

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Policy K-6 Distribution of Non-School Materials

Arlington Public Schools is not a public forum and, therefore, is not a place where materials that are not a part of the curriculum or other school activities may be distributed, except as specifically provided herein. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all schools and departments enforce and adhere to this policy.

Arlington Public Schools only distributes materials, surveys, and questionnaires to students, parents/guardians, and staff that are created by or on behalf of Arlington Public Schools, the Arlington County Government, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) of Arlington Public Schools or Nonprofit Organizations as detailed below. For-profit organizations are unable to distribute materials through Arlington Public Schools.

Except as part of the school curriculum, no materials may be distributed electronically or on school property, except as set forth in this policy. Only the following five methods are available to distribute non-school related material within Arlington Public Schools:

1. Electronic distribution;
2. Posting electronic distribution and/or making flyers available in school buildings;
3. Distribution as part of authorized use of school facilities;
4. Distribution of materials produced or distributed by students as part of the instructional or authorized student activities; and
5. Distribution by outside entities on school property.

Arlington Public Schools does not approve any distribution of materials that advocates the election or defeat of any political candidate, the passage or defeat of any referendum question, or advocate the passage or defeat of any matter pending before a local school board, a local governing body, the General Assembly of Virginia, or the Congress of the United States.

Electronic Distribution

Electronic distribution is the process used to electronically distribute approved materials to students or parents/guardians providing materials to families through an Arlington Public Schools authorized electronic distribution system. The electronic distribution of materials is not available to outside groups during the first week of the school year, the last week of school, and during winter, spring and summer breaks.

Electronic distribution is used to distribute only those materials that are as follows:

1. Produced by or on behalf of Arlington Public Schools Departments and Offices or one or more individual schools and directly related to school business;
2. Produced by or on behalf of the Arlington County Government, the Commonwealth of Virginia or the U.S. Government and directly related to Arlington Public Schools or Arlington County business;
3. Produced by or on behalf of the Parent-Teacher Organizations of Arlington Public Schools and that are directly related to PTA business; or
4. Produced by a nonprofit organization under the further conditions and pre-approved by Arlington Public Schools as outlined further in this policy.

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No entities other than those listed above are permitted to electronically distribute materials to students, parents/guardians, and staff.

Nonprofit organizations are defined as entities that have provided evidence of their nonprofit and/or tax-exempt status, for federal tax purposes, to the Superintendent or designee. Other than fundraising materials, which are not accepted, nonprofits may request to have materials electronically distributed to schools. No nonprofit organization's materials shall be distributed more than five times per academic year.

Notwithstanding the above prohibition on fundraising materials, nonprofit organizations whose sole purpose is to support the educational or extracurricular activities of Arlington Public Schools, specifically the Arlington Outdoor Education Association and the Friends of Arlington's David M. Brown Planetarium, shall be permitted to distribute approved fundraising. Arlington Public Schools athletic, visual and performing arts booster clubs shall also be permitted to distribute fundraising materials to their school community using electronic distribution.

The Superintendent or designee shall state in the Policy Implementation Procedures when and how materials should be submitted in advance to enable distribution without undue disruption to school staff.

Posting and/or Making Flyers Available within School Buildings

Each principal or designee may designate the location(s) where the school will post notices and/or make available bulk distribution of flyers that outside groups request to be posted or made available to students. Such location(s) shall be available to all persons and groups on an equal basis, but the principal may, in writing, set forth time, place, and manner restrictions on the posting or making available of flyers. Only materials that meet the General Requirements section of this policy shall be posted or made available. Materials from nonprofit organizations may be posted or made available in school buildings if space is provided for this purpose and if preapproved by the Superintendent or designee as outlined in the General Requirements and Policy Implementation Procedures of this policy.

Principals shall not be required to make any such locations available for materials from non-school or Arlington Public Schools groups. If a Principal has not designated a time, place, and manner for the posting or distribution of flyers or notices at their school, then no person or group shall be permitted to post or distribute flyers at that particular school. Principals shall not discriminate based on the viewpoint or content of the material posted. If a Principal designates any place for outside groups to post flyers in a school, then all groups must have an equal opportunity to access this forum.

Distribution as Part of Authorized Use of School Facilities by Outside Groups

When outside entities have permission from the School Board, whether by lease, under Arlington Public Schools policy, or through other means, to use school facilities outside of school hours, each such outside entity – and not Arlington Public Schools – is responsible for its own material and may only distribute materials to participants of the outside group's activity and only during the scheduled activity. Material distributed by outside groups does not need to be pre-approved or include the disclaimer legend required for all Arlington Public Schools approved distribution.

