

# Thetford Town School District

## **Code A21 Public Participation at Board Meetings (Recommended)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the board to encourage public participation at its meetings.

### **Background**

Public participation is very important to the successful function of the Thetford Town School District. The board wants to carry out its business with the benefit of public input and expertise. It also wants to keep the public informed and up-to-date on what is happening in the community's schools.

### **Implementation Need to craft the reasonable rules of participation.**

Reasonable rules of participation may be used to ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly fashion and that the business at hand is completed in a timely manner. Such rules may take into consideration such things as length of each speaker's presentation and the number of times each speaker may comment.

### **Persons Who May Address the Board**

1. Any district resident
2. School staff members, students and parents
3. Individuals who have been requested by the superintendent or the board to present a given subject
4. Persons who are directly affected by matters on the board agenda
5. Others at the discretion of the board

### **Public Comment on Agenda Items**

1. The chair will ask for comments on agenda items before action is taken by the board.
2. When the number of people wishing to speak is large, the board may authorize the chair to use a speakers' list. Members of the public will be given an opportunity to sign the speakers' list, indicating which agenda item will be addressed.

### **Public input on items not on the agenda**

1. There will be time set aside for public input on items not on the agenda at every regular, special or emergency meeting of the board.
2. The time allotted to this item will be assigned by the chair or the person responsible for organizing the agenda.
3. The chair shall rule out of order any presentation to the board which breaches the privacy or other rights of students, parents or school employees, or which does not comply with Board policy on complaints.

## Thetford Town School District

### **CODE: A22 Notice of Non-Discrimination**

(Recommended)

**Date Warned:** 4-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

### Policy

The board will not unlawfully discriminate in its programs and activities against any person or group on any basis prohibited by federal or state law, and will provide equal access to ~~the Boy Scouts~~ groups that abide by non-discrimination policies and other designated youth groups.

The district shall make reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified handicapped applicant or employee unless the district can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of its program or activity.

The superintendent or his or her designee shall prepare, and the board shall approve, guidance to applicants and employees regarding requests for reasonable accommodations, including provisions for undue hardship.

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Blue Mountain Union School District are hereby notified that this district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, political affiliation or marital status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities and provides equal access to ~~the Boy Scouts~~ groups that abide by non-discrimination policies and other designated youth groups.

A person has been designated by the Thetford Town School District to coordinate the district's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other non-discrimination laws or regulations. The designated coordinator is identified in the procedure accompanying this policy along with information on how that person may be contacted.

Any person having inquiries concerning the Thetford Town School District's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 or other state or federal non-discrimination laws or regulations is directed to contact the non-discrimination coordinator described above.

### Grievance Procedure

In the absence of a controlling grievance procedure outlined in a collective bargaining agreement the procedure accompanying this policy will be in effect.



## Thetford Town School District

### **CODE A24 Board/Superintendent Relationship (Recommended)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

#### **Policy**

The School Board establishes policy and governs through the policy it creates. The Superintendent manages all operations of the school system in accordance with School Board policies.

~~The Board recognizes and values the Superintendent's experience and expertise in instructional and administrative matters. The Superintendent recognizes and values the Board's experience in issues related to the Thetford Town School District (/Supervisory Union) and the Board's connections and responsibilities to the community it represents.~~

The Superintendent and the Board members respect the confidentiality of communication in both directions and work toward open communication and trust. The Superintendent works only for the Board as a whole, not for any individual member. Only decisions of the Board acting as a body are binding on the Superintendent.

Board members work directly with the Superintendent and central office staff, so long as such communication is clearly not giving direction or suggesting a course of action that staff perceives as direction. When presented with citizen concerns, Board members refer them to appropriate levels of authority, in accordance with the district's policy on complaints.

The Board directs the Superintendent through written policies that prescribe the results the Board wants to achieve. The Board is realistic in setting expectations about what can be accomplished, given the school district's (/supervisory union's) available resources. The Superintendent is accountable to the Board for the performance of staff.

Annually, the Board evaluates the Superintendent's performance. The Superintendent is accountable to the School Board for the achievement of the Board's goals. The Board is responsible for clearly setting forth and communicating its expectations before evaluation takes place. The Board will evaluate the Superintendent's job performance in a way that is systematic, fair, and effective.

