

Policy Manual for The Mirror
Official Student Newspaper at Northwood School
92 Northwood Road
Lake Placid, NY 12946

Adopted on August 10, 2018

Part One: Balancing Freedom and Structure

INTRODUCTION¹

Balancing individual freedom and group structure is a fundamental principle of both democracy and scholastic journalism. Good schools engage in democratic learning and authentic journalism when they strike a proper balance between the press rights of students and the pedagogic responsibilities of educators. Students are empowered but not emancipated; educators are authoritative but not authoritarian; and the school culture is collaborative and not autocratic.

No competent stakeholder in scholastic journalism believes students should have unbridled control of their news medium. Nor do they believe school authorities should have autocratic control of the *student* press. A proper balance sets parameter of control for both students and school authorities.

Educator Paulo Freire offers a measure for proper balance: "If the authority of the [educator] goes beyond the limits authority has to have in relation to the students' freedom, then we no longer have authority. We no longer have freedom. We have *authoritarianism*."

Students should understand that they are custodians, not owners, of their news medium. They have an inherent obligation in decision-making to consider the heritage of their news medium, the values of the school community, the tenets of the school mission, the pedagogic responsibilities of school officials and the wants, needs and interests of their news consumers.

Public school authorities should understand they serve as agents of the state and are obligated to recognize the First Amendment rights of students as defined by judicial rulings and/or extended by state legislation. In schools where communication is accompanied by accountability, transparency, partnership, respect, trust, ethics and competent leadership, democratic learning and scholastic journalism can thrive. The policy contained herein is designed to cultivate free and responsible student news media in a school environment that inspires civic engagement and First Amendment values.

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY²

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. Accordingly, school officials are responsible for encouraging and ensuring freedom of expression and press freedom for all students.

It is the policy of Northwood School that its official, school-sponsored student newspaper, The Mirror, has been established as a forum for student expression.

The Mirror should provide a full opportunity for students and other citizens to inquire, question and exchange ideas. Content should reflect all areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be dissent or controversy.

It is the policy of Northwood School that student journalists shall have the right to determine the content of student media, in accordance with the following guidelines.

II. OFFICIAL STUDENT MEDIA²

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 provide space therefore if appropriate.

B. Unprotected Expression

The following types of student expression will not be protected:

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.
- (c) The work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

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) Northwood 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 critical opinions about policies and practices of school officials. In disseminating critical perspectives, students should follow professional journalistic standards and ethical guidelines to minimize harm.

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 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

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.

D. Protected Speech

1. School officials cannot:

- (a) Ban student expression solely because it is controversial, disagreeable, unpopular or unpleasant;
- (b) Ban the publication or distribution of constitutionally-protected material relating to sexual issues;
- (c) Prohibit criticism of the policies and practices of teachers, school officials, the school itself or any public officials;
- (d) Cut off funds to official student media because of disagreement over editorial policy;
- (e) Ban the publication or distribution by students of material written by non-students.

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.

On-line media, including Internet Websites, e-mail and listservs 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 on-line 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 Internet Web sites, e-mail and listservs to gather news and information, to communicate on journalism matters 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 attempt to remove or restrict student media access to on-line and electronic material. Just as the purchase, availability and use of media materials in a classroom or library does not indicate endorsement of their contents 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 newsgathering purposes, advisers are not responsible for approving the on-line resources used or created by their students.

3. Acceptable Use Policies

Northwood School recognizes that the technical and networking environment necessary for on-line 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 on-line resources. The guidelines may not be used to unreasonably restrict student use of or communication on the on-line 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. PRIOR RESTRAINT

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.

V. CIRCULATION

The Mirror will be published and made available online free of charge at a convenient time and place determined collaboratively by the editorial board.

Part Two: Mission, Organization, Practices

INTRODUCTION

The best interests of the school community are served by building a partnership among the stakeholders of scholastic journalism—including students, their adviser(s), parents, educators, administrators, school trustees and professional journalists, among others. An outcome of such a partnership should be responsible, authentic journalism that advances the school mission and contributes to community welfare. Student journalists will engage in democratic learning and ethical decision-making; they will pursue high standards of journalism; and they will practice the **3 R's of the First Amendment: Rights, Responsibility and Respect**. Other stakeholders will support scholastic journalism by being accessible, ethical, accountable, transparent and trusting. They will prioritize the school mission above personal vulnerability; they will be collaborative rather than autocratic; and they will participate in protocol-making for ethical decision-making.