Materials Produced or Distributed by Students

Materials produced by students as required course work or for authorized student activities (such as newspapers, yearbooks and literary magazines produced as part of a class) may be distributed under the direction and supervision of the teacher or sponsor.

Materials that students wish to post or distribute that are not part of the regular curriculum shall be distributed in accordance with the designated time, place, manner and/or restrictions and procedures required by the Principal or designee. Such restrictions and procedures will ensure that the distribution does not cause substantial disruption or interference with school activities, does not interfere with the rights of students, does not advocate the violation of law or Arlington Public Schools policy, and does not violate the General Requirements section of this policy. Before distributing materials at school and under the direction of their teacher or sponsor, students shall obtain the approval of the Principal or designee that the distribution complies with this policy.

General Requirements for Materials

Neither students nor school staff may be used to count, fold, or perform other tasks associated with the distribution of materials other than Arlington Public Schools or Arlington County publications.

Notwithstanding any general authority to distribute materials under this policy, where the means of distribution described above are available to entities other than students, Arlington Public Schools and the Arlington County government, permission to distribute materials shall be available only to nonprofit organizations that have provided evidence of their nonprofit status to the Superintendent or designee. The only for-profit entities that may have materials distributed are vendors of items that relate directly to the school programs and that are sold directly to students and parents, such as school pictures, class rings, graduation materials, and yearbooks.

Notwithstanding any general authority to distribute materials under this policy, no material shall be distributed on school grounds by any person or any group at any time that causes substantial disruption or interference with school activities; that interferes with the rights of students; that advocates the violation of law or Arlington Public Schools policy; or that contains obscene, libelous, or illegal material.

Any material to be distributed pursuant to this Policy by an entity other than Arlington Public Schools, Arlington County, or a PTA shall contain, in letters that are at least thirty percent as large as the largest print on the notice or flyer, the following legend:

“Arlington Public Schools does not sponsor or endorse the individual or group providing this material, or any message contained herein.”

Because Arlington Public Schools is not a public forum, printed materials that are not part of the Arlington Public Schools curriculum, or being used for a school-sponsored activity, may not be distributed to students, parents/guardians, and staff on school grounds, except as specifically permitted by this policy. Materials that advocate the election or defeat of any political candidate, the passage or defeat of any referendum question or advocate the passage or defeat of any matter

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pending before a local school board, a local governing body, the General Assembly of Virginia, or the Congress of the United States will not be approved for distribution. This Policy shall not be construed to prohibit the discussion or use of political or issue-oriented materials as part of classroom discussions or projects.

All inquiries or requests for approval of distributing non-school materials should be directed to the Department of School & Community Relations.

All Other Distribution or Posting of Materials by Outside Entities on School Property

For all materials that are not permitted to be distributed by a method stated above, the Superintendent or designee shall designate, or cause to be designated, for each school building, the time, place, and manner for the distribution of such materials on school grounds by any person or group. Such distribution shall be permitted only outside of the school building, only at times that will not disrupt the school day or other school-sponsored events, and only in the manner designated for each school building.

Fundraising materials for non-Arlington Public Schools or non-school groups are prohibited. In addition, materials that advocate the election or defeat of any political candidate, advocate for the passage or defeat of any referendum question or advocate the passage or defeat of any matter pending before a local school board, a local governing body, the General Assembly of Virginia, or the Congress of the United States, or serve as advertisements of for-profit organizations may not be distributed on school grounds during school-sponsored activities unless they meet the guidelines in the General Requirements section of this policy. Principals shall not discriminate based on the viewpoint or content of the material distributed, and all groups must have an equal opportunity to access this forum and are not required to include the disclaimer legend on the material to be distributed. Material that violates the General Requirements section of this policy shall not be distributed.

Materials posted on school property that are used as polling locations for local, state and national elections may be posted for the period during which the polls are open and under the direction of the Arlington County Director of Elections and the Electoral Board policy and procedures.

Enforcement

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that individuals or organizations who do not adhere to the General Requirements contained within this policy may be restricted from distributing materials at Arlington Public Schools for a specified period of time or indefinitely.

References

Code of Virginia §22.1-79.3 Policies Regarding Certain Activities
School Board Policy G-2.7 Political Activity of School Board Employees

Policy Adoption and Revision History

Adopted June 7, 2012, Effective June 7, 2012
Renumbered (former Policy 30-3.2) effective July 1, 2018
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