## Thetford Town School District

### **CODE B22 Complaints About Personnel & Instructional Materials (Recommended)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

#### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Thetford Town School District to see that complaints about school personnel are considered in a timely manner that is fair to all parties. The district places trust in its employees and desires to support their actions in such a manner that employees are freed from unnecessary, spiteful, or unjustified criticism or complaints.

#### **Resolving Complaints**

The complainant shall be encouraged first to bring a complaint to the individual concerned. If the problem cannot be resolved with the individual concerned, it should be brought to the attention of the immediate supervisor or administrator. The ~~complaint~~ complainant should be in writing stating the issues and supporting facts. The individual employee involved shall be given every opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of the facts as he/she sees them.

If the issue is not resolved by involvement of the immediate supervisor, the complainant may refer the issue to the principal for his or her review and decision. In the event the principal's review does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, the complainant may submit the issue to the superintendent for review and decision.

In cases of alleged discrimination, the complainant should follow the procedures accompanying the district's anti-discrimination policy.

#### **Appeal to the Board**

If the above steps do not resolve the concern of the complainant, he/she may request a session of the board for the purpose of reviewing the superintendent's decision. If the school board decides to hear the request of the complainant, it shall invite all parties involved including the appropriate school and supervisory union administrators to attend a meeting for purposes of presenting facts, making further explanations, and clarifying the issue. The board shall conduct such meetings in a fair and just manner and shall render a decision.

It is the intent of the board that the rights of employees under collective bargaining agreements and Vermont law be protected through the administration of this policy.

# Thetford Town School District

## **CODE C20 Student Conduct and Discipline (Recommended)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Thetford Town School District to maintain a safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environment via a system of classroom and school management practices, supported by consistent, clear and fair disciplinary procedures. The goal of this policy is to create an environment where the rules for student behavior are clearly stated, are understood and accepted by students and staff, and are applied in compliance with due process requirements. This policy is to be applied in conjunction with the school's overall discipline plan developed pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 1161a.

### **Definitions**

- 1) **Weapon** means a device, instrument, material or substance whether animate or inanimate, which, when used as it is intended to be used, is known to be capable of producing death or serious bodily injury.
- 2) **School** means any setting which is under the control and supervision of the School District. It includes school grounds, facilities, and school-sponsored events whether held on or off of school grounds and vehicles used to transport students to and from school or school activities.
- 3) **Expelled** means the termination of educational services for the remainder of the school year or up to 90 school days, whichever is longer.
- 4) **Knife** means any instrument that is capable of ready use as a stabbing weapon that may inflict bodily injury or death.

### **Relation to Other Policies:**

Any and all student conduct covered by the prohibitions outlined under Code C5 Firearms Policy, shall be addressed solely by its terms, and shall not be handled by any other policy related to "weapons" generally.

### **Student Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of each student to contribute to a safe and productive learning environment in the school by demonstrating respect and consideration for fellow students and adults. This includes complying with all policies and rules of conduct of the school district and individual classrooms.

### **Administrative Responsibilities**

The principal, in consultation with the educational staff, will develop an overall discipline plan pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §1161a.

Any student conduct or student statement (oral or written) giving rise to a reasonable fear of an imminent threat at school or at a school sponsored activity, shall be a violation of this policy. A reasonable fear of an imminent threat shall be determined based on the totality of the known relevant circumstances at the time and will be deemed to exist in any case resulting in administrative and/or law enforcement response taken to secure the safety and security of the students and/or the campus.

The plan will include clear guidelines for student behavior. The guidelines may include provisions for the suspension or expulsion of students who engage in misconduct on school property, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored activity when the misconduct makes the continued presence of the student harmful to the welfare of the school. The guidelines may also include provisions for the suspension or expulsion of students who engage in misconduct not on school property, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored activity where direct harm to the school can be demonstrated or where the misconduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's equal access to educational programs.

The guidelines for student behavior will also include prohibitions against the possession by students of knives, weapons and dangerous instruments while at school, **on a school bus**, and shall allow disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for violations of the prohibition against knives, weapons and dangerous instruments that are not possessed at school as part of an educational program sponsored or sanctioned by the school.

Behavioral expectations, and the consequences of misconduct, will be stated in the student handbook and other publications distributed to students and parents/guardians.

