

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee believes that the Arlington Public Schools are an integral part of the community and that community support is necessary for the Arlington Public Schools' operation and achievement of excellence. The School Committee and Arlington Public Schools staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the Arlington Public Schools contributes to the community's success and, in turn, benefits from the community's resources.

In order to maintain productive relationships with the community, the Arlington Public Schools is committed to sustaining:

- Effective, accurate, and meaningful communications that facilitate dialogue, encourage involvement in Arlington Public Schools programs, and create community advocacy for its public schools.
- Volunteer programs that provide mutually enriching experiences for our students, staff, and community volunteers.
- Recognition programs that publicly honor the contributions of our students, employees, and community partners and express pride in our individual and collective accomplishments.
- Community service efforts which enable the Arlington Public Schools' staff and students to express their commitment to the community.

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY-HOME COMMUNICATIONS

The School Committee encourages written and electronic correspondence from the public. Such correspondence should be sent to the Committee through the administrative secretary, who will forward the correspondence to the School Committee Chair and the other members of the School Committee. The administrative secretary shall publish, as an attachment to the School Committee agenda, a list of correspondence received if appropriate given its content.

The Chair shall take steps to address the correspondence as he/she deems appropriate. Such steps may include, but are not limited to: (1) referral of the matter to the school administration for study and possible action; (2) referral of the matter to a subcommittee of the School Committee; or (3) placement of the matter on the agenda of a School Committee meeting. The administrative secretary will send acknowledgment of receipt of the correspondence to the correspondent within ten business days and, if so directed by the Chair, will notify the correspondent of the steps the Chair has determined to be appropriate in addressing it.

SOURCE: Arlington

SCHOOL/PARENT RELATIONS GOALS

It is the general goal of the District to foster relationships with parent/guardians which encourage cooperation between the home and school in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

While parent/guardians are individually responsible for their children, the District provides direct services of education and indirect services of child care for students during the time when they are within the supervision of school personnel. Consistent with these shared responsibilities and as appropriate to the maturity of the student, members of the school staff will consult with parent/guardians regarding student progress and achievement, methods to enhance student development, and matters of correction.

Additionally, parental/guardian involvement in the schools is encouraged through regular communication with the school Principal and staff, the parent/teacher organizations, the school volunteer program, and other opportunities for participation in school activities and District programs.

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS

As required by Massachusetts General Law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

- (a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless the school or district has been given documentation that:
 1. The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
 2. The parent has been denied visitation, or
 3. The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
 4. There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
- (b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to regulation.
- (c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
- (d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in regulation.
- (e) The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
- (f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to law, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:34D; 71:34H
603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents
20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

RELATIONS WITH PARENT/BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

To foster relationships with parents that encourage the home and school to work together to establish and achieve common educational goals for students, the Superintendent and the professional staff will:

1. Consult with and encourage parents to share in school planning and in setting objectives and evaluating programs.
2. Help parents understand the educational process and their role in promoting it.
3. Provide for parent understanding of school operations.
4. Provide opportunities for parents to be informed of their child's development and the criteria for its measurement.

To accomplish the above and to enhance communications between parents and school officials, the Committee encourages the maintenance of formal parent organizations, including booster organizations, at each school building. For this purpose the Committee will officially recognize a parent organizations. These procedures will be observed:

1. Organizations will be officially recognized upon request by the building Principal who will file a copy of the organizational papers with the Superintendent.
2. A vote, open to all parents of children enrolled, will designate the organization to be recognized if more than one organization with the same purpose makes the request.
3. All parent organizations shall obtain 501C3 status and file appropriate paperwork with state authorities and make proof of such status available to school district administration.
4. All parent organizations need to recognize that spending on student activities must comply with federal law relating to equity among student genders.

LEGAL REFS: Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

CROSS REFS: ACA – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

The School Committee endorses the concept that community participation in the affairs of the schools is essential if the school system and the community are to maintain mutual confidence and respect and work together to improve the quality of education for students. It therefore intends to exert every effort to identify the desires of the community and to be responsive, through its actions, to those desires.

All citizens will be encouraged to express ideas, concerns, and/or about the schools to the school administration, to any appointed advisory bodies, and to the committee.

Residents who are specially qualified because of interest, training, experience, or personal characteristics will be encouraged to assume an active role in school affairs. From time to time, these people may be invited by the committee to act as advisors, either individually or in groups.

The committee and the staff will give substantial weight to the advice they receive from individuals and community groups interested in the schools, particularly from those individuals and groups they have invited to advise them regarding specific problems, but will use their best judgment in arriving at decisions.

