

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Reg. No. 400-58
Subject: STUDENT CLUBS	Issued: 4/1/91
Preparing Office: Office of the Superintendent	Amended: 11/20/19

I. Policy

II. Procedures

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) recognizes that student clubs offer students an opportunity to learn and expand their knowledge and develop leadership skills by working in a group. FCPS permits the organization and operation of student clubs, inclusive of meeting on school premises during designated times as designated by the principal, in accordance with the following provisions.

A. Definitions

School sponsored clubs/middle and high schools – Clubs which are generally related to a body of courses or curriculum objectives offered at the secondary school level. School sponsored clubs may also include noncurricular related clubs based on interests and approval by the principal.

School sponsored clubs/elementary schools – Clubs at the elementary level are based on interest of students and/or staff and may be presented to the principal for review and approval.

Nonschool sponsored clubs – Clubs at the secondary level which are student initiated and generally governed by the Equal Access Act which allows clubs based on religious, political or philosophical content. (see Section E)

B. Approval Process

1. The principal ¹ shall approve both school and nonschool sponsored clubs within his/her school. (COMAR 13A.08.01.09)
2. Students desiring to form a student club shall submit a request form to the principal stating the recommended name and the purpose of the club and anticipated activities.
3. The principal shall review the request and provide a written response within 30 days of the submitted request.
4. If approved, the principal shall advertise the position among faculty/staff and compensation may be allocated as identified in the Activity Compensation Scale pursuant to the negotiated agreement between the Frederick County Teachers Association (FCTA) and the Board of Education of Frederick County (Board).

¹ "Principal" as used in this regulation is defined as the principal or designee.

C. Criteria

1. Membership must be voluntary, open to all students, and comply with Board policies or FCPS regulations. Note: Some exceptions may be imposed for eligibility criteria associated with academic clubs or honor societies.
2. Participants are expected to abide by school rules and shall not conspire or engage in hazing, bullying or intimidation of any form.
3. The principal may suspend and/or terminate the operation of the student club to maintain order and discipline and/or protect the well-being of others.

D. After-School Activity/Club Permission Form

If a club meets beyond the regular school day, the "After-School Activity/Club Permission Form" is provided for schools to use with students as they deem appropriate.

<https://formfinder.fcps.org/FormFinder%2FMiscellaneous/Afterschool%20Activity-Club%20Permission%20Form.pdf>

E. The Equal Access Act ² - Secondary Schools Only

The Equal Access Act ensures that if noncurricular clubs are offered at secondary schools, a student group may not be denied the opportunity to request a club due to religious, political, philosophical or other content of speech associated with the club.

In addition to the provisions outlined in Sections A and B above, the following provisions apply to noncurricular secondary student clubs in accordance with the Equal Access Act:

1. The club must be initiated by a student or group of students currently enrolled at the school where the club seeks to meet.
2. The principal will advertise the position among faculty/staff to serve as a monitor for the club, who shall be responsible for monitoring the meetings to assure that the club and its members comply with this regulation and to assure that order and discipline are maintained. Monitors act in a nonparticipatory capacity.³
3. The principal shall not compel any employee to be a monitor for a nonsponsored club if the content of the speech at any meeting of the club is contrary to the beliefs of the employee.
4. Nonschool persons may not organize, direct, conduct, control or regularly attend activities or meetings of a nonsponsored club. Subject to the preceding sentence, nonschool persons may be permitted to attend a nonsponsored club meeting upon invitation and with the prior approval of the principal. Visitors may not attend on a regular basis.
5. The school and/or school system may not be identified or associated with endorsing the goals, objectives, activities or opinions of a nonsponsored club.

² The Equal Access Act provides: "...shall be unlawful for any public secondary school which receives federal financial assistance and which has a limited open forum to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or discriminate against, any students who wish to conduct a meeting within that limited open forum on the basis of religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings."

³ 20 U.S.C. §4071

F. Distribution of Student Club Information

1. Students may distribute or display club related information on school premises, subject to prior administrative review. Such review is to ensure time, place and manner criteria are evenly and consistently applied to all clubs, and that information is not deemed disruptive, contrary to the mission of the school system, violates the law or rights of others.
2. Club information must include the name of the club, and students distributing the information are responsible for removing any litter associated with the distribution.
3. Information distributed by nonsponsored clubs will include the following: *The views in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of FCPS.*

Approved:

original signed by

Theresa R. Alban
Superintendent