

Policy Name	Student Journalist Policy
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Applicable Statute	<i>See references at bottom of policy</i>

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**Vermilion Country School  
Student Journalist Policy**

*(Compliant with Minnesota Statutes § 121A.80 — Student Journalism; Student Expression)*

1. Purpose & Scope

This policy establishes the rights and responsibilities of student journalists, defined under Minnesota law, and affirms Vermilion Country School's adherence to state protections for freedom of expression in school-sponsored media.

2. Definitions

- **School-sponsored media:** Materials prepared, substantially written, published, broadcast, or otherwise disseminated by a student journalist, under the supervision of a student media adviser, and made generally available to students. This includes newspapers, broadcasts, literary magazines, and other formats, **excluding** classroom-only projects and yearbooks. [MN Revisor's Office](#)[Student Press Law Center](#)
- **Student journalist:** Any student in grades 6–12 who gathers, compiles, writes, edits, photographs, records, or otherwise prepares materials for school-sponsored media. [MN Revisor's Office](#)
- **Student media adviser:** A qualified teacher (as defined in state law) designated to supervise student journalists or provide instruction related to media. [MN Revisor's Office](#)
- **School official:** A school principal or other individual with administrative control or supervision of the school. [MN Revisor's Office](#)

3. Protected Rights

- Student journalists have the **right to exercise freedom of speech and freedom of the press** in school-sponsored media—regardless of school funding, equipment use, or whether work is part of a class. [MN Revisor's Office](#)[Student Press Law Center](#)
  - Student journalists retain the sole authority to determine the content of news, opinion, features, and advertising in school-sponsored media. [MN Revisor's Office](#)[Student Press Law Center](#)
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- No student journalist may be disciplined for exercising these rights. [MN Revisor's Office](#)
- No student media adviser may be retaliated against for supporting the exercise of these rights. [MN Revisor's Office](#)

#### 4. Limits to Expression (Unprotected Content)

Content may be restricted if it includes any of the following:

1. Defamatory statements
  2. Profane, harassing, threatening, or intimidating content
  3. Unwarranted invasion of privacy
  4. Violation of federal or state law
  5. Material and substantial disruption of school activities
  6. Content inciting or producing imminent lawless action on school premises or violating lawful school rules or policies [MN Revisor's Office](#)[Student Press Law Center](#)
- Additionally, school-sponsored media may not publish advertisements promoting products or services that minors are legally prohibited from purchasing or using. [MN Revisor's Office](#)

#### 5. Prior Restraint & Review

- **Prior restraint**—censorship before publication—is prohibited, except when content clearly falls into one of the above unprotected categories. [MN Revisor's Office](#)[Student Press Law Center](#)
- **Prior review**—requiring school officials to review content before distribution—is **discouraged**, unless there are specific and articulable concerns that the content includes unprotected material. [Student Press Law Center](#)

#### 6. Publication Responsibility

- Student journalists are responsible for the content they publish under this policy, including any resulting praise, criticism, or potential legal claims. [Student Press Law Center](#)
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- Student media advisers may teach and guide according to professional journalistic standards but may not override student editorial decisions. [MN Revisor's Office](#)

#### 7. Policy Posting Requirement

As required by law, this policy will be formally adopted by the Board and **prominently posted on the Vermilion Country School website.** [MN Revisor's Office](#)

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#### Summary Table

Area	Policy Highlights
<b>Media Covered</b>	School-sponsored (not classroom-only or yearbook)
<b>Rights Protected</b>	Full student control over content; freedom from discipline
<b>Adviser Protections</b>	No retaliation for supporting student rights
<b>Unprotected Content</b>	Defamation, threats, privacy violations, disruption, etc.
<b>Censorship Limits</b>	No prior restraint; restricted only within narrow exceptions
<b>Posting</b>	Policy must be published on school website

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