

Technical Academies of Minnesota

Adopted: Orig. 6/23/2013

Revised: 8/25/2020

502 DISTRIBUTION OF NON SCHOOL-SPONSORED MATERIALS ON SCHOOL PREMISES BY STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect the exercise of District students' and staff' free speech rights, taking into consideration the educational objectives and responsibilities of the District.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The District recognizes that students and staff have the right to express themselves on District property. This protection includes the right to distribute, at a reasonable time and place and in a reasonable manner, nonschool-sponsored material.
- B. To protect First Amendment rights, while at the same time preserving the integrity of the educational objectives and responsibilities of the District, the School Board adopts the following regulations and procedures regarding distribution of nonschool-sponsored material on District property and at District activities.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Distribution" means circulation or dissemination of material by means of handing out free copies, selling or offering copies for sale, accepting donations for copies, or posting or displaying material.
- B. "Non school-sponsored material" or "unofficial material" includes all materials or objects intended for distribution, except school newspapers, employee newsletters, literary magazines, yearbooks and other publications funded and/or sponsored or authorized by the District. Examples of nonschool-sponsored materials include but are not limited to leaflets, brochures, buttons, badges, flyers, petitions, posters, and underground newspapers whether written by District students or staff or others, and tangible objects.
- C. "Obscene to minors" means:
 - 1. The average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the material, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest of minors of the age to whom distribution is requested;
 - 2. The material depicts or describes, in a manner that is patently offensive to

prevailing standards in the adult community concerning how such conduct should be presented to minors of the age to whom distribution is requested, sexual conduct such as intimate sexual acts (normal or perverted), masturbation, excretory functions, and lewd exhibition of the genitals; and

3. The material, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.
- D. "Minor" means any person under the age of eighteen (18).
- E. "Material and substantial disruption" of a normal District activity means:
1. Where the normal District activity is an educational program of the District for which student attendance is compulsory, "material and substantial disruption" is defined as any disruption that interferes with or impedes the implementation of that program.
 2. Where the normal District activity is voluntary in nature (including, without limitation, District athletic events, plays and concerts, and lunch periods) "material and substantial disruption" is defined as student rioting, unlawful seizures of property, conduct inappropriate to the event, participation in a school boycott, demonstration, sit-in, stand-in, walk-out, or other related forms of activity. In order for expression to be considered disruptive, there must exist specific facts upon which the likelihood of disruption can be forecast, including past experience in the school, current events influencing student activities and behavior, and instances of actual or threatened disruption relating to the written material in question.
- F. "School activities" means any activity sponsored by the District.
- G. "Libelous" is a false and unprivileged statement about a specific individual that tends to harm the individual's reputation or to lower that individual in the esteem of the community.

IV. GUIDELINES

- A. District students and staff have the right to distribute, at reasonable times and places as set forth in this policy, and in a reasonable manner, nonschool-sponsored material.
- B. Requests for distribution of nonschool-sponsored material will be reviewed by the District staff on a case-by-case basis. However, distribution of the materials listed below is always prohibited. Material is prohibited that:
 1. Is libelous or slanderous;
 2. Is pervasively indecent or vulgar or contains any indecent or vulgar language or representations, with a determination made as to the appropriateness of the material for the age level of students to which it is intended.
 3. Advertises or promotes any product or service not permitted to minors by law;

4. Advocates violence or other illegal conduct;
5. Constitutes insulting or fighting words, the very expression of which injures or harasses other people (e.g., threats of violence, defamation of character or of a person's race, religious or ethnic origin);
6. Presents a clear and present likelihood that, either because of its content or the manner of distribution, it will cause a material and substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the District or District activities, will cause the commission of unlawful acts or the violation of lawful school regulations.

V. TIME, PLACE, AND MANNER OF DISTRIBUTION

- A. No non school-sponsored material shall be distributed during and at the place of a normal District activity if it is reasonably likely to cause a material and substantial disruption of that activity.
- B. Distribution of nonschool-sponsored material is prohibited when it blocks the safe flow of traffic within corridors and entranceways of the school.

VI. PROCEDURES

- A. Any District student or staff wishing to distribute non-school sponsored material must first submit for approval a copy of the material to the District staff at least 24 hours in advance of desired distribution time, together with the following information:
 1. Name and phone number of the person submitting the request and, if a student, the room number of his or her first-period class.
 2. Date(s) and time(s) of day intended display or distribution.
 3. Location where material will be displayed or distributed;
 4. If intended for students, the grade(s) of students to whom the display or distribution is intended.
- B. Within three school days, the District staff will review the request and render a decision. In the event that permission to distribute the material is denied or limited, the person submitting the request should be informed in writing of the reasons for the denial or limitation.
- C. If the person submitting the request does not receive a response within three school days, the person shall contact the District staff to verify that the lack of response was not due to an inability to locate the person.
- D. If the person is dissatisfied with the decision of the District staff, the person may submit a written request for appeal to the Board Chairperson. If the person does not receive a response within three (3) school days (not counting Saturdays, Sundays and holidays) of submitting the appeal, the person shall contact the Board Chairperson to verify that the

lack of response is not due to an inability to locate the person.

- E. Permission or denial of permission to distribute material does not imply approval or disapproval of its contents by either the District, the District staff, the School Board, or the individual reviewing the material submitted.

VII. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- A. Distribution by any student of nonschool-sponsored material prohibited herein or in violation of the provisions of time, place and manner of distribution as described above will be halted and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the District's Student Discipline Policy.
- B. Distribution by any District staff of nonschool-sponsored material prohibited herein or in violation of the provisions of time, place and manner of distribution as described above will be halted and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, in accordance with any individual contract, District policies and procedures, and/or governing statute.
- C. Any other party violating this policy will be requested to leave the District property immediately and, if necessary, the police will be called.

VIII. NOTICE OF POLICY TO STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

A copy of this policy will be published in student handbooks.

Legal References: U.S. Constitution, First Amendment.
Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S.Ct. 562, 98 L.Ed.2d 592 (1988).
Bethel Sch. Dist. No. 403 v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675, 106 S.Ct. 3159, 92 L.Ed.2d 549 (1986).
Tinker V. Des Moines Indep. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503, 89 S.Ct. 733, 21 L.Ed.2d 731 (1969)
Bystrom v. Fridley High School, 822 F.2d 747 (8th Cir. 1986).