

**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION POLICIES**

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE HIGH SCHOOL “HAWKEYE”

RATIFIED AND APPROVED: 12/16/02

MINOR REVISIONS: 6/1/08, 9/4/10 &amp; 9/1/12

THIS DRAFT UNDER REVIEW BY THE HSM EDITORIAL BOARD FOR UPDATES (1/17/25)

**HAWKEYE Mission Statement**

The HAWKEYE’s mission, as an open public forum faithfully serving our audience since 1960, is to provide the MTHS community with quality, thought-provoking, student produced publications.

In these efforts, the HAWKEYE has established several open forums for the exchange of information, opinions, and artistic expression dedicated to those in the MTHS community.

**HAWKEYE Editorial Policy**

Editorials, Editorial Columns and Letters to the Editor serve as a forum to express opinions, in a well-written and thoughtful manner. Letters to the Editor are signed and should be no more than 200 words. Editorial Columns are signed, usually exceed 200 words and are customarily related to news content. Editorials are unsigned since they represent the views of the leadership staff (Editorial Board) of the HAWKEYE. Views in all forums do not necessarily reflect the views of the HAWKEYE staff, the MTHS student body, the faculty, the administration nor the School Board. The HAWKEYE staff determines whether submissions shall be printed. No unsigned submissions will be printed. Editorial Columns should be submitted to the Editorial Editor at [editorial@TheHawkeye.org](mailto:editorial@TheHawkeye.org).

**Letters to the Editor Policy**

For more than five decades, the opinion pages of the HAWKEYE have served as a public forum for the exchange of comment and criticism. These pages are open to students, staff, parents, and others interested in MTHS.

It is the tradition of the HAWKEYE to print as many letters to the editor as space allows in each issue. The HAWKEYE reserves the right to not print any letter.

All letters to the editor must include the author’s name, signature, and title (such as class or position). Typed, double-spaced letters are preferred, but legible, hand-written letters are acceptable. Letters should not exceed 200 words, or one double-spaced, typed page.

Letters to the Editor should be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief or the Opinion Editor. All submissions may be submitted via e-mail at [opinion@TheHawkeye.org](mailto:opinion@TheHawkeye.org), in person in Room 130 at MTHS, or placed in the adviser’s mailbox in the main office.

**Advertising Policy**

The HAWKEYE will not accept advertising that the staff believes to be:

- » factually inaccurate
- » designed to mislead, deceive or defraud
- » containing malicious, vindictive, or unsubstantiated attacks
- » offering goods and/or services illegal for teens to possess, buy, or use

- » libelous
- » obscene, or
- » certain to create imminent danger or disruption to the educational mission of MTHS.

The advertisements printed within and/or distributed by the HAWKEYE do not necessarily reflect the views of the HAWKEYE, MTHS students, the faculty, the administration, the School Board nor the community.

In the event that the HAWKEYE receives a request to print an ad that the publication staff believes might cause controversy, the ad will be fully discussed by the Editorial Board, who may also seek input from MTHS staff, students and community. The final decision whether to accept and publish such an ad is completely within the jurisdiction of the Editorial Board of the HAWKEYE.

Payment by the advertiser for the advertisement is to be received no later than 21 days after the issue in which the ad appears is distributed. If payment is not received by this time, all discounts will be voided. Yearlong or multi-issue contract advertisers have the option of paying after each issue, in installments, or paying in full prior to Monday of the last week of the school year.

Before an unsolicited advertisement is published, the ad must meet the criteria listed in the HAWKEYE Advertising Policy. All unsolicited ads will receive equal consideration with solicited ads for publication. Unsolicited ads will be carefully examined to insure the business/service is legitimate.

If a client's ad (solicited or unsolicited) is deemed unacceptable by the HAWKEYE General Manager and/or Editorial Board, the advertiser will be contacted in a timely manner. The HAWKEYE Business Staff will work in conjunction with the advertiser to develop an ad that meets the requirements of the HAWKEYE Advertising Policy while still benefiting the client.

