

How to share school facilities

Fact Sheet 2 of 3 | July 2010

There are a number of factors to take into account when hiring school facilities to third parties. Schools councils must consider the insurance and public liability requirements, legal considerations and fees and costs associated with hiring facilities.

Changes to the insurance and liability guidelines

The Department has removed the requirement for not-for-profit community groups, conducting low risk activities, to have \$10 million public liability insurance in order to use school facilities.

This will assist in promoting schools as community hubs and meeting the Commonwealth Government requirements to make Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21) facilities available for community use.

The change will also mean that:

1. insurance costs will no longer make hiring school facilities unaffordable for not-for-profit community groups
2. school councils purchasing public liability insurance to cover third parties will no longer need to do so

Community groups can still choose to take out insurance and are encouraged to do so if they believe there is risk associated with the activity they are undertaking.

Groups that will still be required to purchase their own public liability insurance (\$10 million policy) include:

- Groups undertaking high risk activities
- Sporting clubs and other organisations that are required by their state/national body to have insurance
- Organisations that are required to purchase insurance for regulatory purposes (e.g. early childhood facilities)
- For profit organisations

Advice on strategies to minimise the risks associated with third party use of school facilities can be found at: www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schooloperations/schoolfacilities.htm

Forms and Hire Agreements

The Department has a number of agreement templates for schools to use when they are hiring facilities to or sharing school facilities on a long term basis with third parties. The agreement templates are available on the Government and Legal services page on eduGate, and can also be obtained by contacting Legal Services on 9367 3165. There are a range of issues to consider when hiring and

licensing school facilities to third parties.

Simple hire and licence agreements (where the template provided by legal services has not been altered) can be completed by school councils on their own without further consultation with the Department.

However, for any alterations to the templates, arrangements with local government authorities or involving child care, school councils must contact Legal Services in DEECD to assist in the preparation of the documentation. These types of arrangements have special requirements.

If in doubt, Legal Services can clarify what type of document is suitable for the particular arrangement.

Costs and Fees

The BER Guidelines stipulate that schools must make P21 facilities available at no or low cost.

Schools may charge a low fee for the use of a facility where the charge is to cover recurrent costs incurred by the school in providing the community access.

Costs to be considered include:

- Maintenance
- Cleaning
- Utilities (e.g. electricity)
- Security



Every child, every opportunity



Fees may be in the form of a hire fee/donation to the school or an in kind contribution (e.g. assisting with a working bee/mowing the school oval).

For example, a primary school could hire out their multipurpose hall two to three times a week for \$40 per week. This charge is designed to cover costs associated with additional use. Alternatively, a primary school could make their oval available for use by the local council on the condition that the local council mows the lawn and maintains the general landscape.

Advertising

As outlined in the Building the Education Revolution (BER) Guidelines, schools must agree to advertise the availability of P21 facilities for community use through any avenue available which does not incur significant cost to the school.

Schools should discuss with their local council (Director of Community Services) to include information on the council's website and other advertising opportunities.

Examples of advertising include:

- Newsletters
- School websites
- Free community papers

- Local government newsletters/websites
- Community-based organisation publicity material

Commonwealth Compliance

The Department is currently discussing reporting requirements under the BER program with the Commonwealth Government. Once available, advice regarding the reporting requirements will be communicated to schools.