

2432 SCHOOL SPONSORED PUBLICATIONS IN ALL MEDIA

For purposes of this policy, the term “publication” shall include student work distributed on paper, the internet, television and all other media.

The Board of Education permits and encourages the preparation and distribution of all school sponsored publications.

No school sponsored publication may contain materials that:

1. Are grossly prejudicial to a disability, ethnic, national, religious, or racial group or to either gender;
2. Libel any person or persons;
3. Infringe rights of privacy protected by law or regulation;
4. Seek to establish the supremacy of a particular religious denomination, sect, or point of view over any other;
5. Advocate the use or advertise the availability of any substance or material that constitutes a direct and substantial danger to the health of pupils;
6. Contain obscenity or material otherwise deemed to be harmful to impressionable pupils as defined by the faculty advisor;
7. Incite violence, advocate the use of force, or urge the violation of law or school regulations;
8. Solicit funds for non-school organizations when such solicitations have not been approved by the Board;

In addition, excellence in writing will be sought for all publications. A code of ethics adapted from the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics will guide the staff of school publications.

Issues on which opposing points of view have been responsibly promoted, as determined by the faculty advisor, may be introduced in a school sponsored publication provided that all responsible representatives or advocates of all recognized viewpoints are given an equal opportunity to present their views.

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In order to ascertain that school sponsored publications do not violate the standards established by this policy and those delineated in the regulations, the Board of Education encourages the active participation of students in the editorial review process and requires that each publication be reviewed by the faculty advisor pursuant to the procedures outlined in the regulations. A publication that contains material in violation of this policy may not be distributed.

Material cannot be censored merely because it is personally offensive to the reviewer or may tend to embarrass the Board. Pupils must be offered the opportunity to modify or delete any material that violates this policy.

The Board requires that the distribution of school publications take place only at the places and during the times established by regulation in order that the instructional program is not disrupted.

N.J.S.A. 2C:34-3
N.J.S.A. 18A:42-4

Approved: February 20, 2001
Revised: October 23, 2007
Revised: September 1, 2015

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IN ALL MEDIA

The regulations outlined below shall apply to all “Publications” as defined in Policy 2432.

A. Objectives

The program of school sponsored publications is intended to:

1. Disseminate news to those who are actively interested in the school -- pupils, teachers, parents or legal guardians, administrators, alumni/ae, and other members of the school community;
2. Provide a means for the expression of thought;
3. Report actively on school sponsored activities and school district news;
5. Provide training and experience in journalism, television production, graphics, photography, and creative writing;
6. Create an appreciation for the best forms of journalism both in and out of school;
7. Record the history of the school;
8. Teach pupils the rights and responsibilities of the press in a free society.

B. Guidelines

1. Excellence in writing will be sought, and the ethics of responsible journalism will determine what will be printed and produced. All facts printed or produced will be based on careful research.
2. Pupils will have a right to their views and attitudes on all issues, so long as they follow the ethical guidelines of accepted journalistic practice.
3. Constructive criticism is encouraged.
4. A by-line will accompany every printed or produced article or story, with the exception of staff editorials, which represent the majority of the staff’s opinion and are written by multiple authors.

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C. Review and Appeal Procedures

1. Procedures for review and appeal for the inclusion of a piece in any student publication are outlined in Appendix A.

D. Faculty Duties

Faculty advisors to school sponsored publications shall:

1. Serve in a liaison capacity between the staff of the publication and the faculty and administration;
2. Instruct members of the publication staff in proper journalistic techniques and standards;
3. Offer editorial advice and suggestion when necessary;
4. Interpret the publication guidelines set forth in the policy; as they apply to an independent program.
5. Review material intended for publication; and
6. Proofread each publication before it is printed and distributed.

In Effect: February 20, 2001

Revised: October 23, 2007

Revised: September 1, 2015

Appendix A

*Westfield High School
Journalism Review Process
October 2014*

General Review for Student Publications

Each reporter writes his or her story and reviews it before submission. If the story is a video piece, the reporter oversees the video-editing process as well.

