Freedom of Expression

The free expression of student opinion is an important part of education in a democratic society. The district encourages students' verbal and written expression of opinion on school premises so long as it does not substantially disrupt the operation of the school or otherwise violate this policy. Students are expressly prohibited from the use of vulgar and/or offensive terms in classroom or assembly settings.

Student Publications

Student publications produced as part of the school's curriculum or with the support of the associated student body fund are intended to serve both as vehicles for instruction and student communication. Although substantively financed and operated by the district, student editors of school-sponsored media are responsible for determining the news, opinion, feature, and advertising content of the media, consistent with chapter 28A.600 RCW. Material appearing in such publications may reflect various areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be controversy and dissent. When engaging with a controversial issue, student publications should strive to provide in-depth treatment and represent a variety of viewpoints. Such materials may not:

- Be libelous or slanderous;
- Be an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
- Be obscene or profane, such that it would violate federal or state laws, rules or regulations or incites others to violate federal or state laws, rules or regulations, including the standards established by the federal communications act or applicable federal communication commission rules or regulations;
- Incite students so as to create a clear and present danger of the material and substantial disruption of the school;
- Violate district policy or procedure related to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or related to the prohibition on discrimination pursuant to RCW 28A.642.010.
- Violate federal or state laws, rules, regulations, or incite the violation of such laws; or
- Advertise tobacco products, liquor, illicit drugs, or drug paraphernalia.

The superintendent will develop guidelines, assuring that students are able to exercise freedom of expression so long as it does not present a material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school, implementing the standards above, and establishing procedures for the prompt review of any materials that appear not to comply with the standards.

Distribution of Materials

Students and district staff may distribute student publications or other materials on school premises in accordance with procedures developed by the superintendent. Such procedures may impose limits on the time, place, and manner of distribution including prior authorization for the posting of such material on school property.

Students responsible for the distribution of material that leads to a substantial disruption of school activity or otherwise interferes with school operations will be subject to corrective action, including suspension or expulsion, consistent with student discipline policies.

No one who is neither a student nor a district employee may distribute materials on school grounds.

Legal References:

- RCW 28A.600

Management Resources:

- 2021 - October Issue
- 2018- June Policy Alert
- 2018 - May Issue
- 2015 - July Policy Alert
- Policy News, August 2001 A Few Civil Liberty Reminders

Cross References:

- 2340 - Religious-Related Activities and Practices
- 3241 - Student Discipline

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