

## **Students**

### **Freedom of Speech/Expression**

Responsible criticism and reasonable dissent are basic to the free expression of ideas. No idea will be suppressed simply because it is not shared by the majority. However, expressions which are vulgar, lewd, plainly offensive, or involve false statements, substantially disruptive or potentially dangerous content, the use of obscenities, the advocacy of violation of law or official school regulations, or which are inconsistent with the fundamental values of public school education are unacceptable.

#### **Bulletin Boards**

School officials may restrict the use of certain bulletin boards of school announcements. Ample bulletin board space shall be provided for the use of students and student organizations including a reasonable area for notices relating to out-of-school activities or matters of general interest to students. The following general limitations on posting apply:

1. That which is obscene, vulgar, lewd, plainly offensive, libelous, likely to inflame or incite so as to substantially disrupt order, ~~or~~ advocate violation of the law or school regulations, or inconsistent with the fundamental values of public school education will be prohibited.
2. Identification shall be required on any posted notice of the student or student group issuing same.
3. The school shall require that notices or other communications be officially dated before posting and that such material be removed after a prescribed reasonable time to assure full access to the bulletin board.

#### **Petitions, Leaflets, Posters, Etc.**

Any student desiring to distribute handbills, leaflets, petitions or other printed materials in the school, in which he or she is enrolled, must receive prior approval from the Principal of that school or the Principal's designee. After presenting such material to the Principal, the student will receive a decision within two days regarding the distribution thereof. The following limitations apply:

1. The time of such activity shall be limited to periods before school begins and after dismissal.
2. The place of such activity shall be reasonably restricted to permit the normal flow of traffic within the school and at exterior doors.
3. The manner of conducting such activity shall be restricted to prevent undue levels of noise, or to prevent the use of coercion in obtaining signatures on petitions.
4. Student identification shall be required on all printed matter and petitions distributed or circulated on school property.

## Students

### Freedom of Speech/Expression

#### Petitions, Leaflets, Posters, Etc. (continued)

5. The school shall prohibit the distribution of materials which are obscene, vulgar, lewd, plainly offensive, libelous, likely to inflame or incite so as to substantially disrupt order, advocate violation of the law or school regulations, or inconsistent with the fundamental values of public school education.

#### Buttons, Badges, Printed Shirts, Etc.

The school shall prohibit the wearing of buttons, badges, printed shirts, etc. if the message thereon is obscene, vulgar, plainly offensive, libelous, likely to inflame or incite so as to disrupt order, or advocate violation of the law or school regulations, or inconsistent with the fundamental values of public school education.

(cf. 6145.3 - Publications)

Legal Reference: Hazelwood School Dist. v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).

Bethel School Dist. No. 403 v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986)

Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 393 U.S. 503 (1969)

Grayned vs. City of Rockford, 408 U.S. 104 (1972)

First Amendment to U.S. Constitution - Article 1

Connecticut Constitution, Article I, Declaration of Rights, Sections 4, 5

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/09/81)

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NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New Milford, Connecticut