

Series 5000 – Students**1. Elementary and Secondary****D. Welfare****(9) Civil & Legal Rights and Responsibilities****(b) Freedom of Speech/Expression**

The Suffield Board of Education recognizes and protects the rights of student expression. Responsible criticism and reasonable dissent are basic to the free expression of ideas. No idea will be suppressed simply because it is not shared by the majority.

School administrators are charged with maintaining a balance of these rights with the interests of an orderly and efficient educational process and of a school environment suitable for the healthy growth and development of all students. Thus, the school district reserves the right to regulate student speech during the school day, on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities and events. The school district will not tolerate any speech that is disruptive of the normal operation of the school or that violates any other district policy, rule or regulation. Examples of such speech include, but are not limited to expressions that: 1) contain libelous, vulgar or obscene language; 2) advocate illegal actions; 3) would subject any person to hatred, ridicule, or contempt; 4) advocate actions that would threaten the health or safety of others; and 5) encourages the violation of school rules. The Board of Education accepts responsibility for supporting appropriate student expression. However, that which is obscene, libelous, likely to inflame or incite so as to disrupt the educational process or advocate violation of the law or school regulations will be prohibited.

The school district shall assume no responsibility for the contents of any written material produced, posted, circulated or otherwise distributed, or of student conduct, taken in accordance with this policy, insofar as such matter or conduct may relate to any interests other than those of an orderly and efficient educational process and proper school environments.