Part Two of this policy manual defines the **mission** of the student newspaper and provides some of the philosophy integrated in the journalism program. Part Two also explains the **organization** of the newspaper staff and **practices** that guide the effective management of the staff and the implementation of rules.

I. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Mirror is to engage students in authentic American journalism as defined by the “Elements of Journalism” and the “Functions of the Student Press” (listed below) and to provide a forum for students and the community to share perspectives and to acquire information they need to make wise choices in our democratic society. By engaging in authentic journalism, The Mirror inspires civic participation, democratic learning and an appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a free society.

A. Elements of Journalism³

1. Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.
2. Its first loyalty is to citizens.
3. Its essence is a discipline of verification.
4. Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover.
5. It must serve as an independent monitor of power.
6. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.
7. It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.
8. It must keep the news comprehensive and in proportion.
9. Its practitioners have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience.
10. Citizens, too, have rights and responsibilities when it comes to the news.

B. Functions of the Student Press⁴

- 1. To Educate.** Beyond the diverse skills journalism hones for its practitioners, its news media *educate* their consumers about “practical matters and issues” as well as more “abstract ideas and concepts.”
- 2. To Inform.** From posting the school calendar to showing which topics letter writers are concerned about, student news media *inform* in ways that offer both convenient and essential services.
- 3. To Promote Diversity.** In its range of coverage, from issues and perspectives to creeds and cultures, media provide *diverse* voices consideration in the “marketplace of ideas.”
- 4. To Involve People.** As a forum for all, student media *involve people* throughout the community in conversations about issues and events.
- 5. To Find Common Ground.** Reporting differences can also help the discovery of *common ground*, which boosts civility and tolerance.
- 6. To Encourage Discussion.** When they *encourage discussion*, student media open opportunities that can help eliminate distrust, alienation, misunderstanding and other detrimental features of a poor relationship.
- 7. To Entertain.** By providing responsible *entertainment*, student media can lift morale and improve the school climate.
- 8. To Persuade.** In editorials, columns, letters, advertising and other features, the chance *to persuade* satisfies an inherent need of people and contributes to the potential for improvement.
- 9. To Interpret.** In a world deluged with information, the student media *interpret* the facts and provide a

context that reveals significance.

10. To Share School Culture. Student media *share school culture*, preserving its history and impacting its present state.

11. To Promote Civility. Student media offer a responsible alternative to social-networking sites for students to engage in civil discussion without the threat of “cyberbullying.” Further, student media help to cultivate civility among people of the diverse cultures, races, religions and other dimensions of school demographics.

II. ORGANIZATION

A. Requirements for Joining The Mirror Staff

1. Be a member of a journalism class, including independent study students. (In special circumstances with the approval of the editor and adviser, a student stringer may be welcomed as a guest staff member);
2. Have an aptitude for journalism;
3. Have adequate communication skills to achieve success in journalism;
4. Show evidence of good character and the qualities of a good reporter (i.e., objective, independent, accurate, responsible, trustworthy, intrinsically motivated, curious, persistent and passionate);

If the class capacity is reached, the adviser will determine which students best meet the aptitude and attributes for taking the class. (The adviser’s decision may be appealed to the Dean of Academic Affairs.)

B. Editorial Board / Selection and Responsibilities

1. The editorial board will consist of:

- (a) Editor(s)-in-chief
 - (b) Managing editor (if there is only one editor-in-chief)
 - (c) News editor
 - (d) Opinion editor
 - (e) Feature editor
 - (f) Sports editor
 - (g) Photography editor
 - (h) Adviser (non-voting member)
- (In the case of co-editors, duties of the managing editor will be divided and absorbed by the editors.)
(The adviser and editor may agree to modify the structure of board positions at any time.)

