

# Wayland Student Press Network Policies

Public Version 1.0

2010

[www.waylandstudentpress.com](http://www.waylandstudentpress.com)

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## Mission Statement

WSPN's mission is to give a voice to Wayland High School students and to serve the public with relevant, accurate, and engaging news, conveyed professionally in a variety of mediums.

## Freedom of the Press

### Open Forum Status

WSPN identifies itself as an open student forum, a publication where students can make their voices heard. This exempts WSPN from the prior review and/or censorship by the administration.

- Chapter 71, section 82 of the Massachusetts General Laws (commonly known as the Student Free Expression Act) gives students the freedom "to write, publish and disseminate their views." This outlines all students' "freedom of expression."
- Students inherently have these "freedom of expression" rights as long as they do not "materially and substantially" disrupt the operation of the school or violate the rights of others.
- The Pyle case (Pyle v. South Hadley School Committee) in the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts says that the Student Free Expression Act "is unambiguous."
- All requests from the administration for content to be removed must be submitted formally in writing from the current Principal (in the form of a letter or e-mail from school-issued e-mail address) to the current Editor(s)-in-Chief, as well as the staff advisers. The final decision for removal will be made solely by the Editor(s)-in-Chief, however, they must consult the staff advisers.
- If a formal request is made, the current Editor(s)-in-Chief will have a face-to-face conversation with the current principal to discuss why it "materially and substantially" disrupts the operation of the school.
- Even though the Fraser and Hazelwood cases give school authorities in the majority of the country the right to censor anything reasonably considered part of the school curriculum, those standards do not apply in Massachusetts due to the Student Free Expression Act.
- Slander, libel, and obscenity are not protected speech under any circumstance in the United States.

### Rights of the Student Body

As the official publication of the Wayland High School student body, WSPN assures all students the following rights:

- All students have the right to comment on content published on WSPN. All comments must adhere to the comment policy.

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- All students have the right to submit articles, commentary, photos/videos to WSPN. Content submitted will be evaluated by WSPN editors, and published if it meets WSPN's expectations for quality and timeliness.
- All students have the right to apply for editorial positions on WSPN.

## Privacy

### Privacy as a Commenter

- When you submit a comment to WSPN, it becomes our property. We adhere to our comment policy when posting.
- When you submit a comment, the name you provide, the e-mail address (or Facebook profile link), and your IP address are collected. Submitting a comment is the only time WSPN advisers and the Executive Board have access to view your IP address. We cannot pair IP addresses from our analytics with those in comments.
- All threats are taken seriously. Comments containing threats to someone's safety (including your own) will immediately be sent to the WHS administration and the Wayland Police with the all information provided, including IP address.
- Hate speech, defined as speech that attacks a person or group on the basis of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, is not protected speech. At the Executive Board's sole discretion, comments containing hate speech may be passed along to school administrators if deemed cruel and malevolent. We believe in healthy, strong criticism of ideas and beliefs, not cruelty.

### Anonymous Data Collection

- At WSPN, we anonymously collect traffic data to help serve our audience with a better experience. This data cannot be used to identify specific individuals. We use industry-leading analytics software to securely collect the following information:
  - Visits, page views, and time spent on each page.
  - Traffic sources - search engines and the search terms used to find us, as well as the site that sent you to WSPN via a link.
- We collect the following information about devices used to access our site
  - Device type (Smartphone, Computer, Tablet)
  - Operating system (Mac OS, Windows, Android, iOS, BlackBerry, etc)
  - Web browser (Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mobile Safari, Dolphin, etc)
  - Screen colors (number of colors your device displays)

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- Screen resolution
  - Flash version and support
  - Java version and support
  - General geographic location by IP address (We can drill down to look at the number of visits/views by town, state, and country).
  - Internet Service Provider or mobile carrier
  - Network Hostname
  - Connection speed
- This data collected is never sold or shared with third parties. However, raw statistics may be shared with advertisers for the purpose of tracking the success of their advertisements. Service provider information (Ex. Verizon Internet Services, Columbia University, Wayland Public Schools, etc) will not be shared with advertisers. Visits, page-views, time spent on each page, and basic geo-location information may be shared. None of this data can be used to single out a single user.

*Why do you collect this anonymous data?*

- This data is collected to provide our users with a better experience. It allows us to roll out new services and technologies, knowing that the majority of our users devices support those technologies. It also allows us to gauge how “heavy” our site can be (number of images, number of videos, number of scripts, etc), to provide a rich but accessible experience. The data on users devices allows us to focus our energy in the right places and the right direction.
- The viewership data allows us to understand our readers better. Viewership data serves as feedback on how our content is being viewed.
- There is no way to opt-out of this data collection. The vast majority of professional and personal websites and news websites use some sort of analytics.

