

**DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY OF
NON-SCHOOL MATERIAL**

Policy Code: **5210**

1 The Transylvania County Board of Education (the “board”) believes students and the educational
2 program must be the focus of the school system. In order to maintain an educational
3 environment conducive to learning and to minimize intrusions upon instructional time,
4 distribution and display of non-school material will be limited in accordance with this policy and
5 policy 5240, Advertising in the Schools. School officials shall screen and approve the
6 distribution or display of non-school material on school property. (The term “non-school
7 material” is defined in Section F.)
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9 This policy applies to the distribution and display of non-school material by students and school-
10 related groups (as defined in Section F) and by governmental agencies, educational institutions,
11 and non-profit entities as permitted in Section C. **This policy does not apply to the distribution
12 and display of materials by individuals or groups that are on school property in accordance with
13 policy 5030, Community Use of Facilities.** Except as provided in Section A, below, this policy
14 will not be construed as applying to or prohibiting the display of compliant political signs
15 permitted by G.S. 136-32.
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17 **A. DISPLAY OF COMPLIANT POLITICAL SIGNS IN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY DURING**
18 **DESIGNATED PERIODS**
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20 Any person may display compliant political signs in the right-of-way of the state highway
21 system or in municipal street rights-of-way in accordance with the standards established
22 in G.S. 136-32, even if such right-of-way constitutes school grounds. Compliant political
23 signs may be displayed in such right-of-way from 30 days before the first day of “one-
24 stop” early voting to 10 days after the primary or election day. School officials may
25 remove and dispose of any political sign remaining in the right-of-way more than 40 days
26 after the primary or election day. School officials shall observe any different rules
27 established by applicable local ordinance for placement and removal of political signs on
28 municipal street rights-of-way.
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30 School officials shall not remove any political sign lawfully placed except as provided in
31 this section but may request the Department of Transportation to remove a sign that is not
32 in compliance with G.S. 136-32.
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34 **B. DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY BY STUDENTS**
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36 Students wishing to distribute or display on campus any publication, leaflet, or other
37 written material that is not school-sponsored must submit the publication or material to
38 the principal for review prior to distribution. The principal shall prohibit distribution or
39 display when the publication or material contains speech that is prohibited as specified in
40 Section D but otherwise shall not discriminate on the basis of viewpoint in granting or
41 denying a student permission to distribute or display non-school publications or
42 materials. If permission to distribute or display a publication or material is denied, the
43 student may request review of the principal’s decision as specified in Section E.

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C. DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY BY NON-STUDENTS

1. Distribution and display of “school-sponsored or curriculum-related publications and materials” as defined in Section F are permitted during the school day, on school grounds, and at school activities.

2. Distribution and display of publications and materials from school-related groups that have received prior approval of the superintendent or designee pursuant to the standards in Section D and the standards for review of the decision in Section E are permitted at reasonable times and places as designated by the superintendent or designee. The term “school-related group” is defined in Section F. The superintendent or designee shall not discriminate on the basis of viewpoint in granting or denying permitted school-related groups permission to distribute or display non-school material.

3. The following agencies and organizations are permitted to distribute or display educational information or information about programs and activities of interest to students:
 - a. local, state, and federal government agencies and departments;

 - b. non-profit organizations that offer educational, recreational, cultural, or character development activities or programs for school-aged children, including, but not limited to, scouts, YMCA or YWCA, organized youth sport leagues, etc.;

 - c. school/business partnerships or incentive programs that directly enhance or support the school’s educational program; and

 - d. community colleges, universities, and other non-profit institutions of higher education.

All publications and materials that one of the permitted agencies or organizations would like to distribute or display must be submitted to the superintendent or designee for approval prior to distribution or display. Approval for distribution or display will be granted pursuant to the standards in Section D and the standards for review of decisions in Section E. If approved, the publications and materials will be distributed or displayed at reasonable times and places as designated by the superintendent or designee.

4. The superintendent or designee shall not discriminate on the basis of viewpoint in granting or denying permitted agencies and organizations permission to distribute

87 or display non-school materials.

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89 5. The superintendent is authorized to adopt regulations regarding approval forms,
90 how many times a year groups may distribute or display publications or materials,
91 delivery and bundling requirements, etc.

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93 6. Nothing in this policy will be construed to create a public forum that would allow
94 non-students unrestricted access to school property for the purpose of distributing
95 or displaying publications or materials.

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97 **D. DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY STANDARDS FOR NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS**

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99 School officials shall apply the following standards to approve the distribution or display
100 of all non-school material by individuals or groups authorized by this policy on school
101 property:

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103 1. While materials will not be screened for viewpoint, the reviewer shall prohibit the
104 distribution or display of any publication or material that (a) is vulgar, indecent,
105 or obscene; (b) contains libelous statements, personal attacks, or abusive
106 language, such as language defaming a person’s character, race, religion, ethnic
107 origin, **sex** gender, family status, or disability; (c) causes or clearly threatens to
108 cause a material and substantial disruption of a school activity; (d) encourages the
109 commission of unlawful acts or the violation of lawful school regulations; (e) is
110 inappropriate considering the age of the students in the school; (f) contains
111 information that is inaccurate, misleading, or false; or (g) advertises any product
112 or service not permitted to minors by law.

