

## Permits Unit Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- 1) What constitutes Community Use of Schools?
- 2) What is the Priority School Initiative (PSI)?
- 3) What is the role of the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC) in the permit process?
- 4) What is the role of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation in the permit process?
- 5) What is recognized as Not-For-Profit groups?
- 6) What types of groups/activities are not eligible for TDSB permits?
- 7) How do you permit a school facility?
- 8) How long before my event should I request a permit?
- 9) What are the hours/days of Community Use of Schools?
- 10) What days/periods are not available for permits?
- 11) Do all schools cost the same?
- 12a) How is an application processed?
- 12b) When is a permit application processed?
- 12c) How long will it take before my permit is approved?
- 13) How will I know when my permit is approved?
- 14) Do I require insurance to permit TDSB space?
- 15) What is required for the Certificate of Insurance?
- 16) What if we need to make changes to our permit once it is approved?
- 17) How do I gain access into the school?
- 18) How much time is allotted at the end of my permit?
- 19) Why do you need to know how many participants?
- 20) Can we rent out classroom space?
- 21) What if I want a specific room?
- 22) Can I book half a gymnasium?
- 23) Our group wants to use school equipment?
- 24) Am I allowed any storage?
- 25) Who do I speak to if I am unhappy about my permit?
- 26) How do I find out who the permit clerk is for my permit?
- 27) What can I expect from the TDSB for support?
- 28) How can I determine if the site is suitable?
- 29) Who has the detailed information on whether space is available?
- 30a) Why are security personnel required for my permit?
- 30b) Why are media technicians required for my permit?
- 31a) What do I do if there is a problem at the time of the permit and there is no caretaker available in the school (e.g., summer permit of fields)?
- 31b) What do I do if there is another group using my permitted space at the time of the permit?

## 1) What constitutes Community Use of Schools?

Community Use of Schools is an initiative by the Ministry of Education that supports access to school space for Not-For-Profit groups. Refer to the Permits Unit website for specific hours of availability.

Profit and Commercial groups are able to permit space but priority is given to Not-For-Profit groups. There is an Advisory Committee that the TDSB supports (Community of Use of School Advisory Committee (CUSCAC)) and more information about this committee can be found through this link: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Community-Advisory-Committees>

## 2) What is the Priority School Initiative (PSI)?

In 2009, the Ontario Ministry of Education introduced a new component of the Community Use of Schools funding program entitled Priority Schools Initiative. This provides funding to selected school boards in order that not-for-profit groups will have free after-hour access to school facilities in communities that need it most. More information can be found here:

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/Community-Use-of-Schools/Priority-Schools-Initiative>

The PSI Permit Eligibility Criteria can be found by using the above link. Note:

- a) that all approved PSI requests are sent to the Permits Department for final processing.
- b) only certain weeks are available for PSI; you may need to apply for the remaining weeks/sessions needed using the regular permit application process.

## 3) What is the role of the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC) in permit process?

While the TLC manages the pools and sets the rates for their use, the TDSB sets the rates for the caretaker fees and any additional fees.

## 4) What is the role of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation in the permit process?

Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation permit many TDSB facilities to run their extensive programming, in evenings, weekends, and holidays. Information about this programming and how to register can be found at the city of Toronto's information page or at your local Recreational Center. Space available to community groups may be affected by the permit requirements of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

## 5) What is recognized as Not-For-Profit groups?

- Registered charity
- Registered organization that has legal documentation to establish its operation as Not-for-Profit, for information is available at: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/Permits/Permit-Categories-and-Fees>
- *Bone fide* community groups with a Board of Directors operated by volunteers, more information is available at: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Community-Advisory-Committees/Community-Use-of-Schools-Community-Advisory-Committee>

**6) What types of groups/activities are not eligible for TDSB permits?**

- Private group uses such as wedding receptions, anniversary celebrations, wedding/baby showers, baptism celebrations, birthday parties, product promotion parties and similar private gatherings.
- Uses where activities of the group are incompatible or competing with the interests of the Board or are in conflict with the Board's Continuing Education Programs.

**7) How do you permit a school facility?**

- Research the type of facility you need and the options by reviewing the TDSB website.
- Complete the online permit application process through ebase. All Community Use of School Applications must be approved and paid for before a school facility can be used.

**8) How long before my event should I request a permit?**

You need to request your permit a minimum of 3 weeks before you require confirmation of the requested space. The deadline dates that you can submit permit applications for bulk processing are June 1 for school year indoor permits; March 1 for summer indoor permits; January 31 for outdoor field permits. As new permit requests are on a first come first served basis the earlier you submit an application the better chance you have of securing your first choice. Returning permit groups may have priority for renewal.

**9) What are the hours/days of Community Use of Schools?**

Certain periods are excluded (see the answer to Question #7). There are specific time periods for requesting a permit: School year September to June; Outdoor permits May to October; Indoor summer permits July and August.

For school year permits: you may request anytime between 6:00 pm and 10:00 pm for most schools. Some schools are not available after 6:00 pm or 8:00 pm, depending on caretaker coverage (these will be indicated on the permit website). On weekends permits must go no later than 6:00 pm on Saturdays or 3:00 pm on Sunday.

**10) What days/periods are not available for permits?**

School year indoor permits are not available on Statutory Holidays, Christmas and New Year Break, March Break, Easter Monday, the first week of September and the last two full weeks of June. For the summer period, evenings during the months of July and August and daytime for the last two weeks of August are not available for permits. Exceptions may be granted for Summer School and other Board-related programs.

