

Students

Freedom of Speech/Expression

Protected Activities in Bulletin Boards

One bulletin board shall be provided in each school for the use of approved student organizations, student groups, or individual students. Other bulletin boards will be designated for official school announcements only. Any bulletin board so designated shall be for restricted use, and materials placed thereon by students will be removed by the school.

Prior approval by school officials is not required for the posting of notices or other communications on the assigned student bulletin board. All such materials, however, must conform with the “General Limitations” herein provided. The bulletin board designated for students may be used for school activities, out-of-school activities, or matters of general interest to students.

Any posted material deemed to violate the “General Limitations” or herein provided may immediately be removed by the school administration. At the request of interested students or of the sponsoring organization, the school official responsible for removing the materials will explain the nature of the violation.

All student posted notices or communications shall be subject to reasonable size limitations and shall be dated. The name(s) of at least one student(s) principally involved in the posting of such notice or communication shall be included. Such material may be removed by the school after seven days to assure full access to bulletin boards for all students.

Protected Activities through the Distribution of Written Materials and Circulation of Petitions

Subject to the procedures and “General Limitations,” students may exercise their protected activities through the distribution of handbills, leaflets and other written materials, and the collection of signatures on petitions concerning either school or non-school matters or issues.

1. The time for the conduct of any activities under this section will be restricted by the school administration to a period of fifteen (15) minutes before the official opening of the school day and fifteen (15) minutes after the official close of the school day.
2. The place for the conduct of such activities will be restricted by the school administration to permit the normal flow of traffic. Materials may be distributed during the period specified only outside the main entrance(s) of the building as designated by the Principal.
3. The manner of conducting such activities may be restricted by the school administration to prevent undue levels of noise or to prevent the use of coercion or unreasonable interference with any person.

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4. The school administration shall first review written materials and petitions and shall not prohibit the distribution, or the circulation of these unless they violate the “General Limitations” described herein.
 - a. All handbills, leaflets, written materials, or petitions must be submitted during regular school hours to the Principal for review prior to distribution or circulation. The Principal shall render a written decision either approving or disapproving distribution or circulation as promptly as possible and in no event later than 12 noon on the second day following submission.
 - b. Prior to the distribution or circulation of any approved handbill, leaflet, other written material, or petition, the Principal shall specify approval by issuing a written permit to the petitioner(s) or either person(s) who desire to distribute or circulate any written materials. Such administrative approval shall also be published in advance in the Daily Notices which are circulated in each school.

Appeal Procedures

If any activity, whether undertaken or proposed to be undertaken, is determined by the Principal to violate this regulation, the approved student organization, student groups, or students may, within one week (7 days) from being advised of such determination, appeal to the Superintendent, who shall render a decision as promptly as possible, but not later than 12 noon on the second day following his/her receipt of the appeal.

Any student organization, student group, or student aggrieved by the decision of the Superintendent shall have the right to appeal to the Board of Education. The Board of Education, or a subcommittee thereof composed of not less than three members, shall render a final decision within seven days of receipt by the Superintendent of a written notice of appeal from his/her decision.

Protected Activities Through Signs and Symbols

Subject to the General Limitations, students may wear buttons, badges, or arm bands on school premises. Students, however, may not pass out buttons, badges, or arm bands during regular school hours.

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General Limitations

In order to ensure the orderly and efficient conduct of school operations, all protected activities shall be subject to General Limitations. The following activities cannot be considered as protected:

1. An activity which materially or substantially interferes with appropriate student discipline on school premises;
2. An activity which materially disrupts the normal operation of the school or provokes any disorder;
3. An activity which invades the lawful rights of obscene materials;
4. An activity involving the use of false statements or innuendoes;
5. An activity involving advocacy of the violation of existing statutes, ordinances, or other established laws or official school policy, rules or regulations; or
6. An activity involving the distribution of written materials which has the significant purpose of advertising commercial products, services, or activities by profit-making organizations.

Written material published in connection with a protected activity cannot be prepared by the use of school equipment or property. All copies of any written materials, if circulated and distributed on school premises, shall bear the names of approved student organizations and/or of other sponsoring student groups or students. In the case of a student group, the names of at least two students principally involved in the posting, circulation, or distribution shall be included.

Violations

Any violation by any student of the procedures or “General Limitations” or any administrative rules, decisions, or action taken in pursuance of this regulation may subject the student to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion.

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Legal Reference: *Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S., 503 (1969)

Grayned vs. City of Rockford, 408 U.S. 104 (1972)

Amendment to U.S. Constitution - Article 1

Connecticut Constitution, ARTICLE FIRST, Declaration of Rights, Sections 4, 5

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/09/81)