurance? Have keys/security arrangements been negotiated?
7. Have cleaning and rubbish removal requirements been negotiated?
8. Have issues about bonds, fees payment and review of fees been negotiated? Have relevant school personnel been consulted about the proposed use?
9. Have relevant school and community personnel been consulted in relation to policy and procedures on school security?
10. Has use of toilet facilities been arranged?
11. Have the facilities to be used been inspected and their condition agreed?
12. Has the user group been advised to seek legal advice regarding police screening of supervisors to assist in the prevention of child sexual abuse?

7.6 Checklist for users

Users of school grounds agree to abide by the terms and conditions set down for use when they sign an agreement and approval for use. However, schools may find it useful to provide a set of rules or guidelines to users as a reminder about the agreed arrangements.

When formulating rules or guidelines the following items could be considered for inclusion:

1. keys
 - a. deposit
 - b. contact person nominated
 - c. times specified for return.
2. insurance
3. lights/heaters
4. responsibility for turning on/off
5. cleaning/rubbish removal
6. leaving areas as found
 - a. movement of furniture from other areas
 - b. care to be taken when moving furniture
7. times of access
8. rules about alcohol and tobacco
9. rules about clothing/footwear for use of particular areas
10. special rules for particular areas
 - a. consumption of food or drinks
11. storage
 - a. availability
 - b. need for user to provide their own
12. use of telephones
 - a. availability
 - b. specified phone for emergency use
13. emergency procedures
 - a. evacuation procedures
 - b. person to contact in case of emergency
14. parking
 - a. areas available
 - b. areas in which parking is prohibited
15. security
 - a. security lighting activation
16. supervision
 - a. of children accompanying adults
 - b. responsibility for activities of accompanying adults/children
17. materials/equipment out of bounds
18. acquisition of relevant permits where applicable

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE.....16/12/11

9.0 REVIEW DATE.....16/12/13

10.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS

Charges, Community Use, Dispute Resolution, Facilities - Use, Fees, Hire Costs, Insurance, School Check List, Security, User Check List,

11.0 APPROVED BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL HERITAGE, CULTURE AND ARTS, YOUTH AND SPORTS, HONOURABLE FILIPE BOLE



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SIGNATURE

16/12/11

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DATE

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A - Conditions for use of government school grounds

1.0 Collection of revenue

- 1.1 All revenue collected must be properly receipted using official school receipt
- 1.2 All revenue collected must be forwarded to the MoE headquarters and properly receipted. The MoE will in turn transfer all funds collected into consolidated revenue.

2.0 Bookings

- 2.1 Request for booking should be submitted at least one week in advance
- 2.2 Duration of stay should also be included in the booking information
- 2.3 All booking with relevant and required information must be submitted in written form to the School Principals/Heads who will then inform MoE through relevant sections for final approval.

3.0 Declaration:

A Declaration Form must be signed by School Heads and Users Representatives before occupancy

4.0 Rules:

All users must adhere to the rules of the institutions as closely as possible and strictly observe the following:

- 4.1 Responsible for cleaning of the school ground vicinity and for rubbish to be removed and placed appropriately.
- 4.4 Water and electricity are to be used sparingly, water taps and electric switches are to be properly turned off when not in use
- 4.5 Balance for any damage must be settled before vacation or at an agreed time if cost is more than the entire amount paid for the use of grounds
- 4.6 The entire school compound is drug/alcohol free and breaching would result in immediate vacation of the school ground
- 4.7 Smoking, alcohol and illicit drugs are prohibited in the school compound.
- 4.8 Noise must be minimized as not to disturb neighbours and the school community.
- 4.9 Premises to be vacated accordingly as to the time indicated in the booking otherwise extra cost would be levied
- 4.10 School Heads/Principals or his representative have the right to accept or refuse any member/members of the group/users if fail to adhere to rules.

5.0 Security and OHS

- 5.1 Schools will not be responsible for any losses whatsoever
- 5.2 Each user is directly responsible for his/her own Safety under Occupational Health and Safety [OHS] Regulation
- 5.3 MoE will be absolved for any cost or liabilities incurred throughout the entire duration of occupancy
- 5.4 Security on duty must be informed on any matter when School Heads or representatives are not available

6.0 Agreement on Conditions of Use of Government Facilities

The User agrees:

- (a) To use the ground, Premises and Equipment only on the dates and at the times specified;
- (b) Not to interfere in any way with the operation of the School, with records, materials or equipment of the School, with its staff or students and in particular not to use any

- machinery or equipment other than the equipment allocated;
- (c) Not to remove the equipment or any part of it or any other property of the School from the Premises and to ensure that the equipment and any other property of the School are left as found;
 - (d) To permit the Principal to use the bond towards meeting the costs of repair or replacement of the premises in the event of loss, theft or damages.
 - (e) Not to make or permit any structural alteration, including the attaching of nails, screws or other fastenings to walls or fittings, to the premises or any other property of the school;
 - (f) To comply with any request by the Principal and with all laws and departmental policy concerning the use of the premises and equipment including, without limitation, regulations which prohibit smoking on the premises and laws relating to the sale or consumption of alcohol;
 - (g) To produce on request evidence of the user's ability and qualifications to supervise activities, on the premises, and/or equipment, that may result in risk of injury;
 - (h) Not to permit any alcohol to be brought upon or remain on the Premises or the School grounds without permission from the Principal and to comply with regulations regarding alcohol on school premises;
 - (i) To ensure that no illegal activity is carried out upon the premises by person(s) on the premises with the user's knowledge;
 - (j) To leave the premises and grounds in a clean and tidy condition;
 - (k) To ensure appropriate supervision of and accept responsibility for the behavior of person(s) using the premises or equipment with the user's knowledge;
 - (l) To allow the Principal or any nominee to enter the premises at any time to inspect the premises and equipment and to make any repairs the Principal deems necessary;
 - (m) To vacate the premises/grounds on or before the authorized time on the day of use and to lock up and secure the premises after use;
 - (n) Not to have keys duplicated and not to pass any keys to third parties;
 - (o) To use only the premises and equipment specified in the agreement;
 - (p) To repair or make full restitution to the Principal's satisfaction for any damage to the premises, the equipment or other property of the MoE;
 - (q) To cease use of premises or equipment found to be unsafe and to notify the Principal immediately before the beginning of classes on the next school day and then in writing;
 - (r) To notify the Principal immediately in writing of any injury to any person during use of the premises or equipment and to provide such statements from witnesses and the injured person as the Principal may require;
 - (s) To comply with obligations of the duty of care statements;
 - (t) To ensure that when the swimming pool is used, the following precautions are observed:
 - Infants and non-swimmers must not be admitted to the pool area unless accompanied by an adult.
 - An adult must be nominated by the User to assume responsibility for good order
 - Entry to the pool must be supervised.
 - No alcohol is permitted near or within the pool
 - Specific directions of the Principal or nominee regarding safety are to be complied with (eg suitably qualified supervision of pool activities).
 - (u) The User has read and understands these Conditions of Use.

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(Person responsible for User)

(Witness)