2. Selection of Editors

- (a) Seniors on the outgoing editorial board will select the new chief editor/coeditors with the advice and consent of the adviser during the third trimester of school.
- (b) All candidates for editor must submit responses to a questionnaire provided by the editorial board, and at the request of the board, the candidates will have to appear for an interview.
- (c) Once the board selects the editor(s)-in-chief, the new editor(s) will select other members of the editorial board with the advice and consent of the adviser. The selections will not become official until the beginning of the school year, at which time revisions may be made. The editor(s)-in-chief will assign special positions and responsibilities to other staff members with input from other members of the editorial board. Members of the editorial board serve at the convenience of the editor-in-chief and can be reassigned by the editor-in-chief to other duties for justifiable cause and with the advice and consent of the faculty adviser.

3. Primary responsibilities of members of the editorial board:

- (a) *Editor-in-chief*
 - (1) Oversees the production of the student newspaper.
 - (2) Assumes responsibility for the overall content of the newspaper.
 - (3) Guards against plagiarism, conflict of interest and other unethical practices.
 - (4) Works with the editorial board and staff to set goals, plan strategies and measure success.
 - (5) Makes appointments and assignments, supervises staff and exercises effective leadership.
 - (6) Presides over meetings of the editorial board and of the entire staff.
 - (7) Motivates, coaches and mentors staff members, and builds team unity.
 - (8) Facilitates problem-solving and helps resolve disputes.
 - (9) Reads all copy; edits articles.

- (10) Provides adviser with input during staff evaluations.
 - (11) Coordinates editorial positions of the newspaper.
 - (12) Inspires competence, ethics and high journalism standards.
 - (13) Represents the student newspaper and communicates effectively with journalism stakeholders.
 - (14) Takes initiative in discovering and sharing innovations in scholastic journalism.
 - (15) Commits the time and energy it takes to produce a publication of high quality.
- (b) *Managing editor*
- (1) Assists the editor-in-chief with his/her duties; stands in for the editor in his/her absence.
 - (2) Supervises and assists with page layouts.
 - (3) Keeps overall track of the status of assigned stories and monitors deadlines.
 - (4) Critiques each issue of the newspaper and publishes corrections when factual errors are made.
 - (5) Assumes other responsibilities assigned by the editor-in-chief.
- (c) *News editor*
- (1) Coordinates news articles; identifies news stories and makes assignments.
 - (2) Creates and implements a *news beat* strategy that covers various dimensions of the school community.
 - (3) Working with members of the editorial board, assigns news beats to all staff members and monitors staff coverage.
 - (4) Mentors and coaches staff members on their news reporting and writing skills.
 - (5) Double checks facts in all news stories, and copy edits stories, briefs, photo captions and headlines for news pages.
 - (6) Assumes other responsibilities assigned by the editor-in-chief.
- (d) *Opinion editor*
- (1) Coordinates op/ed articles; identifies editorial topics (including topics relevant to current news stories), suggests editorial cartoons and makes assignments.
 - (2) Solicits guest opinion writers.
 - (3) Encourages letters to the editor, verifies their authenticity and guards against inappropriate content.
 - (4) Mentors and coaches staff members on their op/ed reporting and writing skills.
 - (5) Double checks facts in all op/ed stories, and copy edits stories, briefs, photo captions and headlines for news pages.
 - (6) Assumes other responsibilities assigned by the editor-in-chief.
- (e) *Feature editor*
- (1) Coordinates feature articles; identifies feature topics and makes assignments.
 - (2) Inspires imaginative coverage of issues and events that are particularly relevant to students.
 - (3) Collaborates with other editors to consider feature topics that can supplement coverage of other issues and events that appear elsewhere in the newspaper.
 - (4) Mentors and coaches staff members on their feature reporting and writing skills.
 - (5) Double checks facts in all feature stories, and copy edits stories, briefs, captions and headlines for feature pages.
 - (6) Assumes other responsibilities assigned by the editor-in-chief.
- (f) *Sports editor*
- (1) Coordinates sports articles; identifies sports topics and makes assignments.
 - (2) Maintains fair, balanced, objective coverage of all sports—boys and girls; team levels.
 - (3) Emphasizes insightful coverage for past games and previews for upcoming events.
 - (4) Mentors and coaches staff members on their sports reporting and writing skills.
 - (5) Double checks facts in all sports stories, and copy edits stories, briefs, captions and headlines for sports pages.
 - (6) Assumes other responsibilities assigned by the editor-in-chief.
- (g) *Photography editor*
- (1) Coordinates with editors photo coverage throughout the newspaper; makes photo assignments.
 - (2) Makes sure all photo opportunities are covered and has a backup plan to ensure coverage if a photographer misses an assignment.
 - (3) Understands and teaches others the legal and ethical dimensions of photojournalism.
 - (4) Edits photos, edits captions, uploads and maintains photo files and represents photographers’

interests.