### **Comics and Editorial Cartoons Policy**

The comics and editorial pages of the HAWKEYE serve as a forum for student expression. The HAWKEYE staff invites MTHS students to submit their works for publication. In order to be published, a comic or editorial cartoon must meet or exceed the following standards:

1. The comic or editorial cartoon must be original. Any comic or editorial cartoon that is copied or plagiarized will not be accepted. However, we feel satire is acceptable in many cases.
2. The comics are judged by the Editorial Board and editorial cartoons by the editorial page editor based on the quality of artwork and the general theme or punch line.
3. Comics and editorial cartoons may express any political or religious views the artist may have. The HAWKEYE will not prejudge any comics or editorial cartoons based on a political or religious message. Comics or editorial cartoons that attack specific people or groups of people in a malicious or ill-natured way will not be accepted.
4. Specific people appearing in the form of caricatures in comics or editorial cartoons have the right to be informed of their appearance.
5. Comics or editorial cartoons may not contain profanities that would not be acceptable in a typical school situation.
6. In the event that there are not enough quality comics to fill the comics section, said section will not be printed.
7. No comics will be accepted without the approval of the Editorial Board and editorial page editor.

### **Policy Ratification and Amendment**

New policies and amendments to existing policies must be ratified by the Editorial Board with a unanimous vote; or, if a unanimous vote is not possible, a majority vote with no more than one abstention is acceptable. New policies and amended policies must be published in a new version of this Staff Manual and, if appropriate, published on the HAWKEYE staff intra-web account on Basecamp.

Once a policy has been ratified, all staff members are expected to abide by the policy.

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### **HAWKEYE Publication Policies**

*This version 12/16/02; based on the Student Press Law Center Model Guidelines for Student Media*

## **I. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

### **A. Philosophical Foundation**

Freedom of expression and press freedom are fundamental values in a democratic society. The mission of any institution committed to preparing productive citizens must include teaching students these values, both by lesson and by example.

As determined by the courts, student exercise of freedom of expression and press freedom is protected by both state and federal law, especially by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Additionally, Article I, Section 5 of the Washington State Constitution reads: Every person may freely speak, write and publish on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right.

Accordingly, public school officials are responsible for encouraging and ensuring freedom of expression and press freedom for all students. Therefore, it is the policy of the HAWKEYE, the MTHS Administration and the Edmonds School District Board of Education that the HAWKEYE and its subsidiary publications (faces, HAWKEYE online, special editions, etc.), the official, school-sponsored student print and online news media of Mountlake Terrace High School, have been established as forums for student expression and as voices in the uninhibited, robust, free and open discussion of issues. Each medium should provide a full opportunity for students to inquire, question and exchange ideas. Content should reflect all areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be dissent or controversy.

### **B. Edmonds School Dist. Board Policy 7375**

“Student Publications (Adopted Revised 1/19/93). Student publications produced as part of the school’s curriculum or with the support of the associated student body fund are intended to serve both as vehicles for instruction and student communication. Student publications are a valuable means of expression under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. To the extent the material appearing in such publications does not disrupt the learning environment, students should have broad discretion over what does appear. Such material may not be libelous, obscene, or profane nor may it cause a substantial disruption of the school, invade the privacy of others, demean any race, religion, sex, or ethnic group, advocate the violation of the law, or advertise tobacco products, liquor, illicit drugs, or drug paraphernalia.”

The policy may be found here: [www.edmonds.wednet.edu/site/Default.aspx?PageID=208](http://www.edmonds.wednet.edu/site/Default.aspx?PageID=208)

*Therefore, it is the policy of the HAWKEYE, the MTHS Administration and the Edmonds School District Board of Education that student journalists shall have the right to determine the content of student media. Accordingly, the following guidelines relate only to establishing grounds for disciplinary actions subsequent to publication.*

## **II. OFFICIAL STUDENT MEDIA**

### **A. Responsibilities of Student Journalists**

Students who work on official, school-sponsored student publications or electronic media determine the content of their respective publications and are responsible for that content. These students should:

1. Determine the content of the student media;
2. Strive to produce media based upon professional standards of accuracy, objectivity and fairness;
3. Review material to improve sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation;
4. Check and verify all facts and verify the accuracy of all quotations; and
5. In the case of editorials or letters to the editor concerning controversial issues, determine the need for rebuttal comments and opinions and therefore provide space, if appropriate.

