



Administrative Guidelines

Department: Operations

Policy: JH, JHC, JHCB, KG

Topic: School Clubs and Student Organizations

Revised: July 2019

PROCEDURE

I. RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE

Marietta City Schools ("District") recognizes that extracurricular activities are an important part of school culture. School clubs and student organizations offer students an opportunity to learn and expand their knowledge base and to develop leadership skills and skills for working within a group.

II. GENERAL PROVISIONS:

The following provisions apply to schools at all three levels: elementary, middle and high school:

A. DEFINITIONS:

1. School Club and School Organizations:

- a. School Clubs and School Organizations will be recognized as authorized school organizations if they are organized by the school district, sponsored by school personnel, composed completely of current student body members, hold the majority of their meetings at school, have an approved plan for the selection of members, establish aims which are educational, of school interest, or community interest, and meet all those conditions hereinafter set forth for recognized school-sponsored organizations.
- b. School clubs and school organizations are comprised of students who wish to organize and meet for common goals, objectives, or purposes and which are directly under the sponsorship, direction and control of the school, including any activities reasonably related to such clubs and organizations, excluding competitive interscholastic activities or events. Specifically, all curriculum related student groups and all faculty-led non- curriculum related student groups which do not hold or espouse any particular religious, political, or philosophical beliefs.
- c. Recognized school sponsored clubs must:
 - 1) Establish an aim or objective acceptable to the principal.
 - 2) Agree to hold the majority of their meetings at school during the school day.
 - 3) Obtain a sponsor from the school faculty who must attend all meetings held at the school, and must approve all meetings which he/she does not attend.

- 4) Agree to abide by the rules of the school.
 - 5) Accept a democratic plan for the selection of members, all of whom must be currently enrolled in the school.
 - 6) Maintain a list of current members and officers with the principals.
2. Student Organizations:
 - a. Official recognition will be given to student-initiated, student-led, non-curriculum related student groups, including all groups which hold or espouse any particular religious, political, or philosophical beliefs and other like organizations that desire to become a part of the student activities program in MCS schools. Such recognition carries with it equal access to the school newspaper, bulletin board, the public address system, and the school premises for having meetings as required by the Equal Access Act. (See 20 USC § 4071)
 - b. Groups officially affiliated with Boy Scouts of America or any other Title 36 (patriotic) youth group as outlined in final regulations adopted by the U.S. Department of Education regarding the Boy Scouts Equal Access Act (BSEAA). (See 20 USC 7905; CFR Parts 75, 76, 108; Title 36, Subtitle II, Patriotic and National Organizations)
 - c. To qualify for official recognition, religious, political, and philosophical organizations must meet the following requirements:
 - 1) The organization's activities must be voluntary and student initiated.
 - 2) Sponsorship of the activities by the school or its agents or employees is prohibited.
 - 3) Employees or agents of the school may be present at religious meetings in a non-participatory capacity only.
 - 4) The organization's activities may not materially or substantially interfere with the educational activities within the school.
 - 5) Non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of student groups.
 3. School Support Organization:
 - a. Parent-teacher organizations (PTO/PTA/PTSA), booster clubs, and school foundations.
 - b. All secret organizations are prohibited throughout the school district.
 4. Social fraternities and sororities for students shall not be permitted in district schools, nor shall activities or initiations connected with such groups be allowed in the schools. Teacher sponsorship of such organizations is prohibited.
 5. All secret organizations are prohibited throughout the school district.
- B. PARENT OR GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION/CONSENT:**
1. Notification:
 - a. Policy JH – Student Activities provides that *notification to parents and guardians shall be provided annually and shall include the name of the student organization or club, information regarding the purpose, activities, and sponsor, if known, of the organization or club. No student shall be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored organization or club if the student's parent or legal guardian has*

indicated, in writing, that the parent will not allow the student to participate and has provided a copy of such written notice to the school principal.

- b. School-produced student handbooks, other school-provided information and/or school websites should include the following regarding each school club and student organization, as defined above. This information should also be available in the school's administrative office and should be updated during the school year. Specifically, each school club and student organization's:
 - 1) Name;
 - 2) Mission or purpose;
 - 3) Name/names of the school club's faculty advisor(s) or student organization's contact(s); and
 - 4) A description of past or planned activities.
2. Consent:
 - a. Parents/guardians may decline permission for their child (under the age of 18) to participate in a school club by completing the appropriate section of a Parent Acknowledgement Form and returning the Form to the Principal or designee.
 - b. The parent/guardian must submit written permission to the Principal or designee specifically stating that his/her child (under the age of 18) may participate in a new school club started during the school year.