- (5) Mentors and coaches staff members on their photography and caption-writing skills.
- (6) Assumes other responsibilities assigned by the editor-in-chief.

C. Primary Staff Responsibilities

1. To be committed to high journalism standards, scholastic press ethics, maximum effort, teamwork, deadlines, time management, outside-of-class assignments/meetings/work sessions, newspaper policies, excellence and cooperation.
2. To be loyal to the student newspaper, respectful to every staff member and the adviser and responsible for meeting all journalism obligations.
3. To take initiative, demonstrate an exemplary work ethic and provide leadership.
4. To learn the technical systems of The Mirror, notably WordPress.
5. To represent The Mirror in a way that instills the respect and confidence of its readers.
6. To fulfill advertising sales and other journalism requirements.
7. To create and then update a portfolio of your newspaper work for the adviser to inspect at times he/she will designate.
8. To save and backup all journalism data, including interview notes and stories.
9. To make a significant contribution to each issue of The Mirror.
10. To know scholastic press law and the National Scholastic Press Association's *Model Code of Ethics for High School Journalists*.
11. To practice responsible, ethical journalism.
12. To promote First Amendment values via words and actions.
13. To hold yourself and others accountable for the right of students to practice authentic journalism.
14. To work in partnership with stakeholders of scholastic journalism.
15. To be faithful to the principles and discipline of American journalism.

D. Faculty Adviser Responsibilities

1. To counsel and instruct student journalists and inspire them toward professional standards of journalism and an appreciation of journalism law and ethics.
2. To be a liaison who facilitates a close working relationship among stakeholders of scholastic journalism.
3. To read all copy, examine photography and other graphic elements and consult with editors and/or other staff members before publication
4. To intervene at the time of distribution if anything in the publication violates the law or falls outside the parameters of protected speech for scholastic journalists.
5. To function as a guide rather than as an editor or a censor, and to offer critiques of student work.
6. To create an environment that cultivates authentic journalism, competent reporting and writing, and ethical conduct.
7. To be present at editorial board meetings.
8. To determine academic grades for members of the journalism class or independent study.
9. To participate in the selection of newspaper staff positions via the power of "advice and consent."

III. PRACTICES

A. Staff Behavior

Every member of The Mirror staff is expected to model good character and citizenship in and out of school. The behavior of a student journalist, whether it occurs within or beyond the context of journalism responsibilities, reflects not only on the student but also on the news medium the student serves. A dishonest or errant student who is on a news medium staff can significantly damage the credibility of the news medium and cause many other undesirable ramifications that can diminish the public's attitude toward the medium. Consequently, inappropriate behavior within or beyond the context of journalism and The Mirror can result in disciplinary actions, loss of leadership positions and loss of "good standing" status.

1. Staff members can be considered for suspension or expulsion from the staff for the following reasons, among others:
 - (a) Insubordination
 - (b) Failure to abide by school or newspaper rules and policies

- (c) Dishonesty
- (d) Plagiarism
- (e) Disloyalty to the newspaper
- (f) Egregious breach of journalism ethics
- (g) Criminal activity

2. The decision to suspend or expel a staff member rests with the faculty adviser, who will confer with members of the editorial board, the Dean of Students (and his designees) and the staff member's parents prior to making a final decision.
3. A staff member can appeal the adviser's decision to suspend or expel him/her to the Dean of Students, and members of the editorial board will be allowed to give their input to the principal.
4. If a staff member is suspended, he/she will continue to do required academic work in class, including additional work that may be substituted for The Mirror responsibilities missed during the time of suspension.
5. If a staff member is expelled from The Mirror staff, he/she will continue to do required academic work in class, including work that may be substituted for previous *The Mirror* responsibilities. The student will no longer have any responsibilities with The Mirror nor any privileges that accompany those responsibilities.
6. An expelled staff member will be dropped from the journalism class at the end of the grading period. If the expelled staff member is disruptive in class in a way that impairs the learning opportunities of other students or if he/she is considered a significant risk to persons or property, the expelled student may be dropped from journalism class immediately with a failing grade.