## Advertisements

- The WSPN Executive Board retains full and final discretion over the publishing of all advertisements. They retain the right to reject any and/or all advertising for any reason.

WSPN will not publish:

- Advertisements that are racist, sexist, intentionally false/deceptive, obscene, libelous, or attack groups or individuals based on race, gender, religion, and/or sexual orientation.
- Advertisements that are deemed otherwise in poor taste for the WSPN's audience as judged by the WSPN Executive Board.

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- Advertisements that promote products/activities that are illegal for minors (alcoholic beverages, sexually explicit material, cigarettes, and other products illegal for persons under the age of 18). *If a business distributes these products/activities, WSPN will publish an advertisement for that business as long as the advertisement itself is for a product/activity that is legal for minors.*
- Advertisements that link to websites with content illegal for viewing by minors.

WSPN will publish:

- Advertisements for special interest groups so long as they do not attack groups or individuals based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or creed as determined by the WSPN Executive Board.
- A 50% down payment is required before the advertisement is published. WSPN will not publish the advertising of any advertiser that does not meet this payment obligation.
- If errors are made in the advertisement because of *student* fault, WSPN will fix the advertisement and run it for the purchased amount of time at no additional cost or provide a refund at the patron's request.
- If errors are made in the advertisement because of *patron* fault, WSPN is not obligated to give a refund or re-run the advertisement.
- WSPN is not obligated to give a refund after a signed contract has been received (unless a student error is made).
- WSPN will do its best to publish advertisements at the time requested by its patrons but will not guarantee specific publishing dates.
- The advertising period will begin when the advertisement is published.
- Rates are subject to change.
- WSPN cannot guarantee traffic to our site or to yours.
- All advertising will be marked as such with a title below it clearly stating "advertisement."
- Advertisers who appear on WSPN are not necessarily endorsed by WSPNs staff members, editorial board, advisers, anyone at Wayland High School, or anyone affiliated with the Wayland Public Schools.
- Advertisements published on WSPN have no bearing or influence on the content produced by WSPN.

## Content

### Sources

- A source is any person or organization that gives information to a reporter.
- In articles, information and quotes must always be attributed to a source, unless it is common knowledge. (Ex., "WHS cafeteria lunches cost \$3.00." is not information that needs to be attributed. However, the

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statement “Cafeteria lunches in most American schools cost about \$3.00” must be attributed to be considered valid. )

- Reporters may not use close friends or fellow WSPN staff members as sources for quotes, unless those people are essential to the story. For example, a reporter covering the Math Team may not quote their best friend, Hank the Math Team Member, because there are other math team members besides Hank. However, Hank may become Hank the Math Team Captain. In that case, he now has a unique viewpoint and authority which may be important to the article, and he can be quoted despite his friendship with the reporter.
- Sources may not be quoted as “anonymous” unless they would be somehow put at legitimate risk (e.g., threats of violence, persecution by the police or school administration, bullying) by the publication of their real name.
- WSPN will not give up the identity of any source offered the protection of anonymity unless issued a subpoena by a court of law.

## Objectivity

It is the goal of WSPN to maintain total objectivity in our news reporting. In order to maintain viewers’ trust, we believe that it is essential to remain completely objective. We do not seek to sway our viewers; viewers should, instead, be able to make informed decisions based on accurate and comprehensive reporting. If applicable, reporters should strive to be as detached as possible from either side of a story and not allow their own bias to become entangled. Similarly, student journalists with external involvement in a story should excuse themselves from such a story. Reporters will not accept gifts or favors that could compromise their journalistic integrity.

## Editorials

WSPN does not publish unsigned editorials from the WSPN Editorial Board. While WSPN welcomes student-produced opinion pieces and comments, WSPN as a whole does not take a position on issues facing the community, publish editorials, or endorse candidates for office.

## Opinion Articles

Opinion articles written by staff members represent their personal views. The opinions expressed do not represent WSPN as a publication, Wayland High School, Wayland Public Schools, or the Town of Wayland.

## Use of Language

When writing straight news pieces, WSPN will refrain from using swears, slang terms, and/or slurs. There is no reason for these words to be included in an unbiased, objective news story. When including quotations

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however, it is often essential to the story to use the quote verbatim. In blogs, opinion pieces, and other first person accounts, it may be necessary to the reporters' voice and message to use slang or other words that would be inappropriate for a straight news piece. In some cases, the first letter of the word will be printed followed by asterisks or dashes. Final decisions regarding the use of language will be made by the Executive Board. These same standards apply to multimedia stories.