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114 The principal or superintendent’s designee shall notify the superintendent before
115 approving or prohibiting distribution or display of any publications or materials
116 that raise a question as to whether a specific action by school officials might
117 violate the Establishment of Religion Clause, the Free Exercise of Religion
118 Clause, or the free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S.
119 Constitution. The superintendent shall consult with the board attorney to
120 determine the legally appropriate course of action.

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122 2. The distribution of non-school material must not interfere with instructional time.

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124 3. Non-school publications and materials distributed or displayed to students must
125 be clearly identified, through the method of distribution or otherwise, as non-
126 school materials that are neither endorsed nor necessarily reflective of the views
127 of the school board or the school system.

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129 4. In order to minimize disruption to the learning environment, political campaign

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130 materials may not be distributed to students or employees (including through
131 employee mailboxes and e-mail) or made available on school grounds during
132 school time or at school events. However, on election days, posters and printed
133 materials are permitted for viewing and distribution to the public at school
134 buildings used as polling places in accordance with state law and board of
135 elections requirements.

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137 This provision does not prohibit a teacher from using political literature or
138 campaign material for instructional purposes. However, any teacher using these
139 materials for instructional purposes shall not use his or her position to promote a
140 particular candidate, party, or position on a specific issue. The teacher also shall
141 attempt to use a variety of materials that represent balanced and diverse
142 viewpoints on the political spectrum.

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144 **E. PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING DISTRIBUTION OR DISPLAY OF NON-SCHOOL**
145 **MATERIALS**

- 146
147 1. Any individual or organization wishing to distribute or display non-school-
148 sponsored publications or materials must first submit for approval a copy of the
149 publication or material to the superintendent or designee at least five school days
150 in advance of the distribution or display time, along with the following
151 information: (a) the name and phone number of the individual submitting the
152 request; (b) the date(s) and time(s) of day of intended distribution or display; (c)
153 the desired location for distribution or display of material; and (d) if the
154 distribution or display is intended for students, the grade(s) of students for whom
155 the distribution or display is intended.
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157 2. Within five school days, the superintendent or designee shall review the request
158 and render a decision. In the event permission to distribute or display the material
159 is denied or restricted, the individual submitting the request will be informed in
160 writing of the reasons for the denial or restriction.
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162 3. Any request denied or restricted by the principal or designee may be appealed in
163 writing to the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee shall
164 review the decision and render a decision within 10 school days. Any request
165 denied by the superintendent may be appealed to the board of education. The
166 board will review the request at its next regularly scheduled meeting. As
167 appropriate, the superintendent or the board will consult with the board attorney
168 concerning a request to distribute or display non-school literature.
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170 4. Permission or denial of permission to distribute or display material does not imply
171 approval or disapproval of its contents by school system administrators, the
172 school board, or the individual reviewing the material submitted.

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F. DEFINITIONS

The following terms used in this policy are defined as follows:

1. Obscene

“Obscene” describes any speech or work that the average person, applying contemporary community standards (as opposed to “national standards”), would find, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest; or that depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law; and that, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

2. Libelous Statement

Libelous statements are false and unprivileged statements about a specific person that injure that person’s reputation in the community.

3. Non-School Material

Non-school material includes any publication or other written information that is not a school-sponsored or curriculum-related publication or material.

4. Material and Substantial Disruption

A material and substantial disruption is any conduct that for any reason, including inappropriateness of time, place, or type of behavior, significantly interferes with school functions, classroom instruction, or the rights of other students or school employees. Examples of material and substantial disruption include, but are not limited to, demonstrations, destruction of property, injury to students or other persons, shouting or boisterous conduct, and anything that significantly distracts students from instruction or prevents school personnel from performing their educational responsibilities.

5. School-Sponsored or Curriculum-Related Publications and Materials

School-related materials or publications are: (a) materials published by the school system for distribution (i.e. school calendars, menus, school newsletters, etc.); (b) materials that are approved by school officials and related to activities or events that are officially sponsored by the school (i.e. announcements for sports teams, clubs, field trips, school plays, and concerts); or (c) materials that are directly related to instruction.

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6. School-Related Group

School-related groups are organizations formed to support the school in an area of recognized need, such as the PTA, the PTO, teachers’ and principals’ organizations, and booster clubs.

The superintendent shall adopt necessary regulations to ensure that this policy is implemented throughout the school system.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; *Peck v. Upshur*, 155 F.3d 274 (1998); G.S. 115C-36, -47; 136-32; 163-129, -166.4

Cross References: **Community Use of Facilities (policy 5030)**, Collections and Solicitations (policy 5220), Advertising in the Schools (policy 5240)

Adopted: August 15, 2016

Revised: December 16, 2019; August 2, 2021; **[DATE]**