B. Editorials

1. Editorials are the opinion of the editorial board and do not reflect the attitudes of faculty, administrators or the student population, in general.
2. The editor-in-chief and the opinion page editor are responsible for assigning editorial topics and conferring with members of the editorial board to determine positions the newspaper will take. The two editors also are responsible for assigning the writing of the staff editorial and sharing it with the editorial board prior to publication.
3. If necessary, the editorial board will meet to discuss an editorial and formally approve its content.
4. Because editorials reflect the board's opinion, they will never carry the individual writer's byline.
5. Editorials will be clearly recognized as such. Consistent placement of editorials, labeling, use of different typeface and/or size, and column width are ways to make editorials stand out.
6. Guest Opinions must be distinguished from staff editorials.

C. Letters to the Editor

1. Readers are welcome to write a letter to the editor. All letters must be signed and contain contact information for them to be verified and considered for publication. Names may be withheld from publication only under rare circumstances (see "E. Anonymous Sources").
2. The Mirror reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, good taste and accuracy, and to prevent libel, without changing the writer's intent.
3. The editor reserves the right to reject a letter for legal, ethical, space or "excessive coverage" reasons. No poetry, attacks on private individuals, or letter-writing campaigns, please.
4. Except for a guest commentary, the length of a letter should not exceed 300 words.
5. The editor should refrain from "getting in the last word" by attaching an editor's note to a letter. In rare circumstances, a clarification note may be justified.

E. Anonymous Sources⁷

Transparency is critical to a newspaper's credibility with the public. News stories should be fully documented and clearly attributed. Unnamed sources can be used only if all of the following apply:

1. We cannot obtain the information any other way;
2. The sources have good reason to expect serious reprisals if they speak on the record;
3. There is strong corroborating evidence;
4. We are satisfied the information is accurate;
5. The story is of overriding significance to the community.

In using *background information* provided by an anonymous source, the following conditions apply:

1. The material is information and not opinion or speculation, and it is vital to the news report;

2. The information is not available except under the conditions of anonymity imposed by the source;
3. The source is reliable, and in a position to have accurate information.

Also, confidentiality is a contract between the newspaper and a source, not the reporter and the source. The editor must approve decisions to use unnamed sources, and the editor must know the identity of the source. The editor is obligated, like the reporter, to keep the source's identity confidential.

F. Press Cards

1. Press cards may be issued to members of The Mirror staff, but they remain the property of the school and can be recalled by the adviser if the card is abused, if the holder loses his/her "good standing" status as a member of the staff, if the holder leaves the staff or for other reasons determined by the adviser.
2. The press card is an important document, identifying the bearer as a member of the newspaper staff, and it must be cared for with similar precautions one takes in caring for a driver's license.
3. If for any reason the holder refuses to return his/her press card when the adviser recalls it, the holder will be subject to disciplinary action by the adviser and/or a monetary fine not to exceed \$20.
4. The press card should be used in a manner consistent with ethical principles of journalism, such as those stated in the National Scholastic Press Association's "Model Code of Ethics for High School Journalists."
5. Reporters should not abuse any special privileges granted by the press card under penalty of disciplinary action by the adviser, who will consult the editor for his/her recommendation.
6. When a press card is used for admission purposes or for other privileges, the holder should remember he/she is on a working assignment, and the reporter's purpose is to cover an issue or event and not merely to be entertained.
7. No student will be issued a press card unless he/she first agrees to the policies for press card use and recall.

G. Deadlines

Because the production of The Mirror is a team effort, the importance of meeting deadlines extends beyond the self-interests of a staff member. The Mirror, other students and the journalism program are impaired when a staff member fails to meet his/her deadline responsibilities. The bottom line is this: *It is the responsibility of each staff member to complete newspaper assignments and tasks in accordance with the deadlines set or approved by editors and/or the adviser, or to otherwise, for legitimate reasons, make sure another staff member is assigned to complete the journalism task within the deadline.*

