

Student Expression

According to the Regulations of the State Board of Education of Pennsylvania, Chapter 12, February 1984, "Students have the right to express themselves unless such expression materially and substantially interferes with the educational process, threatens immediate harm to the welfare of the school or community, encourages unlawful activity, or interferes with another individual's rights."

1. Review of Student Expression

School officials shall not censor or restrict non-school written materials or other student expression for the sole reason that the materials are critical of the school or its administration or because the views espoused are unpopular or may make people uncomfortable. The review for unprotected expression shall be reasonable and not calculated to delay distribution.

2. Student Initiated Religious Expression

Student initiated religious expression is permissible and shall not be prohibited except as to time, place and manner of distribution or if the expression involved violates some other part of this regulation, e.g., because it is independently determined to be unprotected expression under the standards and definitions of the Student Expression Policy.

3. General Guidelines

The following guidelines are established to insure uniformity of procedure and to comply with Commonwealth directives regarding student freedom of expression:

- A. Students have the responsibility to obey laws governing libel and obscenity and to be aware of the full meaning of their expression.
- B. Students have the responsibility to be aware of the feelings and opinions of others and to give others a fair opportunity to express their views.
- C. A copy of all materials to be displayed, posted or distributed on school property must be submitted to the Supervisor of Career and Technical Education for prior approval.
- D. The Supervisor of Career and Technical Education will set forth the time and place of distribution of materials and/or publications.
- E. A proper time and place set for distribution is one which would give the students the opportunity to reach fellow students.

- F. A place of such activity may be restricted to permit the normal flow of traffic within the school and at exterior doors.

4. Unofficial 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. Unofficial publications have moral and legal obligations to observe the rules of responsible journalism.

- A. 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.
- B. 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:
 - 1. All printed material shall be submitted to the Supervisor of Career and Technical Education for approval prior to distribution in the school.
 - 2. Distribution shall be approved unless the principal determines that such distribution would result in substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities. Approval by the Supervisor of Career and Technical Education must be granted or denied within a reasonable time.
 - 3. 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.
- C. The time for distribution of printed material shall be limited to periods before school begins, after dismissal, and at such other times when the Supervisor of Career and Technical Education 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 Supervisor of Career and Technical Education 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.

- D. All printed matter and petitions distributed on school property shall bear the name of the sponsoring organization and the name of one individual of such organization.

5. Bulletin Boards

- A. 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.
- B. The following general limitations on posting apply:
1. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. 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.
- C. Students who distribute printed materials shall be responsible for clearing any litter that results from their activity and shall schedule the event so that they do not miss instructional time themselves.

6. Buttons and Badges

The wearing of buttons, badges, or armbands bearing slogans and sayings shall be permitted as another form of expression, unless the message thereof falls within the restrictions of the General Guidelines above. 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.

7. Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action may be determined in accordance with the Discipline Policy for students who distribute or post non-school written materials in violation of this regulation or who continue the manifestation of unprotected expression after a person in authority orders that they desist.

Adopted: 6/19/13