

Principals, teachers, and instructional supervisors should encourage student publications, and the exhibit and publication of student work, because they offer the means through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, designing and creating. These educational activities provide an opportunity for students to express their views and learn about responsible journalism. These activities also provide a means to acquaint parents and others with the progress and productivity of students. Exhibits and publications should be arranged by the school staff to achieve maximum opportunity for community residents to view student work.

### **Publishing**

Westford Public Schools recognizes the need to differentiate target audiences to whom information is published. At the elementary level the primary concern is to ensure the security and safety of our children by not publishing the full names of students. Student work, student first name and last initial, photos, and audio may be used with parental permission. At the high school level, there is no restriction on the publishing of student full names subject to parental/legal guardian or eligible student notification to the contrary.

### **Publishing Audiences**

Classroom/School Publishing (Grades K-12) - All student work and images may be used, displayed, or published in the classroom/school setting unless parental notification to the contrary is received by the school. Classroom/School publishing is the default publishing for grades K-12.

Community Publishing (Grades K-8) - Upon parental approval student work may be used in community publications (e.g., Eagle, Sun). The student work may be credited with the student's first name and last initial. Community Publishing requires parental, legal guardian or eligible student permission. There are two exceptions. In grades 6 – 8 honor roll and yearbooks will include the full name of students unless parental notification to the contrary is received by the appropriate school.

Community Publishing (Grades 9-12) - Student work will be used in community publications (e.g., Eagle, Sun) unless parental notification to the contrary is received by the school. Student work may be credited with the student's full name. Community Publishing does not require parental, legal guardian or eligible student permission. Community publishing also allows a student's first name and last name to be published in the world publishing audience.

World Publishing (Grades K-8) - Upon parental approval, student work may be displayed on the school district website. The student work may be credited with the student's first name, last initial. World Publishing requires parental, legal guardian or eligible student permission.

World Publishing (Grades 9-12) - Student work may be displayed on the school district website unless parental notification to the contrary is received by the school. Student work may be credited with the full name of the student.

### **Intellectual Property**

The School Committee recognizes that student work is intellectual property and is protected under copyright laws. When permission is granted, the intellectual property rights of the work are conveyed to the Westford Public Schools who may publish the work as they deem fit. Publishing is defined as the posting or dissemination to recipients that are not personally known to the author.

### **Student Photographs, Audiotapes and Videotapes**

The Westford School Committee supports the rights of parents and legal guardians to restrict the publication and public display of photographs, electronic images and audio of their son/daughter on school bulletin boards, in school and WPS publications, in local newspapers, and on our web site.

The principal or designee has the discretion to permit the photographing, audiotaping or videotaping of students on school property. The taking of photographs, audiotapes, and videotapes must not interfere with the normal progress of any class or meeting.

### **Responsible Publication Practices**

All student publications will be expected to comply with the rules for responsible journalism. This means that libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, defamation of persons, false statements, material advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws or school regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted and will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Principal will establish guidelines that are in keeping with the above and provide a process for the review of the content of all student publications prior to their distribution.

Review of content prior to publication is not censorship, but part of the educational process as this concerns student publications. It can be pointed out to students, as it frequently is to journalists, that a publisher (in this case, the school system) enjoys freedom to determine what it will and will not publish.

**STUDENT PUBLICATIONS /PHOTOS, IMAGES,  
AUDIOTAPES AND EXHIBITS**

**P6115**  
Page 3 of 3

Westford Public Schools Policy References:

P5302 – Student Handbooks

P6111 - Student Records

P6301 - District Computing Environment

P6302 - District Acceptable Internet Use

Other References:

Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 23.00: Student Records

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Fair Use Doctrine” of Copyright Law 17 U.S.C. Section 107 1988 e. and Sup. IV. Title VII of  
1964 Civil Rights Act.

Policy Adopted: April 9, 2001  
Policy Reviewed:  
Policy Revised: March 25, 2002

WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Westford, Massachusetts 01886