1. If a student misses school because of illness or another reason, he/she is still responsible for meeting assigned deadlines or for making arrangements for another staff member to assist in completing the assignment within the deadline. The staff member who arranges a reassignment must notify the editor immediately.
2. Students should strive to meet deadlines early. Procrastination is not an excuse for missing a deadline or for submitting inferior work that reflects insufficient time spent on completing an assignment.
3. As soon as a student realizes he/she may not meet a deadline, the student should notify an editor and the adviser and show them all the work completed to date on the assignment. At that point, the editor and adviser may suggest strategy for making sure the story or task is completed as early as possible.
4. If a student is assigned to cover a story and cannot make it to an event or activity on time to report, the student should immediately contact an editor and arrange for someone else to cover the story.
5. If a student repeatedly misses deadlines, the editor or adviser can assign the student additional work specifically designed to remediate the problem of missing deadlines.
6. The consequences for missing deadlines are determined by the editor and/or the adviser (who is empowered to overrule an editor's disciplinary decision if it is deemed excessive). Consequences for failure to meet deadlines may include any or all of the following:
 - (a) Extra assignment/requirement designed to remediate the problem of missing deadlines
 - (b) Grade reduction
 - (c) Reduction of journalism privileges
 - (d) Suspension from the staff (not to exceed one week per offense)

H. Freelance Contributions

The Mirror may accept freelance contributions from non-staff members, but any contributions should be consistent with the functions of the student press (see I[B]) and not singularly offered to showcase a student's work. The overriding factor in accepting a freelance contribution is the value the piece holds for the reader and for the

newspaper's mission.

I. Copyright Ownership⁶

Generally, the creator of a work owns the copyright, regardless of whether a school camera, film, computer or other equipment/material were used. In other words, student writers own the copyright to material they write, photographers own the photos they take and graphic designers own and have the right to control the graphical works they create. Allowing the material to be used as part of a "collective work," such as a student newspaper or yearbook, doesn't automatically strip a contributor of his or her ownership rights. As the U.S. Copyright Office has said:

"In the absence of an express transfer from the author of the individual article, the copyright owner in the collective work is presumed to have acquired only the privilege of using the contribution in the collective work and in subsequent revisions and later editions of the collective work."

J. Staff Conflict Resolution

It is inevitable that disagreements and conflicts arise among staff members from time to time. Significant conflicts must be dealt with collaboratively, not only to help resolve personal disputes but also to protect the welfare of the work environment and the whole staff.

The editor and/or adviser should intervene when conflicts threaten the work environment, and they should employ effective strategy to help facilitate fair resolutions.

K. Style Guide

The Associated Press Stylebook will be the professional reference for *The Mirror* regarding questions of journalistic style. *The Mirror Stylebook* will reference journalistic style policies particularly related to coverage of the Northwood School community.

L. Protocol for Free & Responsible Student News Media

In February 2010, the McCormick Foundation convened a two-day conference of top scholastic journalism stakeholders from around the nation to create protocol for cultivating free and responsible student news media. The Illinois Press Foundation served as executive agent of the conference. Bob Steele, a Poynter Institute Scholar for Journalism Values, wrote the definition of "Protocol" that was adopted as the core philosophy of the 78-page conference report. Here is the definition:

"We believe it is in the best interests of all stakeholders [in scholastic journalism] to adopt protocols for ethical decision-making. A protocol is not a policy setting down specific rules. Instead, a protocol is a process and a framework for making good decisions.

A protocol includes key principles and important questions. The principles provide reference points on your moral compass, represent "what you stand for," and guide you in ethical decision-making. The checklist of questions is a pathway to follow to resolve conflicting principles and to help determine your actions."

The *Mirror* staff and its supportive scholastic journalism stakeholders may use the McCormick Foundation's *Protocol for Free & Responsible Student News Media* as a guide toward ethical decision-making.

M. Ethics⁶

Scholastic journalism best serves learners and the school community when students produce free and responsible news media by balancing rights and responsibilities, applying ethical prudence, engaging in competent journalism and advancing the best interests of young citizens and the school mission.

The focus of student journalists must always be aimed beyond their self-interests toward doing what is best for society. Their motivation should be driven by service rather than ego gratification.

Another challenge for beginning journalists involves their scope of awareness. As they gain news media experience, their competence improves, their vision broadens and they develop a more panoramic understanding of their craft — including the ethics of journalism. As their insight expands, students become more adept at avoiding

errors, misjudgment and other deficiencies caused by inexperience and an undeveloped ethical compass.

