

ARTICLE IV: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

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POLICY 7-4.1 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: GENERALLY

Generally

Many student activities are extracurricular and supplement the regular school curriculum. Extracurricular activities are voluntary and do not carry credit toward graduation. They take the form of special interest groups, honor societies, athletic teams, and other extensions of classroom work. All extracurricular activities are designed to promote character, building qualities of participation and leadership ability. Extracurricular activities and the eligibility requirements shall be approved by the division superintendent and School Board as required by Virginia's accreditation standards. All student organizations and activities shall be under the direct supervision of the school principal or his designee. They should be evaluated periodically to ensure that interruptions of the instructional programs are avoided. Students should not be permitted to engage in such organizations and activities if doing so is a detriment to their classroom work.

Supervision

Each Poquoson City Public School administration shall appoint members of the faculty to serve as sponsors for each activity. The sponsor shall be responsible for the guidance and general supervision of the activity and shall ensure that all actions conform to School Board policies and regulations.

Permission by School Principal

The actions and activities of each organization must be approved by the school principal.

Parental Permission

In each instance when an organization schedules an activity away from school, parents will be notified and written permission obtained when appropriate.

Evaluation and Approval

The division superintendent or his designees shall periodically evaluate the extracurricular activities program to ensure compliance with all applicable law, including Virginia accreditation standards.

Restrictions

The School Board authorizes each school principal to develop and implement a point system regulating and limiting participation of individual students in activities and organizations.

Compliance - Virginia High School League

All athletic, forensic, debating, public speaking, reading, spelling, and school publication activities shall be conducted, where applicable, in strict accordance with the rules and regulations established by the Virginia High School League. In addition, students must meet Poquoson academic standards. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, persons of school age who reside on a military or naval reservation with military-owned housing located wholly or partly within the geographical boundaries of multiple school divisions shall be deemed eligible for interscholastic programs immediately upon enrollment in a public elementary or secondary school in any of the aforementioned school divisions, provided that such persons (i) satisfy all other requirements for eligibility and (ii) are dependents of a military service member required by the military to live on the military installation as evidenced by a statement on command letterhead signed by, or by direction of, the service member's commanding officer.

Academic Standards for Students Participating in Interscholastic Activities

All students participating in interscholastic competition in athletics, forensics, debate, public speaking, and school publications shall meet, where applicable, the eligibility requirements of the Virginia High School League.

Athletics

Interscholastic athletic programs shall be available to all eligible high school and middle school students. Interscholastic athletic activities shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of the Virginia High School League as approved by the School Board. The primary consideration in all decisions regarding student athletics shall be the safety, health and welfare of the student. The School Board may provide partial financial support and transportation and shall approve any new interscholastic athletic programs.

Cheerleading is an interscholastic athletic program at Poquoson High School. Therefore, all cheerleading, including sideline cheering and competitive cheering, shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of the Virginia High School League as approved by the School Board.

Elementary Schools

Elementary schools shall not sponsor interscholastic competitive sports programs and shall not allow the school name to be used as a team designation in a program conducted by another agency. Elementary school students may participate in interschool competitive sports at the middle school level.

Intramural Activities

Intramural activities should be an integral part of the physical education program provided to meet the needs and interests of students. This program should be developed cooperatively with the principal, teachers, and resource personnel. Intramural programs should be as extensive as facilities, sponsoring and coaching personnel, finance and interest will allow within the confines of the philosophy and aims of the total school program. The intramural program shall be supervised by the principal or his designee.

Middle School Student-Athlete

No public middle school student shall be a participant or try out for any school athletic team or squad with a predetermined roster, regular practices, and scheduled competitions with other middle schools unless such student has submitted to the school principal a signed report from a licensed physician, a licensed nurse practitioner practicing in accordance with his practice agreement, or a licensed physician assistant acting under the supervision of a licensed physician attesting that such student has been examined, within the preceding 12 months, and found to be physically fit for athletic competition.

Concussions

GENERALLY

The Poquoson School Board is committed to ensuring that any student who sustains a head injury and/or is suspected of sustaining a concussion is properly diagnosed, given adequate time to heal, and is comprehensively supported until he or she is symptom free. This policy shall be updated biennially in accordance with Board of Education guidelines on policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes. Concussion management is based on physical and cognitive rest until symptoms resolve, followed by a graded program of exertion prior to medical clearance and return to play. The division superintendent is authorized to develop regulations for the implementation of this policy, consistent with applicable law (the "Concussion Regulation").

