


Principals are responsible for ensuring the content of student publications, including print material on school-related clothing or spiritwear, is aligned with expectations for student inquiry and expression as published in the [MCPS Students Rights and Responsibilities](#). Printed material and publications must not include any content (photos, text, etc.) in violation of these standards. While student editors and student publication advisors engage in the initial rounds of editing, **a school administrator must review the final draft of any printed items (publications, clothing etc.) prior to printing or publication.** Guidance for the review of content by the editors, advisor *and* school administrator is as follows:

Establish Clear Content Expectations	
	Principals are responsible for ensuring that student publication sponsors have set written guidelines for acceptable content before production begins. Clear rules help staff members recognize problems early rather than fixing them after layout is finished.
	<p>The guidelines must follow the <i>MCPS Students Rights and Responsibilities</i> for Freedom of Inquiry & Expression. The following are strictly prohibited for images, print and all content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • messages of hate or bias, discriminatory symbols or images; • language or images associated with gangs; • lewd, vulgar, obscene, language or images or those of a revealing or sexual nature; and/or • content that promotes drugs prohibited on MCPS property as set forth in <i>Regulation IGO-RA, Guidelines for Incidents of Alcohol, Cannabis, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Involving Students</i>. <p>Furthermore, the Board prohibits the use of language and/or the display of images and symbols that promote hate and can be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to school or district operations or activities.</p>
	<p>In addition, content cannot contain or promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profanity or vulgar language • Bullying, harassment, or ridicule of individuals or groups • Invasion of privacy (embarrassing or private moments)
Carefully Examine Photos	
	<p>Photos can even unintentionally capture inappropriate moments. Photographers should scan and review the background prior to taking the photo. Sponsors, editors and school administrators should check for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand gestures or body language that could be offensive • Clothing or signs with inappropriate language or imagery • Background details such as alcohol, drugs, or obscene gestures • Embarrassing or humiliating situations involving students, staff or families • Unsafe or illegal behavior
Review and Monitor Captions, Headlines & Quotes	
	Text can create problems even if the photo itself is appropriate
	Sponsors, editors and school administrators should check for:

← Guidance - Reviewing Student Publications

- Quotes containing **profanity, or suggestive references**
- Language that **implies wrongdoing without verification**
- **Sarcasm or teasing** that could be interpreted as bullying

Reference: *Scholastic Journalism (12th Edition)*