Developing a sense of ethics is essential for student journalists, who learn to distinguish right from wrong and good from bad in their work. The power of news media can be used in good or bad ways, and young journalists must be nurtured to develop the self-discipline to choose what's right and good — even when the right choice may cost something in the short run.

Ethical choices often are not easy. Dilemmas occur when two “right” moral obligations conflict. For example, suppose a newspaper staff member lies to the editor about why she needs an extension on an important deadline. The editor comes to you, the staff member’s friend, seeking confirmation of the excuse that was given. Two moral virtues collide: loyalty to a friend and commitment to truth. It is time to weigh your values.

News media policy manuals may provide consequences for staff members who flagrantly violate the standards of ethical conduct, but a note of caution is in order. People of good intentions can disagree about ethical standards—for example, what constitutes fair and balanced coverage, accuracy, invasion of privacy, truth and other components of an ethical code. Those who measure news media integrity must be careful not to impose their interpretation of an ethical principle as the one and only “right” interpretation.

In schools that practice democratic education, students have choices. Some choices may lack ethical integrity, betray the spirit of the First Amendment and fall at the very far edge of a protected freedom. In such a case, the temptation to narrow that freedom may be great. But the temptation must be resisted. A line will always exist between behavior protected by law and behavior that is not. If we reduce the distance to that line each time free speech is challenged, our freedoms will perpetually erode.

The challenge for educators is to inspire students to be intrinsically motivated to abide by the highest standards of ethical conduct. That goal is best accomplished when school authorities focus more on mentoring than on clout and more on collaboration than on autocratic decision-making.

When ethical questions arise, The Mirror staff will refer to the National Scholastic Press Association’s *Code of Ethics for High School Journalists* and the McCormick Foundation’s *Protocol for Free and Responsible Student News Media* for guidance. Both were created to help guide students in the direction of responsible journalism.

A code of ethics should be a primary reference source for student journalists. It should be part of the curriculum and readily available not only to media staffs but also to those served by news media and those who oversee their production.

A protocol for ethical decision-making helps facilitate problem solving by tapping the wisdom of various stakeholders in scholastic journalism. It helps stakeholders move toward shared vision and a cooperative resolution of dilemmas.

Reputable conduct by student journalists helps secure the public trust and news media credibility. A code of ethics serves as the foundation for free and responsible student media.

N. Plagiarism⁶

1. Plagiarism, as defined in Northwood School’s Student Handbook, includes, but is not limited to, presenting as one’s work an idea or product taken from another source, or using another person’s ideas, concepts or language without proper documentation. is defined as the word-for-word duplication of another person’s writing or close summarization of the work of another source without giving the source credit. Students who plagiarize while writing for The Mirror are subject to the same discipline as in any other academic course.

2. The adviser and editor may impose penalties beyond any imposed through official disciplinary hearings or by school administrators.

3. Because plagiarism can significantly undermine the public trust of journalists and journalism, the adviser and editors should be prepared to consider severe penalties for documented cases of plagiarism, including suspension or dismissal from the staff. Plagiarism is not only unethical, it is illegal if the material is copyright protected.

4. If a student’s plagiarism in journalism is the first plagiarism offense on the student’s entire school record, he/she will be suspended from The Mirror staff for three weeks and receive a failing grade for that aspect of his/her production work. If a student’s plagiarism in journalism is the student’s second plagiarism offense on the student’s entire school record, he/she will be immediately expelled from The Mirror staff and receive a failing grade for the newspaper production aspect of the journalism class for the entire quarter when the offense occurred.

Commented [JS1]: Need to verify definition in new student handbook.

O. Profanity

The use of profanity in most professional newspapers is a rare occurrence. Editors must decide whether the journalistic purpose of the story is best served by bluntness or decorum. In making that decision, editors also weigh the newsworthiness of the event in question against concerns about community standards. The use of a profane word should be beyond reproach journalistically so as not to diminish the paper or weaken the integrity of the story.