DEFINITIONS

Concussion: A brain injury that is characterized by an onset of impairment of cognitive and/or physical functioning, and is caused by a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head (i.e., a helmet to the head, being knocked to the ground.) A concussion can occur with or without a loss of consciousness. The effects of repeated concussions can be cumulative. After a concussion there is a period in which the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. If an athlete sustains a second concussion during this period, the risk of permanent brain injury increases significantly (i.e. “second impact syndrome”).

Appropriate Licensed Health Care Provider: A physician, physician’s assistant, osteopath or athletic trainer licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine; a neuropsychologist licensed by the Board of Psychology; or a nurse practitioner licensed by the Virginia State Board of Nursing.

Return to Learn: Instructional modifications that support a controlled, progressive increase in cognitive activities while the student recovers from a brain injury (i.e. concussion) allowing the student to participate in classroom activities and learn without worsening symptoms and potentially delaying healing.

Return to Play: Participation in a non-medically supervised practice or athletic competition.

REQUIREMENTS

In order to participate in any extracurricular athletic activity, each student athlete and the student athlete’s parent or guardian shall annually review information on concussions provided by the school division. After reviewing the material describing the short and long term health effects of concussions, each student athlete and the student athlete’s parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt, review and understanding of such information.

Any student suspected of sustaining a head injury or concussion shall immediately be removed from the activity and shall not return to play that same day and until (a) evaluated by an appropriate licensed health care provider, and (b) being in receipt of written clearance to return to play from such licensed health care provider. This includes any student suspected of sustaining a head injury or concussion at any school-sponsored event (e.g. during physical education classes or recess). The Concussion Regulation shall include a protocol for student athletes to return to play that is consistent with that recommended by the Virginia Board of Education Guidelines regarding Concussions in Student-Athletes (the “Guidelines”), and shall specifically prohibit any member of a school athletic team from participating in any athletic event or practice the same day he or she is injured when he or she (a) exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors attributable to a concussion; or (b) has been diagnosed with a concussion. Further, the protocol shall include provisions for the student athlete’s return to athletic participation in the days after he or she experiences a concussion consistent with such Guidelines.

The Concussion Regulation shall also include a Return to Learn protocol for students that requires school personnel be alert to cognitive and academic issues that may be experienced by a student who has suffered a concussion or other head injury, including (a) difficulty with concentration, organization, and long-term and short-term memory; (b) sensitivity to bright lights and sounds; and (iii) short-term problems with speech and language, reasoning, planning and problem solving. The Return to Learn protocol shall provide accommodation for a gradual return to full participation in academic activities of a student who has suffered a concussion or other head injury as appropriate, based on the recommendation of the student’s licensed health care provider as to the appropriate amount of time that such student needs to be away from the classroom, and otherwise be consistent with the Guidelines.

Coaches will be concussion certified no later than the first day of their respective seasons. The Concussion Regulation shall prescribe the training required of all coaches, athletic directors, relevant staff and volunteers, meeting the objectives provided in and utilizing training materials and schedules endorsed by the Guidelines.

Physical education teachers are required to review and complete the National Federation of State High School Association concussion training by September 1 of each school year. (www.nfhslearn.com)

The Concussion Regulation shall include a provision that, beginning at a time specified by the division superintendent and his or her staff, all seventh grade and older athletes will be administered a baseline test (the Immediate Post Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (IMPACT) or a comparable test) prior to the first athletic practice of any season in which each athlete participates, by a qualified staff member. The Concussion Regulation shall further provide that such tests will be given in the eighth, ninth and eleventh grades thereafter and to any newly enrolled student athlete. Finally, the Concussion Regulation shall provide that post injury IMPACT testing will be administered to any athlete suspected of having a head injury.

High school athletic trainers in the Poquoson City Public Schools will use standardized measurement tools to assess all head injuries at high school athletic events, as further outlined in the Concussion Regulation. High school athletic trainers may refer the student athlete back to the student's evaluating physician at any point during the Return to Play period, as further outlined in the Concussion Regulation.

All helmets must be National Operating Committee of Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) certified by the manufacturer at the time of purchase. Reconditioned helmets must be NOCSAE recertified by the re-conditioner.

Poquoson City Public Schools will make every effort to provide materials related to concussion management to organizations sponsoring athletic activities for student athletes on school property on the Poquoson City Public Schools website.

A concussion policy team that includes, at a minimum, a school administrator, athletic administrator, appropriate licensed health care provider, coach, parent, and student shall refine and review this policy and the Concussion Regulation on an annual basis.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention

In order to participate in any extracurricular activity, each student-athlete and the student athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information provided by the School Board on symptoms that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest. After reviewing the materials, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information, in a manner approved by the Board of Education.