The page/section editor, editors-in-chief and advisors review the stories and collaborate with reporters on feedback and edits.

The editors-in-chief make the final call regarding which stories are included for publication and which stories are not included.

The advisors review each piece of the publication to ensure that all stories adhere to the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics, the publication's mission statement, and the curricular guidelines.

Advisor Concerns with a Story

If the advisors have a concern with a story, but staff members do not share that concern, then a staff meeting is held. The entire staff discusses the story. A decision is made on this story via majority vote.

If the majority of students vote in favor of the story and the advisors are still concerned with it, those concerns are brought to the English Department supervisor, with the following individuals present: the advisors, the reporter, the page editor, the editors-in-chief, and one other student who is in favor of the story. After listening to all interested parties, the department supervisor may approve the story (thereby overruling the advisors), prevent the story from running or express similar concerns.

If the advisors and English Department supervisor both have concerns with a story, and the majority of staff members do not share that concern, then the staff may go to the principal with that concern. The principal holds a meeting with all of the individuals listed in the paragraph above, then makes a decision within two days of the meeting on whether or not the story may be published.

Should the majority of students on staff still have a concern over the principal's decision, the staff may appeal to the superintendent, who issues a final decision within three days of receiving the appeal.

Student Concerns with a Story

If any member of the publication's staff is concerned about a story and that concern is not shared by the advisors, a class meeting is held. The entire publication's staff discusses the story. A decision is made on this story via majority vote.

If the majority of students vote in favor of the story but a student is still concerned with it, those concerns are brought to the English Department supervisor, with the following individuals present: the student raising the concern, the reporter, the page editor, the editors-in-chief, and the advisors.

After listening to all interested parties, the English Department supervisor may approve the story, prevent the story from running (thereby overruling the advisors) or express similar concerns.

If the department supervisor sees no issue with the story, and the student is still concerned with the story, then he or she may bring that issue to the principal. The principal holds a meeting with all of the individuals listed in the paragraph above, then makes a final decision within two days of the meeting on whether or not the story may be published.

Should a student still have a concern over the principal's decision, that student may appeal to the superintendent, who will issue a decision within three days of receiving the appeal.

The *Hi's Eye* Code of Ethics

*Adapted from the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics

Preamble:

Hi's Eye believes that ethical behavior is the cornerstone of the newspaper's ability to fairly and accurately inform its readership. The duty of the journalist is to seek the truth and provide a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Journalists should strive to "serve the public with thoroughness and honesty." By adapting this code, *Hi's Eye* is committed to maintaining its credibility and dedicating itself to the preservation of its journalistic integrity.

Seek Truth and Report It

The truth exceeds all else. Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering and reporting news.

- Test the accuracy of information and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error
- Seek out subjects to give them the opportunity to respond to accusations (right of reply)
- Make certain that any additional materials (i.e. photos, headlines) do not mislead or misrepresent
 - Identify sources whenever possible
 - Never distort photos
 - Never plagiarize
 - Tell the story from many, diverse sides
 - Avoid imposing personal cultural values on others
 - Avoid stereotyping at all times
 - Support the open exchange of opinions
 - Give voice to the voiceless

Minimize Harm

Hi's Eye journalists treat sources, subjects and other *Hi's Eye* members with respect and careful scrutiny.

- Be sensitive when dealing with those affected by grief
- Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort, and that journalists do not have a license for arrogance
- Show good taste in reporting
- Do not identify juvenile suspects or victims of crimes, sexual or otherwise
- Always identify yourself as a journalist to potential sources or subjects

Act Independently

Journalists should not take on subjects that may interfere with the school community's right to know.

- Avoid all conflicts of interest, real or perceived
- Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable
- Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests

Be Accountable

Journalists are accountable to their readers and each other.

- Clarify and explain news coverage and invite public dialogue over the newspaper's content
- Encourage the public to voice grievances against the newspaper in the form of letters to the editor
- Admit mistakes and correct them properly

ETHICS

CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT RADIO-TELEVISION NEWS DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

The Radio-Television News Directors Association, wishing to foster the highest professional standards of electronic journalism, promote public understanding of and confidence in electronic journalism, and strengthen principles of journalistic freedom to gather and disseminate information, establishes this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

PREAMBLE

Professional electronic journalists should operate as trustees of the public, seek the truth, report it fairly and with integrity and independence, and stand accountable for their actions.