CROSS REF.: BDF, Advisory Committees to the School Committee

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington

**RESPONSE TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY
GENERATION PROPOSALS**

The School Committee shall ensure that a public hearing is conducted before considering any proposal for the installation of major telecommunications or energy-generation equipment on school buildings or property for commercial purposes. This does not preclude the School Department from undertaking feasibility studies or other analyses necessary to determine further steps - if any - prior to the conduct of such hearing.

SOURCE: Arlington

PRIVATE DONATIONS TO THE ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Town of Arlington and the Arlington Public Schools are obligated by the state constitution and state law to provide a free and appropriate education to school-aged children who reside in the Town. The School Committee is of the firm belief that federal, state and local governments must provide sufficient funds to public education.

The School Committee acknowledges that when local, state and federal governments do not adequately fund public schools, private citizens and groups may wish to donate to the schools for general and specific operating and capital needs.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53A allows School Committees to accept grants or gifts from the federal and state governments, charitable foundations, private corporations, and private citizens for the educational purpose for which the gift is made. Further appropriation by the town is not required. Grant funds may be expended only by approval of the School Committee.

Citizens and groups wishing to donate to the School Department should indicate the purpose of the gift in an accompanying letter. It is understood that a gift is a voluntary transfer of property given gratuitously and without consideration. Any interest generated from the temporary investment of the gift shall remain with the principal and be used for the specific purpose of the gift if the letter of donation so specifies. Donations to the Arlington Public Schools are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. An acknowledgment letter for tax purposes shall be sent promptly to each donor and be signed by the Superintendent of Schools.

Unless otherwise indicated, a gift is unrestricted and may be used by the School Department for purposes consistent with the School Committee's goals and priorities. If a donor wishes to restrict a gift to a specific program, the donor must indicate this in an accompanying letter. The School Department shall establish separate accounts for restricted gifts as needed. The School Committee reserves the right to decline restricted gifts for programs that it has chosen to discontinue. Further, the School Committee reserves the right to decline contributions with conditions and restrictions that are not consistent with School Department policy and procedures and the School Committee's goals and priorities.

In the event that a private foundation or group seeks to raise \$50,000 or more for the Arlington Public Schools or for a specific school program through an event, a direct mail campaign, or another activity, it is suggested that the organizing group and the School Committee sign a Memorandum of Understanding defining the goals and purposes for which funds will be raised. The Memorandum of Understanding must be approved by a majority vote of the Arlington School Committee.

SOURCE: Arlington

PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Superintendent will have authority to accept gifts and offers of equipment for the schools in the name of the committee when the gift is of educational value. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.

Gifts that would involve changes in school plants or sites will be subject to School Committee approval.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school system. Any gift of cash, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be handled as a separate account and expended at the discretion of the committee, as provided by law.

The committee directs the Superintendent to assure that an appropriate expression of thanks is given all donors.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37A

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington

PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

The School Committee is a public servant, and its meetings and records will be a matter of public information except as such meetings and records pertain to individual personnel and other classified matters.

The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every effort to disseminate information. All requests for information will be acted on fairly, completely and expeditiously.

All commonly available public record documents of the School District shall be posted on the district's website. The length of time such records shall remain posted on the district website shall be in accordance with the Municipal Record Retention Manual. In addition, the official minutes of the Committee, its written policies and regulations, and its financial records will be open for inspection at the office of the Superintendent by any citizen desiring to examine them during hours when the office is open. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released for inspection by the public or any unauthorized persons by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent).

Each building administrator is authorized to use all means available to keep parents and others in the particular school's community informed about the school's program and activities.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 66:10; 30A:18-25

CROSS REFS.: BEDG, Minutes
GBJ, Personnel Records
JRA, Student Records

NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the programs, problems, planning, and activities of the school system.

All representatives of the media will be given equal access to information about the schools. General releases of interest to the entire community will be made available to all the media simultaneously.

There will be no exclusive releases except as media representatives request information on particular programs, plans or problems.

In order that school system publicity is given wide coverage and is coordinated into a common effort and purpose, the following procedures will be followed in giving official information to the news media:

1. The School Committee chair will be the official spokesman for the committee, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent.
2. News releases that are of a system-wide or a sensitive nature or pertain to established committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent.
3. News releases that are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of the Principal of that particular school. All statements made to the press by other staff members of the particular school must be cleared with the Principal.

While it is impossible to know how news releases will be treated by the press, every possible effort should be made to obtain coverage of school activities that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the school system.

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

When a staff member receives a complaint, the School Committee expects the staff member to do so courteously and to make an appropriate reply.