Any student-athlete who is experiencing symptoms that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest be immediately removed from play. A student-athlete that is removed from play shall not return to play until he is evaluated by and receives written clearance to return to physical activity by an appropriate licensed health care provider as determined by the Board of Education. The licensed health care provider evaluating student-athletes may be a volunteer.

This policy will be biennially updated and incorporate guidelines developed by the Board of Education to inform and educate coaches, student-athletes, and student-athletes' parents or guardians about the nature and risk of sudden cardiac arrest, procedures for removal from and return to play, and the risks of not reporting symptoms.

See Superintendent's Regulation 7-4.1.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-5, 22.1-70, 22.1-78, 22.1-271.5, 22.1-271.8; Virginia Board of Education Rules Governing Accreditation of Public Schools in Virginia, 8 VAC 20-131-200, et seq.; Virginia High School League, Inc. Handbook; Virginia Board of Education "Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes".

Adopted: November 2002

Revised: June 2010, August 2011, August 2013, August 2019, June 2020

POLICY 7-4.2 SPORTSMANSHIP, ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

The Poquoson City School Board recognizes the importance of extracurricular activities in the educational process and the values that students develop when they have the opportunity to participate in an organized activity outside of the traditional classroom.

Participants and responsible adults involved in School Board approved extracurricular activities are expected to demonstrate the same level of responsibility and behavior at practice and competitions as is expected in the classroom. The School Board further encourages the development and promotion of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity in all phases of the educational process and in all segments of the community, including administrators, participants, adult supervisors, parents, fans, spirit groups and support/booster groups.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-176(B), 22.1-207, 22.1-208, 22.1-208.01, 22.1-211, 22.1-253.13:1.

Adopted: November 2002

POLICY 7-4.3 STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Definition of Official School Publications

Official school publications such as newspapers, yearbooks, and literary magazines may be prepared in regularly scheduled classes and are components of the curriculum approved by the Poquoson City School Board. These publications are not intended to provide a public forum for students or the general public. In all instances related to these publications, the School Board will be the publisher, the principal will be the editor, the faculty sponsor will be co-editor, and students appointed by the co-editor may serve as assistant editors and journalists.

Responsibilities of Student Editors and Journalists

Student editors and journalists shall be responsible for preparing and writing factual material that is not obscene, defamatory, or an invasion of privacy or which:

1. is reasonably foreseeable to lead to the substantial disruption of school activities or to endanger the health or safety of students or staff;
2. advocates the commission of an unlawful act or the violation of a lawful school policy or regulation;
3. advertises or advocates illegal products or services; or
4. advocates prejudice, hatred, violence, or harassment on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ancestry or disability.

Responsibilities of Student Publications Faculty Co-Editor

School publications faculty co-editors shall instruct students in the Code of Ethics of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and help students to understand and follow it. Faculty members shall instruct students in correct and appropriate journalistic techniques and consult with the principal (editor) on material that may violate the law or the journalism Code of Ethics. Material that may be considered controversial by some members of the school community should be carefully considered by students and the faculty editor, and brought to the attention of the principal (editor).

Responsibilities of the School Principal (Editor)

The school principal is responsible for approving all publications in accordance with School Board policy and his judgment and discretion.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Hazelwood School Dist. v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 261, 108 S.Ct. 562, 98 L.Ed.2d 592 (1988).

Adopted: November 2002

Revised: July 2005

POLICY 7-4.4 ASSEMBLIES

The Poquoson City School Board encourages the use of assembly programs for the purpose of providing worthwhile educational experiences. These programs shall be well planned in order to benefit a large number of students. Principals should encourage a number of varied programs, such as cultural, informative and honor assemblies.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-79.

Adopted: November 2002

POLICY 7-4.5 CLUBS AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Generally

Students shall be given opportunities to join various clubs and organizations in the Poquoson City Public Schools. Such organizations may meet on school premises during non-instructional time. The objective of these clubs and organizations shall be to provide worthwhile goals for attainment by the students while maintaining a close relationship with the regular school program. All activities not specifically approved by the division superintendent or school principal are prohibited. Furthermore, club initiations which embarrass, ridicule, physically abuse or intimidate students are prohibited.

Student-Initiated Organizations

Curriculum-related student organizations serve as an extension of the regular school curriculum. Their function is to enhance the participants' educational experience and supplement the course materials within the educational program of the schools. The activities of these organizations should bear a clear relationship to the regular curriculum. Student organizations meeting these criteria and approved by the principal shall be deemed to be officially recognized, school-sponsored student organizations.

