

Students

Activism and Dissent

The Board of Education recognizes the fundamental right of students to express their views on school property during the regular school day. This freedom of expression will be acceptable under the following conditions:

1. The activity is not disruptive.
2. The activity does not interfere with the rights of other students or staff.

Students must remain fully aware that guarantees of freedom of speech and press does not protect against legal challenges on issues of libel and slander.

The Board of Education encourages students to use student government and school publications to express concerns and opinions.

Students Rights and Responsibilities in Activism and Dissent

The Newtown Board of Education recognizes the students' rights to:

1. Carry or wear buttons, badges, or armbands on school property.
2. Distribute handbills, leaflet, or newspapers at times and in places approved by the Principal. The limitation is necessary to prevent interference with an orderly school program.
3. Collect signatures on petitions at times and in places approved by the Principal.
4. Seek redress from any decision of the school administration to the Superintendent of Schools. The appeal must be made within a period of five school days and the decision rendered within five school days thereafter.

In expressing dissent, students may not:

1. Use obscenities in any manner.
2. Practice disruptive activities
3. Issue false statements about persons or organizations.
4. Advocate violation of school policies and regulations. (They may, however, criticize these policies and regulations.)

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Activism and Dissent (continued)

5. Sell for individual or group profit any papers, handbills, or leaflets on school property.
6. Coerce others or interfere with another's freedom in collecting signatures on petitions.
7. Collect signatures in any class period, library, or study room.
8. Distribute any materials without prior review by the Principal.

Punishment for a violation of these guidelines will be administered by a designated staff member and may range from oral warning/reprimands to detentions, suspension or expulsion.

Freedom of Speech/Expression

The school district shall assume no responsibility for the contents of any written material produced, posted, circulated or otherwise distributed, or of student conduct, taken in accordance with this policy, insofar as such matter or conduct may relate to any interests other than those of an orderly and efficient educational process and proper school environments.

In order to protect the educational process and school environment, printed material produced or distributed within the confines of school district property shall meet the following criteria:

1. Material shall be noncommercial.
2. Material shall not contain libelous or obscene language.
3. Material shall not advocate illegal actions.
4. Material shall not contain statements or innuendoes that would subject any person to hatred, ridicule, contempt or injury of reputation.
5. Material will not threaten to disrupt the educational process of the school.
6. Material shall not advocate action that would endanger the health or safety of students.
7. Material shall not invade the lawful rights of others.
8. Material published, posted or otherwise distributed shall bear the names of at least two students principally involved in the promotion of this material and, when applicable, the name of the sponsoring student organization or group.
- 9.. Distributors of materials will be held responsible for cleaning up litter caused by such distribution.

Students

(cf. 1220 – Citizens’ Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1312 - Public Complaints)

(cf. 6144 - Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 - Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

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

Amendment of U.S. Constitution - Article I.

Connecticut Constitution, Article First, Declaration of Rights, Sections 4, 5.

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