Profanity may be used in *The Mirror* only when contained in a direct quote from an individual and when that profanity, in the opinion of the staff, is language that is essential for readers to understand and make a judgment on the story. In such cases, we will first try to find a way to give the reader a sense of what was said without using the specific word or phrase. The reporter must have documentation of the accuracy of the quote, and the person quoted must have been aware that his/her comments were on the record. Decisions on including profanity are made first by the appropriate section editor, then by the editor-in-chief, and finally, if necessary, with the editorial board, by majority vote.

P. Privacy

1. Finding the proper balance between the public's right to know and an individual's right to be left alone is a fundamental dilemma facing journalists.
2. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) only prohibits *schools* and *school employees* from disclosing student educational records without consent. FERPA does not apply to student media. "By invoking the First Amendment, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Hazelwood* implicitly rejects the argument that student journalists act as agents of their schools." (See also, *Yeo*, 131 F.3d at 250, n. 8: "*Hazelwood* did not create a new state action analysis that any school-sponsored activity which bears an imprimatur of the school thus constitutes state action.")
3. Look beyond the likely impacts of each story, keeping alert to identify and respond to any unintended or undesirable consequences the story may hold in the shadows. Identify options for dealing with undesirable consequences. Determine if full disclosure of information may jeopardize student welfare unnecessarily; if so, decide what can be held back without jeopardizing the public's right to know.
4. Consider the privacy rights of others who may be negatively affected by disclosure of information about them by another source.
5. Consider all ethical and journalistic standards about the issue of privacy rights.

Q. Responses

We must make significant efforts to reach anyone who may be portrayed in a negative way in our stories, and we must give them a reasonable amount of time to get back to us before we move the story. If we don't reach the parties involved, we must explain in the story what efforts were made to do so.

R. Quotations⁷

The same care that is used to ensure that quotes are accurate should also be used to ensure that quotes are not taken out of context.

We do not alter quotations, even to correct grammatical errors or word usage. If a quotation is flawed because of grammar or lack of clarity, the writer should be able to paraphrase in a way that is completely true to the original quote. If a quote's meaning is too murky to be paraphrased accurately, it should not be used.

S. Fabrications⁷

Nothing in our news report—words, photos, graphics—may be fabricated. We do not use pseudonyms, composite characters or fictional names, ages, places or dates. We don't stage or re-enact events for the camera. We do not ask people to pose for photos unless we are making a portrait. We do not digitally alter photos without explaining such action in the caption.

T. Bylines⁷

1. If a reporter in the field provides information to a staffer who writes the story, the reporter gets the byline, unless the editor in charge determines that the byline should more properly go to the writer.
2. If multiple staffers report the story, the byline is the editor's judgment call.
3. A double byline or editor's note can be used when more than one staffer makes a substantial contribution to the reporting or writing of a story. Credit lines recognize reporting contributions that are notable but don't call for a double byline.

U. Polls and Surveys

Conducting credible polls and surveys to gather data, measure attitudes or reveal opinions is a challenging task. To lessen the chances of conducting an unreliable poll or survey, student journalists should take great caution in the way they word questions, select responders, determine sampling size, administer the poll and interpret the results. Those and other considerations need to be addressed *before* a poll is conducted. Students should work closely with the adviser and other faculty members who have some expertise regarding strategies for conducting credible polls.

V. Death of a Northwood Community Member

1. Any current student, staff member, faculty member or building administrator who dies during the year will be recognized in the school newspaper.
2. The school newspaper will publish factual information (date of birth, date of death, survivors, organizations, hobbies, interests, etc.) in a 300-word obituary and include one photograph, if possible.
3. The school newspaper will first obtain permission from the deceased's family before publishing any information regarding the cause of death.
4. The school newspaper will treat all deaths in a tasteful and respectful manner.
5. An issue should not be dedicated to or in memory of the deceased.
6. Any special news circumstances surrounding a person's death may influence the way the story is covered. News coverage should remain factual and objective.

AMENDMENTS

A collaborative effort should occur at any time an amendment to this Policy Manual is offered for consideration. All stakeholders should be given adequate time and opportunity to provide input regarding the amendment. The principal or superintendent is authorized to approve amendments, but any stakeholder can request that the board of education make the final approval or rejection for a proposed amendment.

REFERENCES

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7. The Associated Press. 2010. *The Associated Press Stylebook*.
8. Hall, Homer L. and Logan H. Aimone. 2009. *High School Journalism*.