III. ACTIVITIES OF SCHOOL CLUBS AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS:

The following additional provisions apply to all levels of MCS schools:

A. General Guidelines:

The following directives shall be observed with regard to the activities of school clubs/organizations and student organizations:

1. Hazing:
 - a. School clubs and student organizations shall not use hazing or degradation of individual dignity as a form of initiation.
2. Sponsors:
 - a. The Principal shall assign faculty members to sponsor and coordinate activities of school clubs.
 - b. The Principal shall not designate anyone as a sponsor, coordinator, or coach of a student organization which is not a school club. However, the Principal shall designate a District employee as an agent of the school to assure that the use of school facilities by student organizations which are not school clubs is in keeping with the procedures of the school. The employee (agent) shall not participate in any way in meetings or activities of the student organization.
 - c. Non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of student organizations.
 - d. Non-school persons may regularly attend and assist with school clubs under the direction and control of the faculty sponsor.
3. Privileges:
 - a. Student organizations and school clubs shall be afforded the same privileges on campuses including, but not limited to:
 - 1) Use of school rooms for meetings and activities as outlined in regulation KG-R: Use of School Facilities.

- 2) Posting of notices concerning the student organization on designated school bulletin boards, if such boards exist. Materials which are to be posted on the designated bulletin board must be approved by the Principal or designee to ensure that the materials are not libelous, obscene or disruptive, and that the materials do not advocate, promote or depict illegal substances or activities. The Principal or designee must either approve or reject the materials within 72 hours of receipt.
- 3) Use of public address systems for announcements concerning organization meetings and activities. The use of the public address system for philosophical or advocacy statements shall not be allowed.
- 4) Coverage in school newspapers and yearbooks.
- 5) These privileges shall not include access to any other signs or display areas inside or outside the school building.
- 6) Approved school support organizations shall be permitted to announce the time and place of general membership meetings on the school's public address system and on signs or display areas outside the school building.
- 7) Except as provided in Section III.B, nothing in this Administrative Rule shall be construed to give any group that is not a school club or student organization access to the school facilities described in this Section.

B. Activities of Student Organizations:

1. Students may initiate the formation of student organizations and may apply for use of school facilities through the Principal or designee. See regulation KG-R: Use of School Facilities.
2. Finances: Funds collected and used by student organizations which are not school clubs must neither be handled as part of the school financial procedures nor accounted for through the school books.
3. Disclaimer of Endorsement or Sponsorship of Religious, Political, and Philosophical Ideas
 - a. While official recognition is to be given to religious, political and philosophical organizations, the individual school and/or school district's name is not to be identified with: (1) the aims, policies, or opinions of any such student activities program as mandated by federal law, and (2) the school and school district's official recognition, endorsement, or sponsorship of religious speech or of the ideas expressed by such organizations is forbidden.
 - b. Any printed literature distributed by such organizations must include the following disclaimer in an obvious and easy-to-read location:

The aims, policies and opinions of this organization are not endorsed or sponsored by _____ School or the Marietta City School District.

4. Teacher/Sponsor's Role
 - a. Because Marietta City Schools regulations do not allow students to be left unattended on school premises, a teacher, administrator, or other school employee may be assigned to monitor the activity pursuant to the following guidelines:

- 1) The school official is to be present only for custodial oversight of the organization to ensure order and good behavior as well as to assure that the requirements set forth in II.A.2 are followed; and
- 2) The school official may not promote, lead, or participate in any activity of the organization.

IV. Distribution of Printed Literature

Recognized School and Student Organizations that wish to distribute literature on campus must comply with the requirements of Board Policy and Administrative Regulations

- A. Each school will provide an information center located in a readily accessible area that will serve as the school method through which recognized student activity organizations may affect distribution or display approved literature and/or material.
- B. Recognized student activity organizations are prohibited from distributing any literature and/or materials in the school or on school property except at regularly scheduled meetings or activities for its membership or through the information center, with the exception of official school publications such as the school newspaper or yearbook.
- C. All literature and/or materials must be approved by the principal or designee before being placed in the information center. The following are prohibited:
 1. Materials which advertise or promote the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco;
 2. Materials which are vulgar, obscene, or pornographic
 3. Materials which advocate the violation of school rules, Board of Education policies, municipal ordinances, and state or federal laws;
 4. Materials which promote popularity contests, games of chance, raffles, or lotteries;
 5. Materials which attack individuals, ethnic, religious, or racial groups, whether within or without the school;
 6. Publications which aim to create hostility and violence in the school or community; and
 7. Political endorsements.
- D. Religious, political, or philosophical student organizations that have met the requirements for official recognition must include a disclaimer on any printed literature distributed.
- E. Violation of any of the above conditions will result in penalties for the violators and may disqualify the club or organization from recognition.

Legal Reference

O.C.G.A. 20-02-0705	Parental consent for participation in school clubs and organizations
O.C.G.A. 20-02-0736	Student codes of conduct; distribution
20 USC 7905	Equal Access to Public School Facilities
20 USC 4071	Equal Access Act
34 CFR 75, 76, 108	Equal Access to Public School Facilities for the Boy Scouts of America and Other Designated Youth Groups
36 USC 10101, et seq.	Patriotic and National Organizations