PUBLIC TRUST: Professional electronic journalists should recognize that their first obligation is to the public.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Understand that any commitment other than service to the public undermines trust and credibility.
- Recognize that service in the public interest creates an obligation to reflect the diversity of the community and guard against oversimplification of issues or events.
- Provide a full range of information to enable the public to make enlightened decisions.
- Fight to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public.

TRUTH: Professional electronic journalists should pursue truth aggressively and present the news accurately, in context, and as completely as possible.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Continuously seek the truth.
- Resist distortions that obscure the importance of events.
- Clearly disclose the origin of information and label all material provided by outsiders.

Professional electronic journalists should not:

- Report anything known to be false.
- Manipulate images or sounds in any way that is misleading.
- Plagiarize.
- Present images or sounds that are reenacted without informing the public.

FAIRNESS: Professional electronic journalists should present the news fairly and impartially, placing primary value on significance and relevance.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Treat all subjects of news coverage with respect and dignity, showing particular compassion to victims of crime or tragedy.
- Exercise special care when children are involved in a story and give children greater

- privacy protection than adults.
- Seek to understand the diversity of their community and inform the public without bias or stereotype.
- Present a diversity of expressions, opinions, and ideas in context.
- Present analytical reporting based on professional perspective, not personal bias.
- Respect the right to a fair trial.

INTEGRITY: Professional electronic journalists should present the news with integrity and decency, avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest, and respect the dignity and intelligence of the audience as well as the subjects of news.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Identify sources whenever possible. Confidential sources should be used only when it is clearly in the public interest to gather or convey important information or when a person providing information might be harmed. Journalists should keep all commitments to protect a confidential source.
- Clearly label opinion and commentary.
- Guard against extended coverage of events or individuals that fails to significantly advance a story, place the event in context, or add to the public knowledge.
- Refrain from contacting participants in violent situations while the situation is in progress.
- Use technological tools with skill and thoughtfulness, avoiding techniques that skew facts, distort reality, or sensationalize events.
- Use surreptitious newsgathering techniques, including hidden cameras or microphones, only if there is no other way to obtain stories of significant public importance and only if the technique is explained to the audience.
- Disseminate the private transmissions of other news organizations only with permission.

Professional electronic journalists should not:

- Pay news sources who have a vested interest in a story.
- Accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.
- Engage in activities that may compromise their integrity or independence.

INDEPENDENCE: Professional electronic journalists should defend the independence of all journalists from those seeking influence or control over news content.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Gather and report news without fear or favor, and vigorously resist undue influence from any outside forces, including advertisers, sources, story subjects, powerful individuals, and special interest groups.
- Resist those who would seek to buy or politically influence news content or who would seek to intimidate those who gather and disseminate the news.
- Determine news content solely through editorial judgment and not as the result of outside influence.
- Resist any self-interest or peer pressure that might erode journalistic duty and service to the public.
- Recognize that sponsorship of the news will not be used in any way to determine, restrict, or manipulate content.
- Refuse to allow the interests of ownership or management to influence news judgment and content inappropriately.
- Defend the rights of the free press for all journalists, recognizing that any professional or government licensing of journalists is a violation of that freedom.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Professional electronic journalists should recognize that they are accountable for their actions to the public, the profession, and themselves.

Professional electronic journalists should:

- Actively encourage adherence to these standards by all journalists and their employers.
- Respond to public concerns. Investigate complaints and correct errors promptly and with as much prominence as the original report.
- Explain journalistic processes to the public, especially when practices spark questions or controversy.
- Recognize that professional electronic journalists are duty-bound to conduct themselves ethically.
- Refrain from ordering or encouraging courses of action that would force employees to commit an unethical act.
- Carefully listen to employees who raise ethical objections and create environments in which such objections and discussions are encouraged.