



Ministry of Education, Science & Technology

**POLICY IN
COMMUNITY USE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOL FACILITIES AND
RESOURCES**

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

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

2. POLICY

It is Government policy that school facilities and resources are made available for use by the community.

Applications for use of school facilities and resources must be approved by MoEST [the school management] or its representative, the school principal and formalised through a written agreement signed by the school principal and a representative of the user group.

Principals will consult with the School Management and use the fee structure provided to establish the schedule of fees or charges to be applied for the hire or use of school facilities and resources.

3. BACKGROUND

For the purposes of this document, school facilities and resources are defined as:

- ☐ school buildings and the facilities contained within them;
- ☐ school grounds and recreation areas and associated structures; and
- ☐ parking areas

Community use of school facilities and resources can provide a number of benefits to the school and the community. These include:

- the development of positive perceptions about schools and learning;
- the development of cooperation and goodwill in school, community and local government relationships;
- increased community awareness of school activities;
- the opportunity for schools to improve their curriculum and learning programs through access to a wider range of resources and talents in the community;
- improved levels of security for the school through out-of-hours use;
- the potential for increased financial returns to the school;
- access for the community to a wider range of facilities and resources; and
- more efficient utilisation of the community's large investment in school facilities and resources

It is important that the community perceives schools as being community buildings, and it is more likely that this will occur when schools make as many of their facilities and resources available as is feasible.

This policy replaces previous MoEST documents and instructions on hiring of school facilities

4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND OTHER LINKS

Education Act 1978
1997 Circular on Hiring of School Facilities
Finance Act 2004
OHS Act 1996 and OHS Policy 2005
Tobacco Control Act 1998

5. PROCEDURES

Availability

- 5.1** Schools must make premises available for the conduct of national elections and for the conduct of emergency welfare exercises.
- 5.2** The school Management [MoEST] always has the prerogative on the use of government school facilities.
- 5.3** Application for use of school facilities and resources by the community must be formalised through the school's principal or school management.
- 5.4** In instances where the request for use does not satisfactorily cover the requirements for a particular use, the Conditions for Use [See Appendix A] must be amended and referred to the Director Secondary in MoEST headquarters.

Agreement and Approval

- 5.5** 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.
- 5.6** The use of facilities approved to be hired out annually must be reviewed and/or renegotiated at the end of each year with results kept as a school record.
- 5.7** To enable users to make appropriate plans for the future, Principals must advise users, at least one month before the expiry date, whether the Use of school facilities and resources can be renegotiated.
- 5.8** Discretion must be used in the decision to terminate further use of facilities and resources by the user. Conditions under which the termination may be invoked are:
 - breach of conditions;
 - unforeseen essential school need for exclusive use of the facilities and resources concerned; and
 - situations where the activity engaged in by the user is detrimental to the school and its students

School Responsibility

- 5.9** Schools must not permit activities which are inconsistent with the educational aims of the school or which interfere with its operations.
- 5.10** The Director Secondary will manage grievances about access to and use of school facilities and resources.
- 5.11** The security responsibilities of the users of school resources and facilities must be clearly specified to users.
- 5.12** The school's responsibility for ensuring a safe environment for all users of school facilities and resources extends to users involved in community use of school facilities and resources, including grounds.
- 5.13** 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.

Users Responsibility

- 5.14** It must be made clear to users of school facilities and resources that any damage or accidents occurring during use must be immediately reported to the Principal or other authorised person.
- 5.15** An appropriate record must be made by users of any report of damage or accidents occurring during use of school facilities and resources and reported to the Principal.
- 5.16** Users must be advised that they will be responsible for the costs of repair or replacement of equipment or damage to buildings or fixtures. Repairs must be carried out within a time frame and to a standard, which is acceptable to the Principal, and in the case of structural repair, a building engineer.
- 5.17** Where possible, users are to be incorporated bodies.
- 5.18** 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 as set out by the school principal

Alignment to Acts and Instructions

- 5.19** The Principal and users of school facilities 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 (ie; Principal). The onus is on users to sign a duty of care statement.
- 5.20** Following the Financial Management Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 1982, on trust money and trust fund accounts, fees generated from the use of school facilities must be transferred to Consolidated Revenue.
- 5.21** In accordance with the Tobacco Control Act 1998 section 12 and 14 smoking may be prohibited in government premises

6. GUIDELINES

6.1 Community Awareness

Schools are encouraged to inform the community about the facilities 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 facility. These include:

