ILLINOIS MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE ACADEMY

SECTION J
STUDENTS

STUDENT EXPRESSION

Principles

IMSA believes that each person is responsible for her/his own choices, and that belonging to a group requires alignment of self-interests and the common good. Further, IMSA believes that both the individual student and IMSA the institution have rights and responsibilities with respect to student expression.

Expectations

Every student has the right to free expression. However, student expression shall be civil, fair, responsible, honest and respectful. These expectations are meant to help each student find and express his/her own voice – in student publications, performances, exhibitions or in individual expression. For purposes of this policy, the term “expression” means uttering or gesturing; writing, printing, typing, or drawing; and the distribution, publication and/or display of any of the above to others. This policy applies to students while under IMSA’s jurisdiction and includes on-line expression.

Guidelines

Nothing in this policy shall authorize or support:

1. Expression that causes or is likely to cause material and substantial disruption of or interference with teaching or the orderly operation and discipline of the Academy or Academy-sponsored activities, or expression that collides with the rights of others;
2. Expression that is defamatory;
3. Expression that could result in tort liability to the Academy;
4. Threats of violence or other intimidating statements, gestures, or symbols;
5. Expression in Academy sponsored expressive activities, including but not limited to, student newspapers, yearbooks, and plays, that is inconsistent with the habits and manners of civil discourse, including, but not limited to:
   a. Cursing, profanity, and other vulgar or indecent language, gestures, or symbols;
   b. Expression that is obscene to minors;
c. Insulting or fighting words, gestures, or symbols, the very expression of which injures or harasses other people, including, but not limited to, slurs of another person’s character, family, race, religion, gender, ethnic origin, physical appearance, sexual orientation, intellectual ability or disability;
d. Abusive or harassing expression that is sufficiently severe and pervasive as to create a hostile learning environment for any student, including, but not limited to, conduct based on another person’s race, religion, ethnic origin, disability, gender, or sexual orientation; and
e. Statements, gestures, or symbols reflecting bias or prejudice.
6. Expression that is likely to cause the commission of unlawful acts or the violation of lawful Academy regulations; and
7. Expression that is otherwise prohibited by Board policy or the directives of administrators or other staff.

Expression of the nature listed above, especially continued or egregious incidents of such prohibited expression, is unacceptable to the community and may result in informal or formal disciplinary consequences.

Supervision

Students shall be responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that is consistent with the expectations and guidelines specified herein. All IMSA-sponsored activities and publications shall have an IMSA-accountable adult sponsor to oversee student expression and maintain said expectations and guidelines.

Right to Appeal

If there is disagreement between an IMSA staff member and a student organization or an individual student regarding whether proposed expression is prohibited by this policy, the student may appeal the staff member’s decision. In the case of a student organization the appeals shall be made to the supervisor of the staff member and her or his decision shall be final. In the case of an individual student, the appeal shall be to the Principal or the Principal’s designee whose decision shall be final.

ADOPTED May 11, 1999