

Activity 3.1



Put it in writing

A well-written publication policy clearly defines the roles of the administration, adviser and staff. It establishes the limits for each group so that a violation of the policy can be discussed and resolved. It creates a standard procedure for advertising, obituaries and sales.

In many school districts, a student publication policy is drafted by the staff and the administration working together and then approved by the superintendent and the school board, depending on how many levels of approval are necessary within your district.

A few states, after the Hazelwood ruling, now require school districts by law to adopt a student publications policy.

- If your school district already has a student publication policy in place, read and discuss your school's policy.
- If your publication does not have an editorial policy, invite an administrator to visit with your class to provide ideas for drafting and adopting your own. Areas to consider include:

What is the role of the editors, staff, adviser and administration in determining content?

How will the staff handle material which may be copyright protected, libelous, irresponsible or may advocate an illegal activity?

Portrait Policy: What must students and faculty do to ensure inclusion in the yearbook?

Book Sales Policy: Will exchanges or returns be accepted?

Advertising Policy: What content guidelines must ads meet? Is there a model release form for students appearing in the advertisements? How may students, parents or clubs purchase ad space?

Obituary Policy: How will deaths of students or school personnel be covered in the yearbook?

If your staff is drafting a publications policy, divide into small groups with each group writing a portion of the policy.