



INSTRUCTION: Schedules

Patriotic Exercises

I. Purpose

To establish procedures for the observance of patriotic exercises and the proper custody, care and display of flag in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

II. Display of Flags

A. Guidelines for display of U.S. Flag

1. The U.S. flag shall be displayed at every school building and in each classroom while schools are in session.
2. At least one outdoor flagpole shall be provided to each school. The U.S. flag shall be flown outdoors on the school grounds, weather permitting, each day that school is in session and at school polling places on election days. The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all-weather flag is displayed.
3. The U.S. flag shall be displayed each day that the school system is in business on or near the main administrative building of BCPS.
4. The safety patrol, an appropriate student group or a custodian shall be assigned the duty of raising and lowering the flags outside the school building or the main administrative office.
5. The U.S. flag should be raised briskly first and lowered ceremoniously last.
6. When the U.S. flag is displayed on a flagstaff in an auditorium, it should be to the speaker's right as the speaker faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be to the speaker's left.
7. It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on stationary flagstaffs in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, an all-weather flag may be displayed 24 hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.

B. Flag as a Tribute

1. U.S. Flag  
Per executive order of the President of the United States or the Governor of the state of Maryland, the Superintendent will direct that the U.S. flag be flown at half-staff.

- a. The U.S. flag may not be flown at half-staff under any other circumstances.
- b. No other flag should be displayed on the same pole with the U.S. flag when it is at half-staff.
2. Maryland State Flag as a Tribute  
Per order of the Governor of the state of Maryland, the Superintendent will direct that the state flag be flown at half-staff.
3. School Flag as a Tribute  
If a student or staff member dies, as a tribute, the principal may order the school flag to be flown for two days at half-staff at the respective school.
4. Flags at Half-Staff
  - a. If the U.S. flag is at half-staff, all other flags flown with it should be at half-staff.
  - b. When a flag is to be displayed at half-staff, the flag should be briskly raised to the top of the staff before being lowered slowly to the half-staff position. The flag should again be raised to the top before it is lowered for the day.

C. Responsibilities

1. Each school principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for the following:
  - a. Ensuring that flags are properly displayed in his/her school and on school premises.
  - b. Ensuring the proper and respectful handling and storage of the flag.
2. When a flag becomes worn, the principal or office head shall replace the flag immediately and contact the Office of Facilities Support Services to have the flag destroyed by burning.

D. Respect for Flag

1. No disrespect shall be shown to the U.S. flag.
2. The flag should never be dipped to any person or thing.
3. The flag should never be allowed to touch anything beneath it such as the ground, flooring, water or merchandise.
4. The flag should not be used as a drapery, or for covering a speaker's desk, draping a platform or for any decoration in general.
5. The flag should never have placed on it, or attached to it, any mark, insignia, letter, word, number, figure or drawing of any kind.
6. The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything.

III. Opening Exercises

- A. Each school shall begin the day by providing appropriate opening exercises that include the salute to the U.S. flag, recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and other patriotic exercises that are approved by the United States government or by the Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board).
- B. Exceptions
  - 1. Any student or staff member who wishes to be excused from the flag salute or recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance or other patriotic exercises shall be excused, but shall not interfere with the right of other students or staff members to participate in such exercises.
  - 2. Students and/or staff members wishing to be excused under this paragraph may use any form of peaceful protest as long as such protest does not create a substantial disruption or material interference with school activities.

Legal Reference: 4 USC § 1 to § 10, *The Flag*  
*Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article §7-105, *Display of Flag; Patriotic Exercises*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5600, *Students' Rights and Responsibilities*  
Board of Education Policy 6304, *Commemorations and Observances*

Rule

Superintendent of Schools

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