### **B. Unprotected Expression**

The following types of student expression will not be protected:

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1. Material that is “obscene as to minors.” Obscene as to minors is defined as material that meets all three of the following requirements:
  - (a) the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the publication, taken as a whole, appeals to a minor’s prurient interest in sex; and
  - (b) the publication depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct such as ultimate sexual acts (normal or perverted), masturbation and lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
  - (c) the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value. Indecent or vulgar language is not obscene.
2. Libelous material. Libelous statements are provably false and unprivileged statements of fact that do demonstrated injury to an individual’s or business’s reputation in the community. If the allegedly libeled party is a “public figure” or “public official” as defined below, then school officials must show that the false statement was published “with actual malice,” i.e., that the student journalists knew that the statement was false or that they published it with reckless disregard for the truth without trying to verify the truthfulness of the statement.
  - (a) A public official is a person who holds an elected or appointed public office and exercises a significant amount of governmental authority.
  - (b) A public figure is a person who either has sought the public’s attention or is well known because of personal achievements or actions.
  - (c) School employees will be considered public officials or public figures in relationship to articles concerning their school-related activities.
  - (d) When an allegedly libelous statement concerns an individual who is not a public official or a public figure, school officials must show that the false statement was published willfully or negligently, i.e., the student journalist who wrote or published the statement has failed to exercise reasonably prudent care.
  - (e) Students are free to express opinions. Specifically, a student may criticize school policy or the performance of teachers, administrators, school officials and other school employees.
3. Material that will cause “a material and substantial disruption of school activities.”
  - (a) Disruption is defined as student rioting, unlawful seizures of property, destruction of property, or substantial student participation in a school boycott, sit-in, walkout or other related form of activity. Material such as racial, religious or ethnic slurs, however distasteful, is not in and of itself disruptive under these guidelines.

Threats of violence are not materially disruptive without some act in furtherance of that threat or a reasonable belief and expectation that the author of the threat has the capability and intent of carrying through on that threat in a manner that does not allow acts other than suppression of speech to mitigate the threat in a timely manner. Material that stimulates heated discussion or debate does not constitute the type of disruption prohibited.

- (b) For student media to be considered disruptive, specific facts must exist upon which one could reasonably forecast that a likelihood of immediate, substantial material disruption to normal school activity would occur if the material were further distributed or has occurred as a result of the material’s distribution or dissemination.

Mere undifferentiated fear or apprehension of disturbance is not enough; school administrators must be able affirmatively to show substantial facts that reasonably support a forecast of likely disruption.

- (c) In determining whether student media is disruptive, consideration must be given to the context of the distribution as well as the content of the material. In this regard, consideration should be given to past experience in the school with similar material, past experience in the school in dealing with and supervising the students in the school, current events influencing student attitudes and behavior and whether there have been any instances of actual or threatened disruption prior to or contemporaneously with the dissemination of the student publication in question.
- (d) School officials must protect advocates of unpopular viewpoints.

- (e) “School activity” means educational student activity sponsored by the school and includes, by way of example and not by way of limitation, classroom work, official assemblies and other similar gatherings, school athletic contests, band concerts, school plays and scheduled in-school lunch periods.

### C. Legal Advice

1. If, in the opinion of a student editor, student Editorial Staff or faculty adviser, material proposed for publication may be “obscene,” “libelous” or would cause an “immediate, material and substantial disruption of school activities,” the legal opinion of a practicing attorney should be sought. The services of the attorney for the local newspaper or the free legal services of the Student Press Law Center [www.splc.org or (703) 807-1904] are recommended.
2. Any legal fees charged in connection with the consultation will be paid by the board of education.
3. The final decision of whether the material is to be published will be left to the student editor or student Editorial Staff.

### D. Protected Speech

1. School officials cannot:
  - a. Ban student expression solely because it is controversial, takes extreme, fringe or minority opinions, or is distasteful, unpopular or unpleasant;
  - b. Ban the publication or distribution of material relating to sexual issues including, but not limited to, virginity, birth control and sexually-transmitted diseases (including AIDS);
  - c. Censor or punish the occasional use of indecent, vulgar or so-called “four-letter” words in student publications;
  - d. Prohibit criticism of the policies, practices or performance of teachers, school officials, the school itself or of any public officials;
  - e. Cut off funds to official student media because of disagreement over editorial policy;
  - f. Ban student expression that merely advocates illegal conduct without proving that such speech is directed toward and will actually cause imminent unlawful action.
  - g. Ban the publication or distribution by students of material written by non-students;
  - h. Prohibit the endorsement of candidates for student office or for public office at any level, nor prohibit the endorsement of initiatives, referenda, or other measures brought before citizens including school levies and bonds.
2. Commercial Speech.

