



CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

On Campus Speech and Expression

This document presents basic scenarios regarding actions or statements that may implicate constitutional guarantees and/or limits and supplements our policies. It does **NOT** supplant CBSD policies or administrative regulations but rather supplements and summarizes key information. Policies mentioned in this document are linked for quick reference. Each case likely involves fact-specific considerations. Therefore, please be assured that we invite your questions and concerns when navigating these issues that call for both sensitivity and compliance.

STUDENTS | Students do not shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech/expression at school, but their First Amendment rights are not absolute. Student speech cannot “materially and substantially interfere” with the normal operations of a school or “impinge upon the rights of other students.” School authorities may prohibit the distribution or dissemination of student-originated material on school grounds only when such material would materially and substantially interrupt the educational process or intrude upon the rights of others. Expression, conduct, and misconduct that occurs off school property or after school hours may only be subject to discipline when there is a legal nexus (link) between the misconduct and a disruption of the educational process (such as threats to school safety or school personnel). That said, in such circumstances, the school may still provide support for any student targeted by or a victim of off-campus misconduct.

FACULTY AND STAFF | Put most simply, given the enormous complexity of the subject of expression, faculty and staff should refrain from expressing or in any way taking positions on controversial topics, whether political, religious, or ideological, while on school grounds or during school activities. Faculty and staff must maintain a neutral stance to ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment.

SCHOOL-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS | Similar to staff, School-Related Organizations, such as Booster Clubs and Home & School Associations (HSAs) must follow Central Bucks School District policy to ensure they represent and reflect the district’s values and rules. Policies 915 (Booster Organizations) and 915.1 (Home and School Organizations) require that the actions of the School-Related Organization must be consistent with state and federal law and the policies and administrative regulations of the district.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS | When parents/guardians are visitors to Central Bucks School District buildings, they are obligated to uphold policies to minimize disruption and distraction, as well as to refrain from discriminatory, harassing, or uncivil conduct. Parents/guardians are not permitted to post signs or conduct fundraisers in school buildings without express permission from a school’s principal or designee.

	EXPRESSION (verbal, attire, etc.)	SIGNAGE	FUNDRAISERS	PROTESTS	ATTENDANCE
STUDENTS	Students retain First Amendment rights on school property, however some limits on speech/expression can be imposed to minimize disruption and interference with the rights of others (such as hate speech and harassment).	All materials to be displayed, posted or distributed on school property must be submitted to the principal or designee for prior approval.	Student fundraising is permitted with guidelines for approval pursuant to CBSD Policy 229; not all charitable fundraising may be approved.	Protests and other forms of civil disobedience that involve missing class, violating district and/or school rules, and/or otherwise creating disruption warrant consequences per Policy 218.	Attendance is governed by policy 204, which outlines reasons for excused absences. Missing school based on an unspecific and generalized safety concern is not deemed an excused absence.
FACULTY AND STAFF	Per CBSD policies 119 and 321, faculty and staff should refrain from expressing or taking positions on controversial topics, whether political, religious, or ideological, while on school grounds or during school activities. Faculty and staff must maintain a neutral stance to ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment.	Per CBSD policies 119 and 321, faculty and staff should refrain from expressing or taking positions on controversial topics, whether political, religious, or ideological, while on school grounds or during school activities. Faculty and staff must maintain a neutral stance to ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment.	(Faculty/Staff-to-Faculty/Staff) Faculty and staff are not permitted to use CBSD technology for fundraising purposes (e.g., promoting outside fundraisers). (Faculty/Staff-to-Student) Per CBSD policies 119/AR 119 and 321, faculty and staff shall not direct, coerce or otherwise exert undue influence over a student to participate, or not participate, in any fundraising activity. Staff may not advertise their business(es) or encourage students or staff to patronize them.	Faculty and staff may not join protests, unless assigned to maintain student safety or for other specified work-related purposes. Faculty and staff should not voice opinions during protests. Faculty and staff must refrain from any type of participation, endorsement, or support of protests during . Student safety concerns may warrant a supervisory presence from faculty and/or staff.	Eligible faculty and staff are permitted to use personal or vacation days for reasons due to their personal circumstances or needs.

SCHOOL-RELATED ORGS	Like faculty and staff, School-Related Organizations should refrain from expressing or in any way taking positions on controversial topics, whether it is political, religious, or ideological, while on school grounds or during school activities. See Policy 122 and AR 122.	Signage other than for school-sponsored activities are not permitted unless preapproved by administration.	.	Access to facilities should be denied for staging protests; among other reasons, a protest would not be considered a school-sponsored activity.	N/A
PARENTS/ GUARDIANS	Limits on speech/ expression can be imposed to minimize disruption and interference with the rights of others (such as hate speech and harassment).	Signage other than for school-sponsored activities must be approved by the administration.	Facilities may be used in accordance with Policy 707.	Access to facilities should be denied for staging protests.	N/A

References

[Policy 119 – Current Events](#)

[Policy 122 – Extracurricular, Cocurricular, Activities, Athletics, and Student Organizations](#)

[Policy 204 – Attendance](#)

[Policy 218 – Student Discipline](#)

[Policy 229 – Fundraising](#)

[Policy 321 – Political Activities](#)

[Policy 707 – Use of School Facilities](#)

[Policy 915 – Booster Organizations](#)

[Policy 915.1 – Home and School Associations](#)