The School Committee believes that complaints and concerns are best addressed and resolved as close to their origin as appropriate to the circumstances. Thus, the Committee encourages individuals to present and discuss any complaints they may have with the staff member against whom the complaint is directed whenever appropriate. If the individual is not comfortable addressing the matter with the staff member, or if the matter remains unresolved after doing so, the individual may address the complaint to the Building Principal or his/her designee or to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the School Committee as a whole or to a School Committee member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution, provided that the School Committee may directly address complaints regarding the conduct or performance of the Superintendent where appropriate.

Should dissatisfaction remain after the above steps have been taken, the complainant may contact the School Committee Chair, who shall arrange for the School Committee to address the matter if the Chair deems appropriate

SOURCE: Arlington

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Permission to use school facilities may be granted by the Superintendent.

Permits shall be issued in writing by the Superintendent; a copy will be given to the custodian. Regardless of whether a building is open for other activities, permits will still be required for use of any part of the building.

The following conditions shall apply to permits for the use of school property, and shall be accepted and acknowledged in writing by each organization receiving a permit:

1. The intended use shall be in accord with the license granted for the building by the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety.
2. The organization using school property shall protect the property from abuse or injury and shall be responsible for any damage occurring in connection with or in consequence of such use.
3. Smoking, alcohol and all prohibited substances are prohibited on school property. The organization using a school building shall enforce this rule.
4. An organization using school property shall be responsible for the behavior of persons attending or using the building or grounds in connection with the permit, and shall furnish at its own expense such police or fire protection as the Superintendent, School Committee, or supervisor of custodians may direct.
5. All scenery and fixtures used in school buildings must conform strictly with fire laws and town ordinances. Any arrangements for scenery, refreshments, etc., must be made so as to cause no damage to school property and to meet the approval of school officials.
6. Payment of fees shall be made not later than the time of use. Please refer to Exhibit KF-E for the classifications applied when determining fees.
7. Violation or neglect of regulations governing the use of school property or unpaid bills may disqualify the organization for further permission to use school property.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:71
By-laws of the Town of Arlington, Title IV, Article w

CROSS REF.: KF-E, Fee Structure for Rental of School Building Space

CONTRACT REF.: AEA, Unit A, and AAA, XIII-A

SOURCE: Arlington

FEE STRUCTURE FOR RENTAL OF SCHOOL BUILDING SPACE

Due to the increasing cost and the need to maintain the school buildings, the following classifications apply when determining fees:

Group 1: Arlington Public School and Town related business. (Examples include but are not necessarily limited to, school run clubs and activities, School Committee meetings, advisory committee meetings, sports team meetings, community education, PTO meetings.) No usage/energy fee. Custodial fees apply only when no custodian is already scheduled to be on duty, except as otherwise specified by contract.

Group 2: Non-profit groups, or events, which bear some connection to the mission of the Arlington Public Schools. One-half of the usage/energy fee. Refundable damage deposits required for rooms and equipment used. Custodial fees apply.

Group 3: Commercial entities and other groups not affiliated with the Arlington Public Schools. (Examples include, but are not limited to, private dance companies, community college evening course). Full usage/energy fee. Refundable damage deposits required for rooms and equipment used. Custodial fees apply.

Group 4: *Long-Term Rentals explicitly for the after school care of students. One-Quarter of the usage fee. Energy fees apply. Refundable damage deposits required for rooms and equipment used. Custodial fees apply. (*180 days or more)

All groups must be in compliance with federal and state laws of non-discrimination and all other applicable statutes.

The Schedule of refundable damage deposits, the energy charge rates, and applications for rental will be reviewed by the Business Office by **March 15 (originally May 15)** of each year to be approved by the School Committee.

The Superintendent shall have sole final discretion over classification decisions.

SOURCE: Arlington

SURPLUS SPACE POLICY FOR EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS

The School Committee permits the use of available surplus school space for child care facilities, play groups and extended day programs for the education and safety of the child and convenience of those parent/guardians who need these services. Any arrangements will be reviewed for renewal on an annual basis. The School Committee offers rental space so that these programs may be offered at the most reasonable cost possible. A request for a permit must be completed as a condition for the use of the space.

A descriptive brochure or summary of the program along with a financial statement including revenues, the director's salary, teachers' salaries, supplies and any and all other operating expenses will be presented to the Superintendent and the School Committee by December 31 of each school year.

Failure to comply with guidelines for these programs and financial disclosures as stated above may be brought before the School Committee. The School Committee may authorize the Superintendent of Schools to negotiate with other parties to maintain extended day programs in the Arlington Public Schools or take any other action deemed necessary.

The occupant shall maintain public liability insurance. Limits will be negotiated by the Superintendent in conjunction with legal counsel. Such insurance shall name the program and the Town of Arlington as insureds as their respective interests may appear.

