

Milton Town School District

Policy

F15: STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Policy

It is the policy of the Milton Town School District to support and encourage student publications as part of the school curriculum. Students enjoy First Amendment rights, including freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental principle in a democratic society that provides all citizens, including students, with the right to engage in a robust discussion of ideas. It is the policy of the Milton Town School District to ensure that students enjoy free speech and free press protections related to school-sponsored media, and to encourage students to become educated, informed, and responsible members of society.

No expression made by students in school-sponsored media shall be deemed expression of school policy.

School-sponsored publications (print or digital format) are typically produced by student journalists in journalism, media, or writing classes and are distributed to the school and community. The value of school publications is in teaching responsible journalism, English, writing, editing, media, and reporting skills.

School-sponsored publications produced by student journalists are not a public forum.

Definitions

“Media advisor” means a person employed, appointed, or designated by the district/supervisory union to provide instruction relating to school-sponsored media.

“School-sponsored media” means any material prepared, written, published, or broadcast as part of a school-supported program or activity by a student journalist that is distributed or generally made available as part of a school-supported program or activity to an audience beyond the classroom in which the material is produced.

“Student journalist” means a student enrolled in the district/supervisory union who gathers, compiles, writes, edits, photographs, records or prepares information for dissemination in school-sponsored media.

“Student supervisor” means a student who is responsible for editing school-sponsored media.

Material to be Published

A school is prohibited from subjecting school-sponsored media to prior restraint. However, school-sponsored media is prohibited from including content that:

- 1) is libelous or slanderous;
- 2) constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
- 3) may be defined as obscene, gratuitously profane, threatening, or intimidating;
- 4) may be defined as harassment, hazing, or bullying;
- 5) violates federal or State law; or

- 6) creates the imminent danger of materially or substantially disrupting the ability of the school to perform its educational mission.

Implementation

The Superintendent shall develop written school publication regulations which will include:

1. A statement of purpose of school publications.
2. Responsibilities of official school publications advisors and student editors.
3. The time, place and manner of production and distribution activities.
4. Procedures for resolving editorial differences.

Date Warned: 11/22/2018
Date Adopted: 07/11/2011
Date Revised: 03/26/2018 – 12/10/2018
School Counsel: 01/19/2018 (C. Leopold)
Legal Reference(s): Vermont Statute Chapter 42. STUDENT RIGHTS § 1623. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION (2017)