

Community Relations

Visits to the Schools

The Board of Education and staff of the school district welcome and strongly encourage members of the community and other interested persons to visit the schools. Such visits shall be regarded as expressions of interest in school affairs and/or efforts to become informed about school programs and activities.

The Superintendent shall establish regulations which:

1. Encourage school visitations.
2. Provide for appropriate hospitality for visitors.
3. Channel expressions of approval and constructive criticism to the Board of Education.
4. Ensure that public visits will not hinder the educational program.
5. Require all visitors to register in the principal's office upon arrival at the school.
6. Ensure student safety.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only with the Principal's and teacher's approval. Such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment. When a visit involves a conference with a teacher or the Principal, an appointment should be scheduled during non-instructional time.

Since continuity in classrooms is often difficult to achieve and maintain, while visiting in a classroom, a visitor must not interrupt the class in any way, nor speak to (unless invited to do so) or disturb the students or teacher.

Although Board of Education members are encouraged to visit schools independently, they have authority only in regularly called meetings of the Board of Education, or when delegated specific tasks by specific Board of Education action.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

53a-185 Loitering in or about school grounds. Class C. misdemeanor

Policy adopted: April 13, 2015

THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Thomaston, Connecticut

Community Relations

Visits to the Schools

Visitor Protocols

Definition

For the purposes of this administrative regulation a visitor shall be defined as any person entering a school facility during normal school hours other than:

- A student who attends that facility
- A member of that school's staff and faculty
- Central Office Employees with assigned duties at the school facility
- Multi-site Employees with assigned duties at the school facility
- Maintenance Department Employees
- Uniformed Police or Fire Department personnel in performance of their assigned duties

All visitors shall:

1. Enter building at location designated by the school administration
2. Go to the Main Office
3. Sign in the Visitor's Log Book (Visitor name, Purpose of visit, Person visiting)
4. Be issued a Visitor's ID Badge with date of visit
5. Visitors shall sign out at the end of their visit

The Principal or designee may refuse to register an outsider if he/she reasonably concludes that the individual's presence or acts would disrupt the school, students or employees; would result in damage to property; or would result in the distribution of a controlled substance. The Principal or designee or school security officer may revoke any outsider's registration if he/she has a reasonable basis for concluding that the individual's presence on school grounds would interfere or is interfering with the peaceful conduct of school activities or would disrupt or is disrupting the school, students, or staff.

Visitors entering the building at locations other than the designated visitors' entrance shall be:

1. Stopped by staff
2. Asked to identify themselves by name
3. Asked their purpose for being in the building
4. Directed by staff:
 - a. out of the building and to use the designated entrance
 - b. to the Main Office (if warranted by proximity to the Main Office)

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Visits to the Schools

Visitor Protocols (continued)

Visitors who refuse to identify themselves shall be considered trespassers. Staff shall:

1. Direct them to leave the building
2. Call the Main Office
3. The Principal or his/her designee upon evaluation of the situation may:
 - a. call the Police
 - b. call Central Office
4. Consider locking down building

Special Exceptions to the above:

Special Events (Plays, Concerts, Award Ceremonies, etc.)

When a special event is planned which will attract large numbers of visitors so as to make the sign-in procedures impractical, the school administration shall designate and mark the appropriate path to the event location (auditorium, APR, gym, media center etc.). Appropriate staff shall be assigned to direct visitor(s) to the event location.

Deliveries

School staff that is expecting the delivery of a package(s) should notify the Main Office. Packages are not to be delivered directly to the staff. All packages shall be delivered to a location as determined by the school administration.

A sign-in log shall be maintained for deliveries required for building operations (such as food, fuel, etc.) to locations other than the Main Office.

Students are not expected to receive mail and/or packages at school. Mail and/or packages for students are to be refused unless prior arrangements have been approved by the school principal.

Operations

Maintenance Department Employees shall notify the school administration of their presence within the school facility.

Other Board of Education employees without assigned duties at the school facility shall:

1. Enter building at location designated by the school administration
2. Go to the Main Office
3. Sign in the Visitor's Log Book (Visitor Name, Purpose of Visit, Person Visiting)
4. Sign out at the end of their visit

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Visits to the Schools (continued)

Special Exceptions to the above:

Board of Education members shall:

1. Enter building at location designated by the school administration
2. Go to the Main Office
3. Sign in the Visitor's Log Book (Visitor Name, Purpose of Visit, Person Visiting)
4. Sign out at the end of their visit

Classroom Observations:

When determining whether to approve a request to visit and/or observe student programs the Principal or his/her designee shall consider such factors as (1) the frequency of visits; (2) the duration of the visit; (3) the number of visitors involved; (4) the effect of the visit on a particular class or activity; (5) the age of the students; (6) the nature of the class or programs; (7) the potential for disclosure of confidential personally identifiable student information; (8) whether the visitor has a legitimate educational interest in visiting the school; and (9) any safety risk to students and school staff. The following guidelines shall be followed:

1. If the visitor wishes to observe a classroom, the time will be arranged in advance after the Principal has conferred with the teacher. The Principal has the discretion to limit, or refuse, requests for visits and/or observations of student programs in light of the above criteria.
2. If the purpose of the classroom visitation is to observe learning and teaching activities, the visitor may be asked to confer with the teacher before and after the observation to enhance understanding of the activities.
3. The Principal may withhold approval if particular events such as testing would be adversely affected by a visit. Similarly, if a visitor's presence becomes disruptive, the Principal may withdraw approval. In either case, the Principal will give reasons for the action; and
4. If a dispute arises regarding limitations upon or withholding of approval for visits:
 - a. The visitor will first discuss the matter with the Principal;
 - b. If it is not satisfactorily resolved, the visitor may request a meeting with the Superintendent or designee.
 - c. The Superintendent or designee will promptly meet with the visitor, investigate the dispute and render a written decision. The written decision will indicate that the visitor may appeal to the Board of Education to review the limitations imposed.