**11) Do all schools cost the same?**

The same fee schedule applies to all the schools within the TDSB and can be found at: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/Permits/Permit-Categories-and-Fees>

**12a) How is an application processed?**

The application form is submitted to the Permits Unit for processing. The school principal approves and allocates classrooms to be used.

**12b) When is a permit application processed?**

Bulk processing starts for permits after the relevant application period for the permit closes: June 1 for school year permits; Mar 1 for summer indoor permits and Jan 31 for outdoor permits.

**12c) How long will it take before my permit is approved?**

Bulk processing starts for permits after the relevant application period for the permit closes. If you submit a permit outside of the initial bulk processing period you should have your permit confirmed within 3 weeks (depending on availability).

**13) How will I know when my permit is approved?**

Once your permit has been approved, you will receive eBase notification in your email. Be sure to respond promptly in order to receive a firm permit and check the dates and times for accuracy. Any change from or cancellation of the permit request will incur a charge.

**14) Do I require insurance in order to permit TDSB space?**

All permits must have insurance coverage. Please upload your certificate of insurance to your permit file section. Groups may also purchase the required insurance coverage through a recommended Board vendor. The information will be provided to you by the permit office during the permit processing period and do not purchase Insurance until your permit has been received.

**15) What is required for the Certificate of Insurance?**

The Certificate of Insurance must name the Toronto District School Board as an “additional insured” with minimum liability coverage of \$2,000,000. It must be a current certificate.

**16) What if we need to make changes to our permit once it is approved?**

Changes, additions and cancellations to your permit can be requested by contacting the Permit Unit using the permit Discussion portal. There is an administration fee for amending or cancelling permits. This charge will be added to your permit account.

**17) How do I gain access into the school?**

Prior to the first date of indoor permits you should communicate with the Permits Unit and/or the Head Caretaker to find out the procedure and timing for entrance to the building. Except for the Swimming Pools and if not indicated on the permit, Door 1 is the Default entrance. It is recommended that you get a cell phone number to contact the Caretaker on duty if for some reason the Caretaker is not at the door at the appointed time or call the emergency number shown on your permit.

**18) How much time is allotted at the end of my permit?**

As a permit holder, you are required to vacate the school by the end of your permit time. For example, if your permit end time is 10:00 pm you must vacate the school by 10:00 pm.

**19) Why does the TDSB need to know how many participants?**

Our on-site staff need to be aware of how many people will be entering our schools. This information is also required for Ministry of Education reports so that the school board continues to receive Community Use of Schools funding.

**20) Can we rent out classroom space?**

Classrooms may be available to community groups at the discretion of the Principal.

**21) What if I want a specific room?**

Typically, gyms (do not include showers), auditoriums, cafeterias and outdoor spaces are the facilities approved for community use. If you wish to use another space in the facility, please ask the Permits Unit and it will seek school approval.

**22) Can I book half a gymnasium?**

Gymnasium rentals are as listed and are typically based on a full gym. Partition doors remain open for all rentals.

**23) Can our group use school equipment?**

Permit holders are allowed use of tables, chairs and gym fixtures. The use of any other equipment at the school is at the discretion of, and must be arranged through, the Principal well in advance of your booking. Your permit is for use of Space ONLY.

**24) Am I allowed any storage?**

Permits do not include use of any storage space. TDSB does not allow groups to store their equipment on Board property.

**25) Who do I speak to if I am unhappy about my permit?**

You should contact the Permit Clerk through your permit Discussion Portal. If you are not satisfied with the answer you receive you can ask for the matter to be escalated within the Permits Unit (Supervisor and/or Manager).

**26) How do I find out who the Permit Clerk is for my permit?**

The Permit Clerk will be identified on Permit Discussion portal.

**27) What can I expect from the TDSB for support?**

A minimum of 1 caretaker will be on duty during your permit time. The caretaker is only available for matters that require urgent attention and for unlocking rooms listed on the permit and requested bathrooms.

You can have the expectation that the facility will be in a safe condition. Any problems should be reported to the Permits Unit. The water in swimming pools will be between 78-82 degrees.

**28) How can I determine if the site is suitable?**

Some details about a facility can be obtained from the school and it is also possible to arrange a site visit with the school.

**29) Who has the detailed information on whether space is available?**

The TDSB website is accurate and has real time information.

**30a) Why are security personnel required for my permit?**

Pay-duty police officer(s) are required for special events/tournaments with a large attendance in order to provide crowd control measures if necessary and to ensure the security of the property and participants. Arrangements are to be made by the permit applicant and payment is to be made according to procedures provided by the Police Department.

**30b) Why are media technicians required for my permit?**

Special event requirements such as auditorium lighting and sound may be available but only if operated by board assigned technical stage crew. If requested on the application for permit, Permits Unit will make arrangements for a technician(s) to provide this service (fees will be added to the Permit Contract).

**31a) What do I do if there is a problem at the time of the permit and there is no caretaker available in the school (e.g. summer permit of fields)?**

You should always have a copy of your permit on your person. There is a contact number for Board Emergency/ Security listed on the permit (Call Centre 416-395-4620). Response time varies as geographic areas of coverage are large.

**31b) What do I do if there is another group using my permitted space at the time of the permit?**

The caretaker should be able to confirm which permit has a right of space as they can verify via eBase. You should always have a copy of your permit on your person. There is a contact number for Board Security listed on the permit (Call Centre 416-395-4620). Response time varies as geographic areas of coverage are large. The caretaker is not responsible for the Board security.