## Thetford Town School District

### **CODE C21 Search and Seizure of Students by School Personnel (Recommended)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

### **POLICY**

#### **Searches of School Property**

The school retains the right to examine its property at any time when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the examination may reveal evidence of a violation of law or of school rules. Desks, lockers, textbooks, computers, and other materials or supplies loaned by the school to students remain the property of the school, and may be opened and inspected by school employees at any time.

#### **Search and Seizure of Student and Student Property**

Searches of students' persons, personal effects and vehicles may be conducted where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting at the time of initiating the search that the search will reveal evidence of a violation of law or of school rules. The superintendent or his or her designee may consult with legal counsel when considering whether or how to conduct a search of a student's person, personal effects or vehicle.

The superintendent shall develop procedures to ensure that all searches and seizures of students and student property are conducted in a manner that complies with state and federal constitutional protections against unreasonable searches and seizures of students and student property in schools.

Copies of this policy will be distributed to students when they enroll in school, and will be included in the student handbook given to students and parents at the beginning of each school year.

## Thetford Town School District

### **CODE C22 Student Activities (Elementary) (Recommended)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

#### **Policy**

The school will maintain a student activity program appropriate to the maturity of students and as varied as staff and facilities permit. The program will be designed to offer for the greatest number of students worthwhile leisure time interests, wholesome recreational and social activity, and opportunities to develop skills in democratic and cooperative management for these activities.

#### **Implementation**

The following criteria for eligibility for participation in school sponsored activities are intended to set standards for academic eligibility.

1. Students should be in good disciplinary standing as determined by the principal.
2. Students should be in regular attendance and should be in attendance on the day of the activity unless excused by the principal.
- ~~3. The rules and regulations of the Vermont Principals' Association will be followed for the activities of seventh and eighth grade students.~~

The board will approve new requests for co-curricular activity sponsorship based on the following considerations.

1. The level of student interest in the activity;
2. The fiscal ramifications of sponsorship;
3. The availability of qualified personnel to supervise the activity;
4. The impact of adding or eliminating the activity on the balance of types of activities available in the total activity program;
5. The potential of the activity to help participating students meet the goals of the school's curriculum; and
6. The recommendation of the superintendent.

All school sponsored activities will be under the ultimate control of the school district and will comply with all policies and procedures of the school.

## Thetford Town School District

### **CODE C25 Admission of Non-Resident Tuition Students (Recommended)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

#### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Thetford Town School District to assure that non-resident students are admitted to the schools of this district, when space is available, in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing tuition payment and non-discrimination. This policy shall not apply to students who are enrolled through the public high school choice program created by Act 129 of 2011(Adj. Sess.).

#### **Implementation**

4. Tuition: On or before January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, the school board shall establish non-resident tuition rates for the next school year ~~and shall notify the school board(s) of all sending school districts and the Secretary of Education of any proposed increase in tuition rates. Separate tuition rates may be established for elementary and secondary students, and for students who are eligible to participate in special education programs. Tuition rates will be established in accord with Chapter 21 of Title 16 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, and regulations of the State Board of Education.~~
2. Criteria for Admission: No non-resident will be denied admission as a tuition student if the reason for denial is that the student is disabled as defined in section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended or that the student is in need of special education services. Nor will any child be denied admission on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, **gender identity**, disability, age, marital status or any other classification protected by federal or state law.

Subject to the non-discrimination requirements above, a non-resident who applies for admission as a tuition student shall be admitted if space is available and, if the student has previously attended school, the student is in good standing at the school or schools most recently attended. Good standing shall be demonstrated when the applicant shows:

- that he/she has not been legally dismissed or suspended for more than ten days during the preceding twelve months for disciplinary reasons, and
- that he/she is making satisfactory progress toward the completion of an approved school or home study program, and

- that his/her school attendance record presents a reasonable likelihood that any existing attendance requirements of this school district will be met.

A non-resident who is unable to provide evidence of good standing may be admitted as a non-resident tuition student if it is the determination of the superintendent, based on information presented by the non-resident, that there is a reasonable likelihood that the applicant will benefit from and succeed in the programs offered by the schools in this district.

### **Appeal**

A non-resident applicant for admission as a tuition student may appeal the superintendent's denial of his or her application by submitting a written request to appeal to the board within ten days of the denial. The board will provide an opportunity for the applicant and/or his or her parent or guardian to discuss the request not to uphold the decision of the superintendent. The board will render a decision within 30 days of the request to appeal.

