

Students

Freedom of Speech/Expression: Publications Code

Free inquiry and exchange of ideas are essential parts of a democratic education. The Governing Board respects students' rights to express ideas and opinions, take stands, and support causes, whether controversial or not, through their speech, their writing, their clothing, and the printed materials they choose to post or distribute.

Student liberties of expression shall be limited only as allowed by law in order to maintain an orderly school environment and to protect the rights, health and safety of all members of the school community.

Students shall be free to post or distribute handbills, leaflets and other printed material, whether produced within or outside of the school. Students may collect signatures on petitions concerning either school or out-of-school issues.

Because district schools have a closed forum, students may not post or distribute materials regarding the meetings of non-curricular student-initiated groups.

(cf. 1325 - Advertising and Promotion)  
(cf. 6145.5 Organizations/Associations)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that due process is followed when resolving disputes regarding student freedom of expression.

(cf. 6145.3 - Publications)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

48907 Exercise of free expression; rules and regulations

51520 Prohibited solicitations on school premises

Perumal et al v. Saddleback Valley Unified School District,  
88 Daily Journal D.A.R. 1426

Policy  
adopted: January 1991

NORRIS SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Bakersfield, California

Students

Freedom of Speech/Expression: Publications Code

Students are prohibited from making any expressions or distributing or posting any materials which are obscene, libelous or slanderous, or which demonstrably incite students to commit unlawful acts on school premises, violate school rules, or substantially disrupt the school's orderly operation. (Education Code 48907)

All printed matter and petitions distributed, circulated or posted on school property shall bear the name and the address or contact location of the sponsoring organization or individual.

Students may not post or distribute materials regarding the meetings of noncurricular student-initiated groups.

Printed materials or petitions may be distributed only:

1. Before school begins, during lunch time, or after dismissal.
2. In locations that do not obstruct the normal flow of traffic within school or at entrances.
3. Without undue noise.

No student shall use coercion to induce students or any other persons to accept printed matter or to sign petitions. No funds or donations shall be collected for any material distributed.

Students violating any of these regulations are subject to disciplinary action.

(cf. 5144 - Discipline)

Clothing/Buttons and Badges

Buttons, badges, armbands or clothing bearing slogans or sayings may be worn unless their message falls within the categories prohibited above. No teacher or administrator shall interfere with this practice on the grounds that the message may be unpopular with students or faculty.

(cf. 5132 - Dress and Grooming)  
(cf. 5136 - Gang Symbols)

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards may be provided where students and student organizations may post materials of general interest.

Freedom of Speech/Expression: Publications Code (continued)

Appeals

The following procedures shall be used to address disputes regarding student freedom of expression:

1. The student and faculty member shall first attempt to resolve the problem by themselves.
2. If the student and faculty member are unable to resolve the dispute, the student and/or faculty member may bring the matter to the principal or designee, who shall hear both sides and strive to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible.
3. If the principal or designee is unable to resolve the dispute, the student and/or faculty member may bring the matter to the Superintendent or designee, who shall hear both sides and strive to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible.
4. If the Superintendent or designee is unable to resolve the dispute, the student and/or faculty member may ask for a hearing to determine whether a deprivation of freedom of expression was justified under the above regulations. This hearing shall be held before the Governing Board or impartial person(s) appointed by the Board as soon as possible after it is requested. Both sides shall be given an opportunity to demonstrate that Board policy and administrative regulations were properly applied.