

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS**

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The Avery County Board of Education encourages the community and parents to be involved in and support the schools and the educational program.

### **A. Opportunities to Visit the Schools**

To encourage involvement, the following opportunities are provided to visit the schools.

1. Visitors are welcome at the schools to observe and learn about the educational program at each school subject to reasonable rules developed by school administrators;
2. Visitors are encouraged to use school facilities made available to the public, such as the media centers or meeting space, as provided in board policy 5030, Community Use of Facilities; and
3. Visitors are invited to attend public events, such as athletic events, musical programs, and dramatic productions.

### **B. Requirements of Visitors to the Schools**

While the school board welcomes visitors to the schools, the paramount concern of the board is to provide a safe, orderly learning environment in which disruptions to instructional time are kept to a minimum. The superintendent and each principal shall establish and enforce reasonable rules to address this concern.

1. All school visitors during the school day must report immediately to the administrative office at the school to request and receive permission to be in the school. Each principal is responsible for ensuring that signs are posted in the school to notify visitors of this requirement.
2. School visitors are expected to comply with all school rules and school board policies including policy 5025, Prohibition of Drugs and Alcohol; policy 5026/7250 Smoking and Tobacco Products; and policy 5027/7275, Weapons and Explosives Prohibited.
3. Persons who are subject to policy 5022, Registered Sex Offenders, must comply with the provision of that policy.

### **C. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF PROBATION OFFICERS**

To minimize disruption to student learning and school operations, the board establishes the following additional requirements for visits by probation officers during the school day:

1. Probation officers may not visit students on school property during school hours unless the visit is conducted through the Section of Community Corrections' School Partnership Program.
2. Visits by probation officers must be authorized in advance by the school principal or designee or be the result of a request for assistance by a school counselor or school resource officer. The principal or designee at each school shall coordinate with probation officers to plan and schedule visits to occur at times least disruptive to the student's academic schedule and to school operations.
3. To protect the privacy of students, the principal or designee shall designate a private area for probation officers to meet with students away from contact with the general student population. Initial contact with the student will be made by a designated school employee, who shall direct the student to the private area to meet with the probation officer.
4. Probation officers may not initiate direct contact with any student while the student is in class or between classes.
5. All visits must be conducted in accordance with this policy and any additional guidelines developed by the superintendent or designee.

**D. UNAUTHORIZED, DISRUPTIVE, OR DANGEROUS VISITORS**

If a school employee becomes aware that an individual is in a school without having received permission, or the individual exhibits unusual, threatening, or dangerous behavior, the employee must either direct the individual to the administrative office or notify the principal, designee, or the school resource officer, depending on the circumstances.

If a school employee suspects that an individual is on school property in violation of policy 5022, Registered Sex Offenders, the employee must immediately notify the principal, designee, or school resource officer.

Students shall be instructed to notify school employee of any unusual or suspicious behavior by visitors. School employees shall inform the principal or designee immediately of a student's report of suspicious behavior on the part of the school visitor.

When an individual disrupts the educational environment, acts in a disorderly manner, damages school property, or violates board policy or the law, the principal or designee has authority to:

1. order the individual to leave school property;
2. notify law enforcement; or

3. take any other action deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Failure to comply with a request to leave school grounds may result in the filing of trespass charges or other charges as appropriate against the offending individual.

The superintendent, upon recommendation from the principal, may deny an individual permission to come onto school grounds or enter a school facility for up to one school year if the individual is guilty of disruptive or dangerous behavior on school grounds.

Legal References: G.S. 14-132, -132.2, -159.11, -159.12, 159.13, -208.18; 115C-46.2, -523, -524, -526

Cross References: Registered Sex Offenders (policy 5022), Prohibition of Drugs and Alcohol (policy 5025), Smoking and Tobacco Products (policy 5026/7250), Weapons and Explosives Prohibited (policy 5027/7275), Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030)

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