Advertising is constitutionally protected expression. Student media may accept advertising. Acceptance or rejection of advertising is within the purview of the publication staff, which may accept any ads except those for products or services that are illegal for all students. Ads for political candidates and ballot issues may be accepted; however publication staffs are encouraged to solicit ads from all sides on such issues.

### E. On-Line Student Media and Use of Electronic Information Resources

#### 1. On-Line Student Media.

Online media, including websites, e-mail, social media, listserves and discussion groups, may be used by students like any other communications media to reach both those within the school and those beyond it. All official, school-sponsored online student publications are entitled to the same protections and are subject to no greater limitations than other student media, as described in this policy.

#### 2. Electronic Information Resources.

Student journalists may use electronic information resources, including websites, e-mail, social media, listserves and discussion groups, to gather news and information, to communicate with other students and individuals and to ask questions of and consult with sources. School officials will apply the same criteria

used in determining the suitability of other educational and information resources to attempts to remove or restrict student media access to online and electronic material. Just as the purchase, availability and use of media materials in a classroom or library does not indicate endorsement of their content by school officials, neither does making electronic information available to students imply endorsement of that content.

Although faculty advisers to student media are encouraged to help students develop the intellectual skills needed to evaluate and appropriately use electronically available information to meet their news gathering purposes, advisers are not responsible for approving the online resources used or created by their students.

### 3. Acceptable Use Policies.

The Board recognizes that the technical and networking environment necessary for online communication may require that school officials define guidelines for student exploration and use of electronic information resources. The purpose of such guidelines will be to provide for the orderly, efficient and fair operation of the school's online resources. The guidelines may not be used to unreasonably restrict student use of or communication on the online media.

Such guidelines may address the following issues: file size limits, password management, system security, data downloading protocol, use of domain names, use of copyrighted software, access to computer facilities, computer hacking, computer etiquette and data privacy.

## III. ADVISER JOB SECURITY

The student media adviser is not a censor. No person who advises a student publication will be fired, transferred or removed from the advisership by reason of his or her refusal to exercise editorial control over student media or to otherwise suppress the protected free expression of student journalists.

## IV. NON-SCHOOL-SPONSORED MEDIA

A. Non-school-sponsored student media and the students who produce them are entitled to the protections provided in section II(D) of this policy. In addition school officials may not ban the distribution of non-school-sponsored student media on school grounds.

However, students who distribute material described in section II(B) of this policy may be subject to reasonable discipline after distribution at school has occurred.

1. School officials may reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of distribution.
    - (a) Non-school-sponsored media will have the same rights of distribution as official student media;
    - (b) "Distribution" means dissemination of media to students at a time and place of normal school activity, or immediately prior or subsequent thereto, by means of handing out free copies, selling or offering copies for sale, accepting donations for copies of the media or displaying the media in areas of the school which are generally frequented by students.
  2. School officials cannot:
    - (a) Prohibit the distribution of anonymous literature or other student media or require that it bear the name of the sponsoring organization or author;
    - (b) Ban the distribution of student media because it contains advertising;
    - (c) Ban the sale of student media; or
    - (d) Create regulations that discriminate against non-school-sponsored media or interfere with the effective distribution of sponsored or non-sponsored media.
- B. These regulations do not apply to media independently produced or obtained and distributed by students off school grounds and without school resources. Such material is fully protected by the First Amendment and is not subject to regulation by school authorities. Reference to or minimal contact with a school will not subject otherwise independent media, such as an independent, student-produced Web site, to school regulation.

## V. PRIOR RESTRAINT

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## **OFFICIAL PUBLICATION POLICIES**

No student media, whether non-school-sponsored or official, will be reviewed by school administrators prior to distribution or withheld from distribution. The school assumes no liability for the content of any student publication, and urges all student journalists to recognize that with editorial control comes responsibility, including the responsibility to follow professional journalism standards each school year.

### **VI. CIRCULATION OF GUIDELINES**

A reference to these guidelines will be included in the handbook on student rights and responsibilities and circulated to all students. The actual draft of these guidelines will be kept with the Editorial Board, the adviser, the administrative team, and FANs – the HAWKEYE’s Family Alumni Network.