The concept of “freedom of the press” has somewhat limited application in the context of public schools. Journalistic experiences in a school setting should be calculated to develop the background of skills and understanding which will equip a student for the responsibilities of the free press in adult society. A school publication is unique and different from a commercial publication in at least four ways:

A. It is an instructive tool in addition to a means of student self-expression.
B. It is read not just by the intended audience of fellow students, but by parents and citizens outside the school as well.
C. It is supported largely from tax funds, the salary of the instructor being the largest cost involved.
D. It is an influence on the public relations of the entire district since, rightly or wrongly, content is read by many not simply as expressions of individual students, but as expressions representative of the entire student body approved by the administration.

The principal of each secondary school shall meet with the advisor, student editors and writers of the publication to establish guidelines which will allow for a maximum of student freedom of expression consistent with the four factors outlined above.

The principal of each elementary school shall personally approve any student publication distributed for public consumption.

The principal or designee is entitled to regulate the contents of school publications in a reasonable manner.

These publications are not a public forum. Students may appeal the building administrator's decision to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

Freedom of expression goes hand-in-hand with responsibility for the published statement. Expression is prohibited when the material:

A. Is obscene,
B. Is libelous,
C. Creates an immediate danger or disruption to the school,
D. Advertises or promotes any product or service not permitted for minors by law, encourages students to commit illegal acts or violate school regulations or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of school or school activities,
E. Expresses or advocates sexual, racial or religious harassment, violence or prejudice,
F. Is factually inaccurate or does not meet journalistic standards established for publications.

Copies of each issue of student publication shall be sent to the Superintendent of schools and designees.
Date of Revision: 1/13/2009

Legal Reference: Code of Idaho