Secondary school students are also permitted to organize and conduct meetings of non-curriculum-related organizations to pursue activities outside of the school curriculum, subject to the provisions of this policy. Such organizations must be student-initiated and directed, and school personnel, parents and any other persons who are not students enrolled in the school division are prohibited from directing, controlling, conducting or regularly attending the meetings of such organizations, except that the faculty sponsor(s)/supervisor(s) must attend all meetings. Non-curriculum-related student organizations that are student-initiated shall not be deemed to be school sponsored or endorsed. The fact that such organizations are permitted to conduct meetings under this policy shall not constitute an expression of school division support for the purposes of such organizations or the content of any meetings thereof.

Membership

Membership in all student-initiated organizations shall be open to and limited to all students currently enrolled in the sponsoring school on a voluntary basis. These student organizations may establish academic qualifications for membership where necessarily related to the purposes of the organization. No student shall be denied membership on account of his race, color, national origin or religion.

Faculty Supervision

Curriculum-related student organizations shall be sponsored and supervised by one or more of the members of the school faculty and approved by the principal. Faculty sponsors shall participate in the supervision and direction of all activities of the organization and shall attend all meetings.

Non-curriculum-related student organizations that are student-initiated shall not have a faculty sponsor. However, a member of the school's professional staff shall attend every meeting or activity of such organizations in a non-participatory capacity for purposes of general supervision. The organization shall be responsible to assure the presence of a staff member for its meetings.

No school employee shall be compelled to attend a meeting of any student organization if the content of such meeting is contrary to the beliefs of that school employee. School employees present at any meeting of a non-curriculum-related student organization which includes religious worship, prayer or practice or is identified as having a religious purpose shall attend in a non-participatory capacity only.

Meetings of Student Organizations

All student organizations shall have the right to meet on school premises during non-instructional time as designated by the school principal. No student organization shall be denied equal access to school facilities

during designated meeting times on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical or other content of the speech at the meetings of such organization. No public funding or support shall be extended to any non-curriculum-related student organization other than the opportunity to meet on school premises on an equal basis as other student organizations.

The principal of each school shall develop guidelines and rules concerning the procedure for scheduling meetings of student organizations and setting the times and facilities which are available for such meetings. Meeting times shall be limited to non-instructional time before or after regular classroom hours or during established activities periods. These guidelines and rules shall be made available to all students. Student organizations wishing to conduct meetings under this policy must make application to the principal for permission in accordance with school division procedures.

Compliance with Law and Policy

Student organizations shall not engage in any activity which: is contrary to law, School Board policy or school rules; disrupts or clearly threatens to disrupt the orderly operation of the school; or would adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of any students or staff members. Failure to comply with these provisions shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

Sororities, Fraternities and Secret Societies

Sororities, fraternities, clubs or secret societies whose membership depends on the permission of the group rather than the free choice of the qualified student will not be permitted to operate in any school in this school division.

Candidates for Office

It shall be clearly understood by any student running for office or for any honorary position that he/she represents the whole student body and that, if elected or appointed, he/she will work with all students regardless of race, religion or personal prejudices.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-70, 22.1-78; Virginia Board of Education Rules Governing Accreditation of Public Schools in Virginia, 8 VAC 20-131-200, et seq.; 20 USC §§ 7071, et seq., Equal Access Act.

Adopted: November 2002

POLICY 7-4.6 SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The principal and faculty sponsors must approve all social activities sponsored by the school. All school-sponsored dances, parties, and social activities must be limited to students of the school and invited guests approved by the school principal. These functions must be chaperoned by school personnel designated by the principal, and when deemed appropriate by the principal, parents will be encouraged to attend.

Adopted: November 2002

POLICY 7-4.7 STUDENT VEHICLES

Automobiles

The division superintendent or his/her designee may establish guidelines for students driving vehicles to school.

Bicycles

The division superintendent or his/her designee may establish guidelines for students riding bicycles to school. Bicycles may not be ridden during the school day.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-79.

Adopted November 2002

POLICY 7-4.8 STUDENT VOTER REGISTRATION

The Poquoson City School Board shall provide to any enrolled student who is of voting age or is eligible to register to vote pursuant to § 24.2-403 (i) mail voter registration applications and voter registration information provided by the Department of Elections or (ii) access to the Virginia online voter registration system on a school-owned computing device that is accessible to such student. Each student who is eligible to register to vote shall be provided the opportunity to complete an application form during the normal course of the school day.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-203.4

Adopted: June 2020