

I. Standards

- A. Student instruction will provide clear professional journalistic and ethical standards including standards of written English for articles prepared for media.
- B. A student journalist may exercise freedom of speech and freedom of the press in school-sponsored media subject to certain restrictions as outlined in I.C. below.
- C. The school system, through the Allegany County Public Schools (ACPS) administrators, may only exercise prior restraint of part or all of a school-sponsored media or production if the content or activity:
 - 1. Is libelous or slanderous;
 - 2. Constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
 - 3. Violates federal or state law;
 - 4. Might reasonably be perceived to advocate drug, alcohol or tobacco use, violence, sex, intolerance, discrimination, or other illegal or prohibited activities;
 - 5. Incites students to:
 - a. Create a clear and present danger of the commission of an unlawful act,
 - b. Violate ACPS policies, or
 - c. Materially and substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the public school;
 - 6. Uses language that has the intent to harass, threaten, or intimidate; or
 - 7. Uses language that may be defined as profane, vulgar, lewd, or obscene.
- D. The school administrator has the burden of proving justification for any action taken to restrict media of student writing and productions.
- E. Advisors/sponsors may not use their position to influence a student journalist to promote an official position of the Board, ACPS, or the school.
- F. Students who express viewpoints in a media that are controversial, unpopular, or critical of faculty, administration, or school policies will not be disciplined based solely on their viewpoint.
- G. Every student will have the right to be considered for participation in school-sponsored media.
- H. All school-sponsored media will have an advisor/sponsor.
- I. Advisors/sponsors may not be dismissed, suspended, disciplined, reassigned, transferred or otherwise retaliated against solely for acting to protect a student journalist who is engaged in conduct that is protected by this policy or Section §7-121(h) of the Education Article, of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

- J. Each advisor/sponsor of a school-sponsored medium will:
 - 1. Provide guidance and direction, as appropriate, on editing, format, layout, content, professionalism, and the provisions of this policy.
 - 2. Review the student work product prior to publication.
 - 3. Be guided by school system policies and procedures and applicable professional standards.
 - 4. Promote the expression of a variety of viewpoints.
- K. Students will not be pressured or coerced to take or read school-sponsored media.
- L. Posters and similar materials associated with school-related activities are subject to the approval of the principal and may only be displayed in accordance with school-based procedures. Posters and similar materials that are not related to school-related activities are subject to the provisions of Policy KJB Distribution and Display of Materials and Announcements.
- M. Advertisements may be published in school-sponsored media subject to established criteria and procedures.
- N. Student journalists who disagree with a decision of an advisor/sponsor or principal related to the content or other aspects of a publication have the right to an appeal.

II. Content

- A. Decisions regarding what will be published in school-sponsored media rest with the editor(s) and advisors/sponsors of the medium, subject to the authority of the principal/designee and the appeal process.
- B. The author's name will be required on each communication submitted for publication. It is the responsibility of the editor and advisor/sponsor to determine the form and method by which an author is identified.

III. Finances and Equity

- A. The advisor/sponsor of school-sponsored media will strive to obtain financial sponsorship to supplement the funds provided by ACPS.
- B. The school will strive to provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in or make contributions to school-sponsored media.

IV. Advertising

All advertisements in school-sponsored media, including programs associated with school-sponsored media, are subject to the provisions of Policy Regulation KJ-R and the following criteria, which will be applied by the advisor/sponsor, subject to the authority of the principal/designee, in determining whether to permit inclusion of such advertisements:

- A. Advertising must be identifiable or labeled as an “advertisement”.
- B. Advertising must be submitted under the name(s) of the individual(s), the name of the business or, in case of unincorporated associations or organizations, and the names of the officers sponsoring the advertisement.
- C. Use of advertisements containing company trademarks or the names and/or pictures of persons who are not public figures must be authorized by the appropriate representative of the company or individual/ organization.
- D. When practical, such as when advertisements appear in a separate section of the media, the section will be preceded with a statement indicating that the advertising does not reflect the viewpoints or policies of the editors, the school or the Board of Education.
- E. The school system, through the ACPS administrators, reserves the right to disapprove part or all of a school-sponsored media advertisement if the content or activity might reasonably be perceived to advocate drug, alcohol or tobacco use, violence, sex, intolerance, discrimination, or other illegal or prohibited activities.

V. Appeal Process

- A. A student who disagrees with a decision of a faculty advisor/sponsor related to the content or other aspects of a media or production may appeal the decision.
- B. The student will meet first with the advisor/sponsor to discuss the decision and ask for reconsideration based on perspectives and considerations presented by the student. The advisor/sponsor will provide a response to the student within two (2) school days from the initial meeting.
- C. If the advisor/sponsor does not provide a decision within two (2) school days, or if the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the advisor/sponsor, then the student may appeal in writing to the principal/designee within two (2) school days.
- D. The principal/designee will endeavor to meet with the student within two (2) school days of receipt of the written appeal. The principal/designee will render a decision within two (2) school days of the meeting with the student.
- E. Principal's decision may be appealed to the Superintendent or designee.
- F. Any further appeal is subject to Section §4-205 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

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