

Spectator Conduct Policy

Public Conduct on School Premises

This Policy Primer from the Iowa Association of School Boards is devoted to the topic of the behavior of individuals at school district activities. The Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union asked the Iowa Association of School Boards, Iowa Department of Education and School Administrators of Iowa to assist them in developing a sample spectator policy. There have been increasing concerns and incidents at athletic events where spectators, both students and adults, have been verbally and physically abusive to participants, officials, coaches and other spectators. Included with this Policy Primer is a sample "Public Conduct on School Premises" policy. Some school districts will already have this policy in place, since it was included in the IASB Policy Reference Manual. Those districts will not need to consider a new policy unless they want to incorporate the minor changes made to the sample policy. The following is taken from IASB Policy Primer, Volume 12, Number 3, June 15, 1999

School District Authority

Pursuant to Iowa Code ♦ 279.8, boards have the authority to adopt rules for the school district. Included in this general authority is the right to develop rules to protect students, employees, visitors and school property. Iowa trespass law is used to criminally prosecute individuals whose presence or behavior is prohibited.

Trespass is defined as follows in Iowa Code ♦ 716.7: 716.7 Trespass defined. (Selected sections)

2. The term "trespass" shall mean one or more of the following acts:

- a. Entering upon or in property without the express permission of the owner, lessee, or person in lawful possession with the intent to commit a public offense, to use, remove there from, alter damage, harass, or place thereon or therein anything animate or inanimate, or to hunt fish or trap on or in the property. This paragraph does not prohibit the unarmed pursuit of game or furbearing animals lawfully injured or killed which come to rest on or escape to the property of another.
- b. Entering or remaining upon or in property without justification after being notified or requested to abstain from entering or to remove or vacate there from by the owner, lessee, or person in lawful possession, or the agent or employee of the owner, lessee, or person in lawful possession, or by any peace officer, magistrate, or public employee whose duty it is to supervise the use or maintenance of the property.
- c. Entering upon or in property for the purpose or with the effect of unduly interfering with the lawful use of the property by others.
- d. Being upon or in property and wrongfully using, removing there from, altering, damaging, harassing, or placing thereon or therein anything animate or inanimate, without the implied or actual permission of the owner, lessee, or person in lawful possession.

School officials have the legal authority to ask people to leave when their behavior is interfering with the ability of others to participate in or watch a school activity pursuant to Iowa Code ♦ 716.7. .7.

Misbehavior Defined

School officials should develop a working definition of what they consider to be misbehavior warranting an individual's temporary or permanent removal from school activities.

The sample policy uses the following definitions:

- Abusive, verbal or physical conduct of spectators directed at participants, officials or sponsors of activities or at other spectators will not be tolerated.
- Verbal or physical conduct of spectators that interferes with the performance of students, officials or sponsors of activities will not be tolerated.
- The use of vulgar, obscene or demeaning expression directed at students, officials or sponsors participating in an extracurricular activity or at other spectators will not be tolerated.

For purposes of this Policy Primer and the sample policy, "activities" includes all school-sponsored or approved activities and co- and extra-curricular activities.