

Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems in School Settings

8.23

- I. The Sarasota County School District has established that safety for students, employees, and visitors is a high priority of the district. Technology-based (and other) innovations must be monitored and regulated to retain and monitor a high level of safety for all persons throughout the district, including instructional settings.
- I. Unmanned aircraft (drones) are defined as any powered, aerial vehicle that when operated outdoors is subject to Federal and/or State regulations.
- II. A person may not knowingly or willfully operate a drone over a public or private school serving students in any grade from prekindergarten through grade 12.
- III. A person may not knowingly or willfully allow a drone to make contact with a school, including any person or object on the premises of or within a school facility.
- IV. All approved drones and drone operators must register with the Department of Safety, Security, and Emergency Management prior to operating a drone on any school district property.
- V. Prior to any drone flight on school property all approved drones and drone operators must call the Sarasota County Schools Operations Communications Center at 941-966-SAFE (7233) to notify them of the location, duration, and reason for the flight.
- VI. Staff and students shall only operate drones in accordance with this policy and applicable Federal guidelines. Any inappropriate use must be reported to the Superintendent or designee.
- VII. A teacher wishing to use/demonstrate any remotely controlled aerial system technology in an instructional related setting must adhere to the guidelines of this policy and applicable Federal guidelines. A clear connection between drone technology and the approved course curriculum must exist.
- VIII. Drone Use Pre-Qualification Guidelines
 - A. Any staff member who has been granted permission to use drones in their curriculum or athletic program must obtain remote operator certificate (FAA Part 107 Guidelines).
 - B. All drones owned and operated by the District are to be registered with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
 - C. Only drones produced by approved drone manufacturers can be used for educational purposes and by the District for operations and maintenance of District property.

IX. Operation Guidelines

- A. Staff and students shall not operate drones within five (5) miles of any airport without prior notification and acknowledgment from airport authorities. Written documentation for notification should be logged and kept on file by the notifying staff member.
- B. Students operating drones on school grounds must: be enrolled in a program that includes the use of drones in its curriculum, have been trained in the use of drones, and have authorization from the Department of Safety, Security, and Emergency Management and school principal.
- C. Students shall not operate drones without the direct supervision and presence of a teacher.
- D. All proper safety equipment must be used by any operator(s) and observer(s) to include eye and ear protection.
- E. Drone operators (staff and students) must maintain safe control and line-of-sight at all times during operation and are prohibited from flying drones over playing fields, seating and spectator areas where and when people are present, as well as parking areas where and when people and/or vehicles are present. Broadcast from a remote location does not constitute line of sight.
- F. Staff and students shall not operate drones above an altitude of 400 feet above ground level or within 400 feet of a structure as outlined in FAA Part 107 guidelines.
- G. Any district or teacher provided drone operated on school grounds must be of relatively low power, be equipped with blade guards, weight less than 0.55 lbs., and not be subject to FAA registration requirements. Staff and students shall not operate a drone with a weight of more than 55 lbs.
- H. Staff and students shall not operate drones before sunrise or after sunset or in adverse weather conditions.
- I. Staff and students shall not operate drones within proximity to or above individuals, crowds, or vehicles, to include parking lots.
- J. Students are not permitted to bring drones to school.
- K. If the drone were to be flown/blown onto a building roof, off-campus location, or another restricted area, the teacher/coach must report it immediately to school administration and appropriate support staff, i.e. custodial staff, or technical services if the drone is located on the roof. Students shall not be used to retrieve the drone under any such circumstances.
- L. Any variance from this policy requires the prior written authorization from both the Director of Safety, Security, and Emergency Management and the Supervisor of Risk Management.

- X. Inappropriate Use
 - A. Staff and students shall not operate drones under circumstances where profit would be generated.
 - B. Staff and students shall not operate drones broadcasting or recording images of people or property where the reasonable expectation of privacy exists or over areas that are normally deemed private by social norms, such as restrooms, locker rooms, or residential areas.
 - C. Staff and students shall not operate drones indoors, i.e. no flying in classrooms.
- XI. Drone Injuries or Incidents
 - A. Any injuries or property damage resulting from District drone use shall immediately be reported to the operator’s direct supervisor and to the Risk Management Department. Further use of the drone in question will be suspended until an investigation of the events takes place and clearance for use is provided.
 - B. Any scenarios not addressed within this policy shall be governed by the appropriate Federal Aviation Administration regulations.
 - C. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action for staff and/or students and/or revocation of drone use privileges.
- XII. Exceptions
 - A. This policy shall not apply to a law enforcement agency that is in compliance with FS 934.50 or a person under contract with or otherwise acting under the direction of such law enforcement agency.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 1001.41(2), 1001.42(11), 1001.43(4) F.S.

LAWS IMPLEMENTED: 1001.42(11), 1001.43(4), 330.41, 934.50 F.S. F.S.
 Title 49 U.S.C §§40101, 40102 and 40103
 14 C.F.R § 1.1
 Federal Aviation Administration Advisory
 Circular AC 91-57A
 Public Law 112-95
 Code of Federal Regulation Part 107 – Small
 Unmanned Aircraft Systems
 Florida High School Athletic Association
 Guideline Handbook

HISTORY: **ADOPTED: 07/19/16**
REVISION DATE(S): 11/06/18, 05/2024
FORMERLY: NEW

NOTES:

Refer to: Procedures and Operational Checklist