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

6.2 Risk Management

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

- age of the participants;
- nature of the proposed activity;
- quality of supervision;
- facilities/equipment to be used

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

- whether the group is local;
- whether the group is known to the school;
- the ability of the group to provide evidence of satisfactory use of other facilities;
- whether the activity is one that should be permitted without insurance if the group has none;
- whether the activity involves consumption of alcohol;
- the level of skill required to operate the equipment which it is proposed to use; and
- 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)

6.3 Determining The Cost Of Hire

Fees may be charged for the hire of facilities and resources and to cover the costs associated with their use. It will be necessary for some research to be undertaken each year, with a view to comparing fees for use of similar facilities within the local community. When developing a schedule of fees, the school should exercise care not to introduce undue competitiveness with existing facilities offered by local government and other providers and to aim to achieve consistency in the fees levied upon users.

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:

- value of the activity to the community and school;
- nature of the intended use, including degree of wear and tear on the facility and/or use of equipment and resources;
- access times required;
- set up and restoration time;
- opening and closing fees;
- size of the user group;
- ability of user to pay;
- storage of special equipment;
- comparability of fees charged by other providers within the local community;
- any additional administrative staff time which may be necessary; and

- category of user, eg. commercial or charitable (as per categories outlined in the next section)

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

6.4 Fees And User Categories

In preparing advice to the School Management about recommendation for charge for use of facilities and services, schools may find it helpful to consider categories of users. Within each category, fees could be varied according to the type of use and other factors. The following categories of users could be considered when developing recommendations for charges for use:

- **Organisations which provide a service of direct benefit to the school or community**

(eg. Neighborhood Watch, Crime Stoppers Associations, Occupational Health and Safety Agencies and National Disaster Management agencies). These organisations may be considered as fee exempt.

- **Non-profit or charitable community service organizations**

(eg. Those which have a community support focus, like child support and various welfare groups, and are likely to rely largely on the financial support of others). Fees charged for use by these groups could be structured to cover essential costs such as electricity, gas and water. Schools may wish to waive fees for groups such as these or accept a donation of funds or service in lieu of fees.

- **Local government**

Fees may be negotiated through 'user pays' principles.

- **Non-profit organisations**

(eg. sporting and recreational bodies, cultural and hobby groups). This category is generally self-funded. The primary reason for their existence is to cater for the needs of members. Fees charged may be based on a user pays principle.

- **The government agencies, instrumentalities and departments or branches of the education department**

As a minimum, charges could cover direct costs and be based on unit area rental costs for office space in the locality. The Municipal Elections Office may pay a small fee for use but no charge can be levied for use by the National Elections Office

- **Commercial users**

(eg. fitness classes and the staging of a sporting event). The fees charged to these users could be based on a user pays principle with limited concessions.

It is advisable, if possible, to collect fees in advance.

6.5 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 facilities. It provides reminders and prompts and is intended to act only as a guide.

- Is the proposed use in line with school policy?
- 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?
- Will the group be fee paying?
- Has the user group been informed about the rules governing use?
- Does the group have special furniture needs?
- Should the group be providing its own insurance?
- Have keys/security arrangements been negotiated?
- Have cleaning and rubbish removal requirements been negotiated?
- Have issues about bonds, fees payment and review of fees been negotiated?
- Have relevant school personnel been consulted about the proposed use?
- Have relevant school and community personnel been consulted in relation to policy and procedures on school security?
- Has use of toilet facilities been arranged?
- Have the facilities to be used been inspected and their condition agreed?
- Has the user group been advised to seek legal advice regarding police screening of supervisors to assist in the prevention of child sexual abuse?

6.6 Checklist for users

Users of school facilities agree to abide by the terms and conditions set down for use when they sign an agreement and approval for use(See Appendix A as a guide on this). 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:

- keys
 - o deposit
 - o contact person nominated
 - o times specified for return.
- insurance
- lights/heaters
- responsibility for turning on/off
- cleaning/rubbish removal
- particular requirements
- leaving areas as found
 - o movement of furniture from other areas
 - o care to be taken when moving furniture
- times of access
- rules about alcohol and tobacco
- rules about clothing/footwear for use of particular areas
- special rules for particular areas
 - o consumption of food or drinks
 - o care of floor surfaces, eg. no cereals or liquids on gym floors
- storage
 - o availability
 - o need for user to provide their own
- use of telephones
 - o availability
 - o specified phone for emergency use
- emergency procedures

