

**Lower Merion School District  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

No.:	235-1
Section:	STUDENTS
Title:	STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Date Adopted:	6/3/22
Date Reviewed:	5/15/23

**R235-1 STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**PART I – STUDENT RIGHTS**

I. Regulations Pertaining to Freedom of Expression

A. Bulletin Boards

School authorities may restrict the use of certain bulletin boards to school announcements. Bulletin board space shall be provided for the use of students and student organizations. The following general limitations on posting apply:

- Material which is obscene according to current legal definitions, which is libelous, or which inflames or incites students so as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts or of physical disruption of the orderly operation of the school is prohibited.
- Identification on any posted notice of the student or student group, including the name of at least one person of the group posting such notice, is required.
- Notices or other communications shall be dated by a school official before posting, and such material shall be removed after the prescribed reasonable time to assure full access to the bulletin boards.

B. School Newspapers and Publications

Students have the right and the freedom to report the news and to editorialize and are limited only by their responsibility to observe the rules and standards of responsible journalism and to refrain from libel and obscenity and substantial disruption or material interference with school activities.

In the publication of student run newspapers and other publications within the school program, school officials shall limit their editorial supervision to the educational function of stimulating high qualities and high standards of responsible journalism and, if necessary, to the editing and the removal of obscene and libelous material as well as of material that would cause a substantial disruption or material interference with school activities.

**Lower Merion School District  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

No.:	235-1
Section:	STUDENTS
Title:	STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Date Adopted:	6/3/22
Date Reviewed:	5/15/23

The above is subject to the following:

1. School officials may not censor or restrict material simply because it is critical of the school or its administration.
2. Rules of the school for prior submission for review of obscene, libelous material; and material advocating illegal actions should be reasonable and not calculated to delay distribution.
3. If prior approval procedures are established, they should identify to whom the material is to be submitted, the criteria by which the material is to be evaluated, and a limitation on the time within which a decision must be made. If the prescribed time for approval elapses without a decision, the literature shall be considered as authorized for distribution.
4. Students who are not members of the newspaper staff and other members of the school community shall have access to the pages of the newspaper. The criteria for submission of material by non-staff members shall be published and distributed to all students.
5. Student staff members shall be held responsible for materials which are libelous or obscene or which substantially interfere with or disrupt school activities and such publications may be prohibited.

All publications shall have a publications adviser recommended by the Building Principal and Superintendent and approved by the School Board.

School officials may set forth the time and place of distribution of materials so that distribution will not materially or substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. A proper time and place set for distribution is one that would give the students the opportunity to reach fellow students. The place of the activity may be restricted to permit the normal flow of traffic within the school and at exterior doors.

### C. Non-School Sanctioned Publications

The constitutional right of freedom of speech guarantees the freedom of public school students to publish on their own materials other than those sanctioned by the school. The school has no responsibility to assist students or to provide facilities in the publishing of such materials nor may the school be held responsible for any statements published in them. The newspaper staff members themselves have sole responsibility for any statements published. Non-school sanctioned publications have moral and legal obligations to observe the rules of responsible journalism.

School authorities may prohibit the distribution or dissemination of student-originated material on school grounds only when such material is likely to or does materially and substantially interrupt the educational process or intrude upon the rights of others.

Students have the right to distribute leaflets, newspapers and other printed materials adjacent to school property without any restriction by school authorities. Students have the right to distribute leaflets, newspapers and other printed material on school property in accordance with the following regulations:

- All printed material shall be submitted to the principal for approval prior to distribution in the school.
- Distribution shall be approved unless the principal determines that such distribution is likely to result in substantial disruption or material interference with school activities. Approval by the principal must be granted or denied within a reasonable time.
- Students shall be protected from threats or any other infringement by others in exercising the right to distribute printed materials in a peaceful and lawful manner and in accordance with this regulation. Other students shall also be protected from coercion in responding to the exercise of these rights.
- The time for distribution of printed material shall be limited to periods before school begins, after dismissal, during lunch time, and at such other times when the principal may determine such distribution would not materially or substantially interfere with the operation of the school. The manner in which printed materials are distributed shall be restricted to prevent undue levels of noise. The place for distribution of printed material shall be restricted by the principal to permit the normal flow of traffic within the school and at exterior doors. Students engaged in distributing printed material shall be responsible for the clean-up of litter immediately and directly resulting from their activities.
- All printed matter and petitions distributed on school property shall bear the name of sponsoring organization and the name of one individual of such organization.

#### D. Buttons, Badges, and Other Accessory Items

The wearing of buttons, badges, or armbands bearing slogans and sayings shall be permitted as another form of expression, unless the message thereof is comprised of material which is obscene according to current legal definitions, which is libelous, or which inflames or incites students so as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts or of physical disruption of the orderly operation of the school. No teacher or administrator shall attempt to interfere with this practice on the ground that the message may be unpopular with the students or faculty.

#### E. Student Dress

The following general standards will be in effect at all LMSD schools.

##### 1. Mandatory and Allowable Dress:

- Students must wear a top, bottom and footwear while on school premises
- Some courses may require adjustments to attire and hairstyle to ensure safety during academic activities (i.e. science labs, PE, electives, CTE, etc.)
- Some courses (PE, science lab, CTE, electives, etc.) and school-sponsored extracurricular activities may require specific attire (safety gear, athletic attire, uniforms, hair tied back, etc.)

##### 2. Non-Allowable Dress:

- Items that expose private parts of the body (genitalia, nipples or buttocks)
- Items with sexually suggestive language or messages
- Items that promote illegal or violent conduct, including but not limited to, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons and/or gang affiliation
- Items that depict hate speech, intimidation or intolerance toward protected groups
- Items that are profane or legally libelous
- Items that make the students face unidentifiable (protective masks, clothing/headgear worn for religious and medical purposes are excepted)

#### F. Personal Electronic Devices

While we recognize the importance of being connected and learning how to use technology appropriately in this rapidly changing, interconnected world, we also know that personal electronic devices often cause unnecessary distractions in the school environment. **Absent a school-based rule or explicit permission, all phones and personal devices must be silenced or turned off and remain in a backpack or locker throughout the day.** Teachers/staff may require students to store phones during class in a designated location in the teacher's classroom for that purpose. Should a school choose to implement additional rules or permissions regarding the use of electronic devices, the school will include such rules or permissions in its handbook. This regulation is not intended to

restrict or otherwise limit the use of devices associated with the implementation of an individualized education program, 504 plan, or individual health plan.