



University Policy: Outdoor Chalking Policy
Policy Category: Student Policies, Facilities
Subject: Rules for Chalking Outdoors
Responsible Executive: Vice President of Student Affairs
Office(s) Responsible for Review of this Policy: Division of Student Affairs, Facilities Management
Supplemental Documents: N/A
Related University Policies: Freedom of Expression and Expressive Conduct, Posting Policy, Student Conduct Code

I. SCOPE

This Policy applies to students, staff, faculty, departments/programs, and Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs).

II. POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy aims to accommodate the expression of ideas and promotion of campus events at American University while balancing the need to care for the facilities and grounds. Outdoor chalking is permitted subject to the viewpoint-neutral time, place, and manner parameters outlined in this Policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

University Premises: buildings and grounds owned, leased, operated, controlled, or supervised by the university.

Chalking: the use of a water-soluble hand-held blackboard chalk to write or draw on permitted locations on University Premises.

Permitted Locations: sidewalks and walkways that is open to the sky and the weather on University Premises

Recognized Student Organization (RSO): a student led and created group that has been formally recognized by the Center for Student Involvement or another university department and has benefits and responsibilities tied to the recognition.

IV. POLICY

A. Students, staff, faculty, departments/programs, and RSOs may engage in outdoor

chalking in Permitted Locations only and must comply with the following conditions:

- Hand-held water-soluble blackboard chalk is the only permitted material approved for chalking. All other materials are prohibited.
- Chalking must not include content that threatens the physical health or safety of any person, is lewd and/or obscene, or violates or incites the imminent violation of University policies or federal or local laws. Chalking may not promote drugs or alcohol or anything that would violate University policies.
- Overwriting, removing, defacing, or altering existing chalking is prohibited by anyone other than the person or organization who did the chalking or authorized University officials.
- Chalking may **not** be applied to:
 - vertical surfaces
 - stairs or stairwells
 - sidewalk curbs
 - landings above ground level
 - raised walkways (including the side patios of the Mary Graydon Center)
 - building walls, windows, doors, pillars, or roofs
 - benches
 - slate surfaces
 - plants or trees
 - campus sculptures, artwork, or memorials
 - any vehicular streets or roadways
 - parking lots
 - any indoor surfaces
 - roadways
 - any other surfaces not explicitly identified as a permitted location.

B. Removal

Generally, chalking is removed by the University in the ordinary course of cleaning of facilities and grounds. The University may remove chalking immediately if it does not comply with this Policy. Students, staff, faculty, departments/programs, and Recognized Student Organizations may be charged for the cost of removal and cleanup of chalking not in compliance with this Policy.

V. ENFORCEMENT

Questions about this Policy should be directed to the Division of Student Affairs. Failure to comply with this Policy may be actionable under the Student Conduct Code, the Staff Personnel Manual, and the Faculty Manual.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This Policy is effective August 26, 2024.

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