### **Payment of Tuition**

Tuition for non-resident students shall be payable at any time prior to enrollment. When a student enrolls after the beginning of a semester, tuition for the student will be prorated accordingly and will be payable immediately.

# Thetford Town School District

## **CODE C27 Student Self-Expression and Student Distribution of Literature (Recommended)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Thetford Town School District to allow limited distribution of non-school sponsored literature on school grounds or at school events by students. Accordingly, the Superintendent/Principal may allow students to distribute these materials so long as they are in compliance with this policy.

**Non-school sponsored literature means** any printed, written, or electronic materials prepared by non-school organizations or individuals that are not made as a part of the curricular or approved extracurricular programs of the district. They include such things as fliers, invitations, announcements, pamphlets, posters, photographs, pictures, audio recordings, digital recordings, and electronic messages. Materials prepared under the supervision of school staff as part of classroom instruction or classroom activities are not restricted by this policy.

**Distribution means** circulating non-school sponsored literature in ways that include: handing to others on school property or during school-sponsored events; posting on school property such as walls, bulletin boards, and district web-sites; placing upon desks, tables, on or in lockers; or making available in principal's office.

This policy prohibits the distribution of literature that:

- A. Is obscene, vulgar, or profane, or harms the reputation of others;
- B. Violates federal, state or local laws;
- C. Advocates the use or availability of tobacco, alcohol, **marijuana**, or illegal drugs;
- D. Incites violence;
- E. Interferes with or advocates interference with the orderly operation of the schools;
- F. Primarily seeks to advertise for sale products or services; or
- G. Has fundraising as its primary purpose.

When a student wishes to distribute copies of non-school sponsored literature, the materials must include the name of the person or organization sponsoring the literature, and shall be submitted to the superintendent/principal to review ahead of time in order to confirm that the literature does not fall in one of the prohibited categories listed above.

The superintendent/principal does not need to review the literature ahead of time when the materials will be distributed by a student to other attendees of a student group meeting at school during non-instructional time. However, even in these cases, students must ensure that the materials do not fall into one of the prohibited categories.

**The superintendent/principal may place reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on the distribution of non-school sponsored literature.** However, the administrator cannot use these restrictions or others to discriminate as to the point of view reflected in the materials.

### **Student Self-Expression**

Students have a right to express themselves on school property and at school functions through speech or expressive actions, provided they do not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly operation of the school and the rights of others.

This policy prohibits student self-expression that:

- A. Is obscene, vulgar, or profane, or harms the reputation of others;
- B. Violates federal, state or local laws;
- C. Advocates the use or availability of tobacco, alcohol, **marijuana**, or illegal drugs;
- D. Incites violence; or
- E. Interferes with or advocates interference with the orderly operation of the schools.

The situation in which students express themselves may affect the amount of freedom they are given in their speech. If the speech is part of a school-sponsored publication, when a reasonable person would think that the speech is endorsed by the school district, the school district may exercise more control. School district representatives may have editorial control over the style and content of student speech in school-sponsored activities, such as class work or a school newspaper, so long as their edits are reasonably related to legitimate school-related concerns.

# Thetford Town School District

## **CODE C29 District Equity Policy (Recommended Policy)**

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

### **Policy**

The Thetford Town School District (District) is committed to the success of every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, family economics, class, geography, ability, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or initial proficiencies. The Thetford Town School Board (Board) holds itself and all District and school-site decision-makers, faculty, and support staff accountable for building a District-wide commitment to equity. The District will incorporate principles of equity within all policies, programs, operations, practices, and resource allocations.

### **Definitions**

**Equity:** Each student receives the resources and educational opportunities they need to learn and thrive.

- Equity means that a student's success is not predicted nor predetermined by characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, family economics, class, geography, ability, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or initial proficiencies.
- Equity means that every school provides and every student has access to high quality culturally responsive curriculum, programs, teachers and administrators, extracurricular activities and support services to meet the needs of each and every student.
- Equity goes beyond formal equality where all students are treated the same. Achieving equity may require an unequal distribution of resources and services.
- Equity involves acknowledging and disrupting inequitable practices, acknowledging biases, employing practices that reflect the reality that all students will learn, and creating inclusive multicultural school environments for adults and children.

