

Think First

JEA
press rights
commission

Free expression
through
responsible
journalism

Model High School Student Media Editorial policy

Approved by the JEA Board April 19, 2006, and by the Scholastic Journalism Division of AEJMC Aug. 6, 2006.

While this model is specifically designed for newspapers and newsmagazines, advisers can adapt it for other scholastic media and to fit local needs.

As preservers of democracy, our schools shall protect, encourage and enhance free speech and the exchange of ideas as a means of protecting our American way of life.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION is the official student-produced medium of news and information published/produced by JOURNALISM/PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION NAME students. The NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION has been established as a designated public forum for student editors to inform and educate their readers as well as for the discussion of issues of concern to their audience. It will not be reviewed or restrained by school officials prior to publication or distribution. Advisers may – and should coach and discuss content – during the writing process.

Because school officials do not engage in prior review, and the content of the NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION is determined by and reflects only the views of the student staff and not school officials or the school itself, its student editorial board and responsible student staff members assume complete legal and financial liability for the content of the publication.

Electronic media (including online, broadcast and podcast media) produced by NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION students are entitled to the same protections – and subjected to the same freedoms and responsibilities – as media produced for print publication. As such they will not be subject to prior review or restraint.

Student journalists may use print and electronic media to report news and information, to communicate with other students and individuals, to ask questions of and consult with experts and to gather material to meet their newsgathering and research needs.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION and its staff are protected by and bound to the principles of the First Amendment and other protections and limitations afforded by the Constitution and the various laws and court decisions implementing those principles.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION will not publish any material determined by student

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Materials were produced for this Web site by the Journalism Education Association (<http://jeapressrights.org>) and the Center for Scholastic Journalism <http://jmc.kent.edu/csjs>.

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editors or the student editorial board to be unprotected, that is, material that is libelous, obscene, materially disruptive of the school process, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, a violation of copyright or a promotion of products or services unlawful (illegal) as to minors as defined by state or federal law.

Definitions and examples for the above instances of unprotected speech can be found in Law of the Student Press published by the Student Press Law Center.

The editorial board, which consists of the staff's student editors, OR HOWEVER THE DECISION IS MADE will determine the content, including all unsigned editorials. The views stated in editorials represent that of a majority of the editorial board. Signed columns or reviews represent only the opinion of the author.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION may accept letters to the editor, guest columns and news releases from students, faculty, administrators, community residents and the general public. We ask that letters to the editor, guest columns or other submissions be 300 words or less and contain the author's name, address and signature. All submissions will be verified. (THIS COULD BE MODIFIED BY ANY PUBLICATION OR OMITTED IN PUBLICATIONS/PRODUCTIONS THAT DO NOT ACCEPT LETTERS)

The NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION editorial board reserves the right to withhold a letter or column or other submission and/OR return it for revision if it contains unprotected speech or grammatical errors that could hamper its meaning. Deadlines for letters and columns will be determined by each year's student staff, allowing sufficient time for verification of authorship prior to publication.

Staff members will strive to correct errors prior to publication; however, if the editorial board determines a significant error is printed, the editorial board will determine the manner and timeliness of a correction.

The staff of the NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION will strive to report all issues in a legal, objective, accurate and ethical manner, according to the Canons of Professional Journalism developed by the Society for Professional Journalists. The Canons of Professional Journalism include a code of ethics concerning accuracy, responsibility, integrity, conflict of interest, impartiality, fair play, freedom of the press, independence, sensationalism, personal privacy, obstruction of justice, creditability and advertising.

The adviser will not act as a censor or determine the content of the paper. The adviser will offer advice and instruction, following the Code of Ethics for Advisers established by the Journalism Education Association as well as the Canons of Professional Journalism. School officials shall not fire or otherwise discipline advisers for content in student media that is determined and published by the student staff.



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The student editor and staff who want appropriate outside legal advice regarding proposed content – should seek attorneys knowledgeable in media law such as those of the Student Press Law Center. Final content decisions and responsibility shall remain with the student editorial board.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION will not avoid publishing a story solely on the basis of possible dissent or controversy.

The NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION editorial board reserves the right to accept or reject any ad in accordance with its advertising policy.

Electronic manipulations changing the essential truth of the photo or illustration will be clearly labeled if used.

The duly appointed editor or co-editors shall interpret and enforce this editorial policy.



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