- o evacuation procedures
- o person to contact in case of emergency
- parking
 - o areas available
 - o areas in which parking is prohibited
- security
 - o security lighting activation
- photocopier/facsimile use
 - o availability/conditions for use
- supervision
 - o of children accompanying adults
 - o responsibility for activities of accompanying adults/children
- materials/equipment out of bounds

6.7 Note: Appendices have been attached as a condition for use and approval

7. EFFECTIVE DATE

1December 2007

8. REVIEW DATE

1 December 2008

9. KEY SEARCH WORDS

community use, dispute resolution, facilities-use, fees, charges, hire costs, insurance, school check list, user check list, security

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Conditions for use of government property

Introduction:

All Government institutions are not subject for use as accommodation for any outside organization and non-government schools except for government schools only

However, due to increase in demand for use of government institutions as accommodation and the enormous amount of damages, loses and bills to pay in terms of water and electricity, it has become inevitable to review the decision and define conditions for their use.

Conditions for use of government institutions for billeting/temporary accomodation

The following conditions shall apply to all users except government schools:

1. Rate:

The following rate shall apply:

- 1.1 \$50 per night per classroom
- 1.2 Extra \$50 per day for the use of dining facilities
- 1.3 Refundable deposit of \$100 if no damage whatsoever
- 1.4 Payments are to be made in advance and deposited in the School's General Purpose Account – Trust Fund

2. Collection of revenue:

- 2.1 All revenue collected must be properly receipted using official school receipt
- 2.2 All revenue collected must be forwarded to the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology headquarters and properly receipted. The Ministry of Education, Science & Technology will in turn transfer all funds collected into consolidated revenue

3. Booking:

- 3.1 Request for booking should be submitted at least one week in advance
- 3.2 Request should include number in the contingent, classrooms to be used and if applicable use of dining facilities
- 3.3 Duration of stay should also be included in the booking information
- 3.4 All booking with relevant and required information must be submitted in written form to the School Principals/Heads who will then inform Ministry of Education, Science & Technology through relevant sections for final approval.

4. Declaration:

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

5. Rules:

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

- 5.1 Responsible for the daily cleaning of the school compound, including toilets and bathrooms with cleaning agents. Rubbish must be removed and placed appropriately

- 5.2 Provide own toilet papers, washing and bathing soap and other personal needs
- 5.3 Use gas facilities for cooking and cook outside the classroom if cooking facilities are not provided
- 5.4 Water and electricity are to be used sparingly, water taps and electric switches are to be properly turned off when not in use
- 5.5 Balance for any damage must be settled before vacation or at an agreed time if cost is more than all the amount paid for the use of premises/facilities
- 5.6 The entire school compound is drug/alcohol free and breaching would result in immediate vacation of the school premises
- 5.7 Smoking is prohibited in the school compound(See Procedure 5.21).
- 5.8 Noise must be minimized as not to disturb neighbors or other users, particularly late at night and early morning.
- 5.9 Premises to be vacated accordingly as to the time indicated in the booking otherwise extra cost would be levied
- 5.10 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.

6. SECURITY AND OHS

- 6.1 Schools will not be responsible for any losses whatsoever
- 6.2 Each user is directly responsible for his/her own Safety under Occupational Health and Safety [OHS] Regulation
- 6.3 Ministry of Education, Science & Technology will be absolved for any cost or liabilities incurred throughout the entire duration of occupancy
- 6.4 Security on duty must be informed on any matter when School Heads or representatives are not available

Agreement on Conditions of Use of Government Facilities

The User agrees:

- (a) To use the 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, the equipment and stock (including food stock in the canteen), call out to security alarms and replacement of locks and keys in the event of loss or theft.
- (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 any toilets or other parts of the school buildings and all routes of access and exit used by the User 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 on or before the authorised 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 Minister for Education;
- (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 where the premises include a swimming pool, 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.

.....
(Person responsible for User)

.....
(Witness)

Appendix B

Additional Rates of Hire

Item	Rate
Chairs	50c per chair per day – within school
	\$1.00 per chair per day – out of school
Desks	50c per desk per day – within school
	\$1.00 per desk per day – out of school
Tables	\$1.00 per table per day – within school
	\$3.00 per table per day – out of school
Beddings	\$2.00 per head per night
Hall	\$100.00 for a large group per day which (7.00am – 6.00pm)
School Ground	\$100.00 per day

- Distance from the school to the location where the items are to be taken must be considered carefully
- Other facilities that could be hired with varied rates include sports facilities and equipment such as grass cutters, water blasters and gardening tools
- There would be different rates depending on the location of the school. Rural schools might be required to provide lower rates.