**Culturally Responsive Practices:** The beliefs, methods, and practices that support and empower all students socially, emotionally, intellectually, and civically by leveraging students' lived experiences to ensure learning.

### **Implementation**

To realize this commitment to equity, the District will:

- Systematically use District-wide and individual school-level data, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, and socioeconomic background to inform District decision-making;
- Provide every student with equitable access to high-quality and culturally relevant

instruction, curriculum, support, facilities, technology and other educational resources that respect their individual identities, cultures, backgrounds, abilities and experiences;

- Monitor and evaluate the individual needs of schools and distribute resources and effective personnel based on those needs;
- Incorporate the voice, culture and perspectives of students, staff, families, and communities that reflect student demographics and support and enhance student success;
- Identify and counteract biased practices that perpetuate achievement disparities and opportunity gaps;
- Provide ongoing and continuous professional development at all organizational levels to support employees to engage in culturally responsive practices and delivery of quality culturally relevant instruction;
- Incorporate the principle of equity into the District's strategic plan and identify measurable outcomes to prepare all students for college, career, and life.

The superintendent shall identify outcome indicators as necessary to monitor this policy and shall provide a ~~monthly, quarterly,~~ **annually** status report to the Board.

# Thetford Town School District

## CODE E20 Community Use of School Facilities (Recommended)

**Date Warned:** 04-13-21

**Date Adopted:**

**Date Revised:**

**Date Reviewed:**

***NOTE: Any School District permitting outside organizations or persons to use school facilities does so with the understanding that it may not restrict that use based on the nature and/or viewpoints of the requesting organization or persons. VSBA encourages Districts to consult with legal counsel to better understand their rights and obligations under this policy before adopting it.***

### Policy:

While the primary purpose of the school facilities is to educate students within this district, the school board recognizes that the facilities are a valuable community resource. Accordingly, the Superintendent may make school facilities available to individuals and community group without discrimination in accordance with this policy, provided the facilities are preserved for regular school activities.

Individuals and groups may use school facilities for the following purposes:

- A. Meetings by parent-teacher organizations and school booster organizations whose purpose is to support the operations of the schools and the school district;
- B. Meetings by employees' professional organizations comprised of school district employees;
- C. Instruction in any branch of education, learning, and the arts;
- D. Social, civic and recreational meetings, and entertainment, provided the events are open to the public;
- E. Civic forums and community centers, provided the events are open to the public;
- F. Recreation, physical training and athletics, including competitive athletic contests for children and adults;
- G. Private academic tutoring or music lessons;
- H. Child care programs;
- I. Meetings, entertainment and occasions where admission fees are charged, when the proceeds are to be spent for an educational or charitable purpose, and the events are open to the public.

The superintendent may deny an application for use of facilities or terminate an individual or group's use for:

- A. Uses that are likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to school operations;
- B. Events and meetings promoting or sponsored by a political party;
- C. Political campaign events by someone running for office;
- D. Uses that interfere with school district maintenance and repair of facilities;
- E. Uses that could damage special equipment in the facilities;
- F. Uses that could reasonably be expected to or actually do give rise to a riot or public disturbance;
- G. Events or meetings of private for-profit entities;
- H. Events at which fees are charged for profit;

- I. Uses where alcoholic beverages or unlawful drugs are sold, distributed, consumed, promoted or possessed; and
- J. Uses prohibited by law.

~~The Boy Scouts of America, Big Sisters of America, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Future Farmers of America, Girl Scouts of America, Little League Baseball, Inc.~~ Youth organizations that do not discriminate may use school facilities upon payment of and any other group intended to serve youth under the age of 21 listed in Title 36 of the U.S. Code may use school facilities upon payment of suitable fees and costs according to the district fee schedule.

The superintendent may place reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on the use of facilities.

The superintendent shall set a fee schedule and shall administer it in a manner that does not discriminate based on viewpoint. All users shall be required to demonstrate adequate insurance coverage and shall agree to hold the district harmless from any and all liability resulting from their use of the facilities. All users shall be required to make clear in all announcements and publicity that their events and activities are not sponsored by the school district.

The superintendent may allow individuals and groups to use special equipment, such as audiovisual equipment, provided that the group uses an operator of the equipment who is approved by the superintendent.