## Errors

Spelling and grammar errors in published content will be corrected in a timely manner.

Errors in information will be corrected as soon as possible. An update notice will be published below the paragraph containing the error. A time-stamp will be added for the update date and time. See the example below for styling.

**ERROR CORRECTED:** It was previously published that the T-Tones would perform for President Obama on Tuesday. The T-Tones will be performing for the President on Thursday. *Information updated at 6:07 p.m. on 11/27/2010.*

## Copyright and License

### Copyright Philosophy

WSPN believes that our information should always be free and accessible. To this end, we license most of our work under a Creative Commons license (see full details and restrictions below). We want to allow everyone who values our work to be able to re-publish and distribute it except as limited below. We believe that freedom of information is essential to any democracy. However, we also believe in respecting copyrighted works and using them appropriately.

### The Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported license

- Our logo, photos, graphics in stories (graphs, charts, photo illustrations), videos, multimedia, articles, blogs, and policies, are all open for use under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/) license. All other work is restricted copyrighted material, and we reserve all rights.
- To legally use our work under the Creative Commons license above, you must attribute WSPN as the source of the work. In print we are comfortable simply with "WSPN" or "Wayland Student Press Network." On the web, we strongly prefer that you hyperlink our name to the URL you got the work from. Without



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citing, you are stealing copyrighted work, and are not using it under the terms of the Creative Commons license.

- You may not use our work in a commercial setting. This includes running our content on a personal website that displays advertising. We allow registered 501(c)3 non-profit businesses to use our work as long as the work is attributed and adheres to the rest of the Creative Commons license. Please [contact us](#) for use in a commercial setting.
- You may not make derivative works from our content. Work must be used as is.
- This license is an international license.
- To use work outside of Creative Commons licensing, you must have explicit written permission from the WSPN Executive Board for each use.

## Inquiries and Feedback

### Letters to the Editor(s)

WSPN does not publish letters to the editor. We encourage comments on all of our content. We also encourage event notifications, the submission of story ideas, and general feedback to our editors through their published e-mail addresses and our contact form.

### Comments

- WSPN values the opinion of its readers and encourages them to discuss its content.
- Comments containing obscene, suggestive, vulgar, profane (including letters followed by dashes or symbols), threatening, disrespectful, or defamatory language will not be published.
- Attacks on groups or individuals based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or creed will be rejected.
- All threats are taken seriously. If the Executive Board and advisors are worried for someone's safety, the comment and related identifying information will be passed along to relevant authorities and/or the school administration.
- All commenters writing from the school network are subject to the school's Acceptable Use Policies. At the discretion of the Executive Board, comments and related identifying information will be passed onto the school administration.
- All comments are approved by the WSPN Executive Board. Comments are reviewed as often as possible. This process results in a delay of anywhere from a few hours to a day before a comment is posted.
- Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's name.
- WSPN encourages its readers to use their real names, but will not publish comments written by people who share their name until it has been verified that the comment was in fact written by that person.

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- WSPN is open to strong opinions and criticism of its work, but WSPN does not publish comments discussing its policies and practices. Please stay on topic.
- Likewise, we welcome strong opinions and criticism of our reporters work. However, personal attacks on reporters' will not be published. If you feel strongly that something was reported poorly, or strongly disagree with an opinion, we encourage you to submit a full article or commentary on the subject.
- Comments should be under 300 words. If you feel strongly about an issue, WSPN recommends submitting a full commentary on the subject.
- The views expressed in comments are solely the authors' and do not reflect the views of WSPN, Wayland High School, or the Town of Wayland.
- Once submitted, comments become the property of WSPN.

## Inquiries

WSPN prefers to receive inquiries via e-mail or the contact form on the site. WSPN reads all inquiries but due to the high volume and small staff, cannot always respond to each individual inquiry. Please see our FAQ page; your question may be answered there.

## Publicity for Events

WSPN will publicize events in the Twitter feed as the Executive Board finds relevant. WSPN has a small staff and cannot cover all events in the Wayland community. WSPN will only write articles about events that the Executive Board finds newsworthy. WSPN retains the right to be selective about what events they choose to publicize. WSPN will not publish articles that read as advertisements.

## Professional Affiliation

The Wayland Student Press Network is not affiliated with any professional news organizations. WSPN is a member of the following student news organizations: [Quill & Scroll International](#), [National Scholastic Press Association](#), [New England Scholastic Press Association](#) and the [Columbia Scholastic Press Association](#).

\*These policies are subject to change at any time.