SOURCE: Arlington

PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee will place limits on commercial activities and fund-raising activities in the schools for the following reasons:

1. The school system should provide students, parent/guardians, and employees some measure of protection from exploitation by commercial and charitable fund-raising organizations.
2. The school system should not give the public the impression of generally endorsing or sanctioning commercial and fund-raising activities.
3. Commercial and fund-raising activities may disrupt school routine and cause loss of instructional time.

Following these guiding statements, the Superintendent and Principals may permit occasional commercial or fund-raising activities related to the objectives of the schools with the following exceptions:

1. No direct solicitation of students or employees may take place without School Committee permission.
2. No general or class distribution of commercial or fund-raising literature may take place without School Committee permission.

For the purposes of this policy, local PTA and PTO groups and groups representing school system employees will be considered "school groups" and will be governed by the committee's policy on staff solicitations.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 44:53A

CROSS REFS.: GBEB, Staff Gifts and Solicitations
JJE, Student Fund-Raising Activities
JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
KHB, Advertising in the Schools

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington

ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee may grant permission for advertising of commercial products or services in school buildings or on school property under guidelines or regulations it may approve. Otherwise, no advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school property. Publications of the school system will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in student publications that are published by student organizations, subject to administration controls, or the use of commercially-sponsored, free teaching aids if the content is approved by the administration.

Solicitation of sales or use of the name of the school system to promote any product will not be permitted by the Committee.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

CROSS REF.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
 KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

DISPLAY OF SIGNAGE AND ADVERTISING AT SCHOOL SPORTING EVENTS

The Superintendent of Schools may permit sports teams to display sign advertising at sporting events, e.g., hanging banners on behalf of merchants that sponsor or support the teams at outdoor and indoor-sporting activities. Such advertising must comply with town bylaws. Revenue from advertising of this nature is to be used in accordance with the School Department Budget approved each year by the School Committee. The Superintendent will establish a revolving fund in accordance with the requirements of state law.

The Arlington School Committee believes that sports teams and other school based activities play an important role in projecting a positive image of the Arlington Public Schools and the community as a whole.

In order to ensure a positive and consistent representation of the school system to the community, it is incumbent upon the school administration to communicate to staff the expectation that

1. Any and all advertising in connection with school sporting events will be consistent with a standard of good taste; and
2. Staff members will exercise good judgment and use their best efforts to insure that advertising meets these criteria.

The Superintendent may adopt appropriate procedures to carry out the intent of this policy.

SOURCE: Arlington

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee welcomes parents and guests to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school system's mission and goals.

Visits by parents to several classrooms in a given grade for the purposes of comparing teaching styles to provide a basis for a request for student assignment to a particular teacher are prohibited because the School District's policy of assigning a student to a particular class is the sole responsibility of the building Principal in consultation with the staff of that school.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Parental requests for classroom visitations will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we request that such requests be made at least forty-eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.
2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.
3. For security purposes it is requested that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.
4. Under ordinary circumstances classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.
5. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school MUST ask permission of one of the administrative staff 24 HOURS in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.

CROSS REF.: IHBA, Observations of Special Education Programs

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES

Cooperation with law enforcement agencies is essential for the protection of students, for maintaining a safe environment in the District schools, and for safeguarding all school property.

Relationships between the schools and officials of law enforcement agencies in investigative matters concerning pupils will take into consideration the respective roles of the schools and law enforcement agencies in assisting and protecting the interests of the community, and ensuring the rights of all concerned.

The School Committee also recognizes the -potential enrichment that law enforcement agencies can make in the educational program.

Efforts should be made to develop and maintain a healthy attitude toward law enforcement agencies and personnel to promote better understanding and communication.

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington

RELATIONS WITH FIRE AUTHORITIES

The School Committee and administration recognize their responsibility for the safety of everyone who uses the school buildings and facilities. To this end the School Department will cooperate with the Arlington Fire Department in accordance with Chapter 148, Section 5. Prevention is of prime importance

SOURCE: Arlington

RELATIONS WITH PLANNING AUTHORITIES

The School Committee will participate in local and state planning functions that could directly affect District schools and their immediate environment.

The Superintendent or designee will keep the School Committee informed of planning matters bearing directly on the operation of District schools or school-sponsored programs, and will undertake action on behalf of the School Committee to influence matters in the best interests of the students, the schools and the District.

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington

RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

The School Committee and its administrative officers welcome all who seek to serve the residents of the community and will participate with them in the planning and execution of such projects as will be mutually beneficial for students.

It is School Committee policy that administration inform elected and appointed officials of the local government of the desire to work cooperatively for improved services.

SOURCE: MASC/Arlington