

Policy Code: 5020 Visitors to the Schools

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

A. Opportunities to Visit the Schools

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

1. Visitors are welcome 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 media centers or meeting spaces, as provided in policy 5030, Community Use of Facilities.
3. Visitors are invited to attend school events that are open to the public, 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 and 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 shall ensure 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 provisions of that policy.
4. Burke County Public Schools does not prohibit the taking of photographs by visitors at public events. However, persons intending to gain media access for school sponsored events with permission to photograph students will be required to register with the Central Office and shall

authorize Burke County Public Schools to conduct a formal background check at the expense of the person requesting media access and shall partake in any training deemed necessary by the district. The district will maintain an approved list of visitors with media access which will be provided to school administrators. School administrators shall cross-reference the list of approved persons before permitting media access to any individual.

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 Division 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 on a school property without having received permission or that an individual is exhibiting unusual, threatening, or dangerous behavior, the employee must either direct the individual to the administrative office or notify the principal, designee, or 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 will be instructed to notify a 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 a 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 or designee, 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)

Adopted: November 15, 2021

Revised: March 13, 2023

**PROCEDURE FOR MEDIA ACCESS WITH PERMISSION TO PHOTOGRAPH STUDENTS
REGARDING Policy Code: 5020 VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS B. 4.**

Individuals wishing to be approved for Media Access with Permission to Photograph Students should follow these steps

- ☐ Register at Burke County Public Schools Central Office in the Human Resource Department at 700 E. Parker Road, Morganton, NC 28655
- ☐ Complete the “Application for Media Access with Permission to Photograph Students” form
- ☐ Pay the Background Check Fee in the amount of \$30
- ☐ Present Appropriate Identification
- ☐ Complete the Background Check Process

If approved, the person will receive correspondence (phone call/email/letter) stating he/she has been approved; if not approved, the person also will receive a letter stating he/she was denied and may be offered the opportunity to provide additional information.

Once approved, the individual’s name will be added to the “Approved Volunteers” spreadsheet under the “Approved Media Access with Permission to Photograph Students” tab. The spreadsheet will be updated and maintained by Human Resources and shared with the County Athletic Director, Public Relations Officer, individual school administration and school level athletic directors.

Credentials are non-transferable and may be used only by those representatives to whom they are issued. Credentials must be renewed each new academic year.

Media outlet personnel must follow the visitor policy. Regarding athletics, media personnel must adhere to all NCHSAA rules and regulations pertaining to photographs, conduct and field/bench etiquette, etc.

APPLICATION FOR MEDIA ACCESS WITH PERMISSION TO PHOTOGRAPH STUDENTS

Burke County Public Schools
P.O. Drawer 989
Morganton, NC 28680-0989

(For Office Use Only)

Approved: _____

Approved with restrictions: _____

Not Approved: _____

Credentials are valid for one academic year only and must be renewed each year. Applicants minimum age is 16 years old.

Last Name First Name Middle Name Maiden Name

Address (Street number and name) City/State Zip Code

County Home Phone Cell Phone Work Phone

Birth Date (Month/Day/Year) Email Address

Current Employer Occupation Associated Press Member? Y or N

For Freelance Photographers: Name of Media Organization You Represent

Please provide 3 non-family references, which could include school administrators and/or ADs or other BCPS personnel:

Name Phone Number

Name Phone Number

Name Phone Number

Have you ever been convicted of any violation (misdemeanor/felony) of the law other than a minor traffic ticket?	____ Yes ____ No
Have you ever entered a plea of nolo contendere (no contest) to any charge against you?	____ Yes ____ No
Do you have any criminal charges pending against you or are you currently involved in any criminal proceeding, including supervised or unsupervised probation?	____ Yes ____ No

EXPECTATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS APPROVED FOR MEDIA ACCESS WITH PERMISSION TO PHOTOGRAPH STUDENTS

At Burke County Public Schools, our mission and vision reflect our top priorities: Education and Safety. Whether in the classroom, during extracurricular activities or athletic events, we enjoy celebrating our students with families, friends and the community. Part of that includes welcoming members of the media to school-sponsored events.

Protecting students' rights and privacy is very important to Burke County Public Schools. We follow all state and federal rules, regulations, policies and guidelines regarding students' rights and privacy, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and North Carolina High School Athletic Association. All district and school generated photographs and videos and any subsequent postings on websites and social media sites strictly follow FERPA guidelines. Parents and guardians are presented with opt-out opportunities to protect children's images from being disseminated by the district or school in publications other than those considered directory information.

As for non-district and non-school generated content, Burke County Public Schools recognizes that in today's society cellphone photography and videography are accessible to the masses and because some school sponsored events are public events (including athletic events, awards day ceremonies, academic competitions), the general public is allowed to take photographs for personal and family use.

As an individual approved for media access with permission to photograph Burke County Public Schools students, my initials and signature on this form acknowledges that I will join with Burke County Public Schools to take all necessary steps to protect children and young people from the inappropriate use of their images in resources and media publications, on the internet and elsewhere.

- ☐ _____ I understand and will follow all rules, regulations, policies and procedures set forth by individual schools, the district of Burke County Public Schools, the Burke County Board of Education, and the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, including but not limited to those pertaining to photographing students, conduct and field/bench/court etiquette.
- ☐ _____ I will treat all students, staff, coaches, and fans with dignity and respect. Similar to the National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics, I will give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy.
- ☐ _____ I will present a photo identification and/or credentials if asked while on school property or at a school-sponsored event.
- ☐ _____ I will be cautious of publishing photographs of students that show or hint at body parts that should be covered because I understand that others can copy, edit and manipulate photographs to use images inappropriately or out of context.
- ☐ _____ I understand that activities such as but not limited to swimming, wrestling and volleyball present a higher risk for potential misuse. I will be cautious to publish photographs that focus on the activity and not a particular child and avoid camera angles that may be prone to misinterpretation or misuse.
- ☐ _____ I understand that all photography is prohibited in bathrooms, changing areas and first aid stations.
- ☐ _____ If I am photographing a non-public event on a school campus, when informed by district officials, I will respect the privacy of students and families who I have opted out of the district's photo and video policy.
- ☐ _____ Except for minor traffic tickets, I will notify the Burke County Public Schools Director of Human Resources within 24 hours if I am charged with a crime, convicted of a crime, plead no contest to a charge, or placed on supervised or unsupervised probation.

Signature

Print Name

Date

BACKGROUND CHECK INFORMATION

List all names that you have used during the last seven (7) years (including married, maiden, and aliases):

Name (First, Middle, Last)

Date of Birth (Mo/Day/Yr)

Maiden Name (First, Middle, Last)

Dates Used From and To

Other Names (First, Middle, Last)

Dates Used From and To

Social Security Number

Driver's License Number

State

Current and Previous Address(es) - last seven (7) years. Use extra page if necessary.

1.

Street

City, State, County, Zip Code

Dates Used From and To

2.

Street

City, State, County, Zip Code

Dates Used From and To

3.

Street

City, State, County, Zip Code

Dates Used From and To

Signature

Print Name

Date