

Editorial Policy

The Black and White media policy pertains to all things published and controlled by the Black and White including the newsmagazine, the website, and the social media pages.

The Black and White is an all-student produced media of news and information published by Johnston High School Media and Journalism students. The Black and White is an open forum for students to inform and educate their readers. In accordance with Iowa Code 280.22, students assign and edit all material and make all decisions of content. The material will not be reviewed or restrained by school officials prior to publication. The advisor coaches and discusses content during the creative process, but publishing decisions are made by staff.

The Black and White is run by a group of students editors with the assistance of an advisor and those editors have the final say in content. The editors typically consist of an Editor-in-Chief, Online Editor, Copy Editor, Design Editor, Print Editor, Photo Editor, Sports Editor but range depending on the year. The editors are appointed by the advisor with input from the prior board members.

Because school officials do not review material, all the content created by the Black and White is determined by and only reflects the views of the staff and not school officials, or the school itself. And because students make content decisions, the district is insulated from legal ramifications as the publications are not owned by the school. They are the voice of students.

I. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

As it is essential to preserve the freedom of press in order to preserve a free society,

1. The media will serve the best interest of the students and faculty of Johnston High School, keeping itself free from any commercial obligations distracting from this purpose;
2. Any decisions affecting the publication on all levels will be made by the editorial board, the advisor is allowed to give legal advice and their opinion, but the final decision rests in the hands of the editorial board;
3. Only the editorial board may prevent the publishing of material it judges to be in violation of the editorial policy;
4. All media will resist all attempts at censorship, particularly pre-publication review and censorship;

5. All media retain the right to publish any and all material obtained through an interview by a staff member of the publications staff, holding that the interviewee was made aware that the information could be published in any form at any time, this is made clear by the phrase, "this interview will be on the record," which should be said prior to any interview;
6. All student media referenced in this editorial policy are public forums;
7. Student journalists may use print and electronic media to report news and information, to communicate with other students and individuals, to ask questions of and consult with experts and to gather material to meet their newsgathering and research needs;
8. The Black and White and its staff are protected by and bound by the principles of the First Amendment, Iowa Code section 280.22, Article I section 7 of the Iowa Constitution and other protections and limitations afforded by the United States Constitution and the various laws and court decisions implementing those principles like *Tinker v. Des Moines*;
9. The Black and White will not publish material prohibited by law. Iowa law prohibits the following:
 - a. Materials which are obscene.
 - b. Materials which are libelous or slanderous under chapter 659.
 - c. Materials which encourage students to do any of the following:
 - (1) Commit unlawful acts.
 - (2) Violate lawful school regulations.
 - (3) Cause the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.
10. Definitions and examples for the above instances of unprotected speech can be found in the Law of the Student Press published by the Student Press Law Center.

II. THE EDITORIAL BOARD

1. The editorial board will consist of all student staff editors;
2. The editorial board decides on all decisions that pertain directly to the Black and White and their interests.
3. No member of the editorial board shall have more than one vote on the board.
4. All members of the editorial board and the advisor will elect a replacement for board members who have been dismissed.
5. All members of the board are expected to know their duties and jobs in the room and must understand the consequences of not fulfilling said jobs.
6. The student editor and staff who want appropriate outside legal advice regarding proposed content- should seek attorneys knowledgeable in media law such as those of the

Student Press Law Center. Final content decisions and responsibility shall remain with the student editorial board.

7. The duly appointed editors shall interpret and enforce this editorial policy.
8. All the editorial board will be present at all votes, whether physically or virtually. We will make it known if an editor was incapable to vote.
9. In the event of a tie during an editorial board vote, we will discuss and bring up to topic again at a later date.

III. THE ADVISER

1. The adviser is a professional teaching staff member and is in charge of the class just as in a conventional classroom situation.
2. Is a certified journalism teacher that serves as a professional role model, motivator, catalyst for ideas and professionalism, and an educational resource.
3. Provides a journalistic, professional learning atmosphere for students by allowing them to make the decision of content for the media and ensuring the media will remain an open forum.
4. Guides the newspaper staff in accordance with approved editorial policy and aids the educational process related to producing the newspaper.
5. May caution, act as legal consultant and educator in terms of unprotected speech, but has no power over censorship or veto.
6. Will remain updated on the latest trends in journalism and share these with students.
7. Will submit the Black and White's content produced by students for the school publications staff to receive feedback.
8. Will forward any received correspondence and/or information to the appropriate editors.
9. Will provide information to the staff about journalism scholarships and other financial aid, and make available information and contracts concerning journalism as a career.
10. Will work with the faculty and administration to help them understand the freedoms accorded to the students and the professional goals of the school publications.
11. The adviser will not ordinarily retain copies of students' notes or other confidential work-products.
12. The adviser will not act as a censor or determine the content of the paper. The adviser will offer advice and instruction, following the [Code of Ethics for Advisers](#) established by the Journalism Education Association as well as the Canons of Professional Journalism. School officials shall not fire or otherwise discipline advisers for content in student media that is determined and published by the student staff.

IV. THE BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

1. The Johnston High School administration will provide the students of JHS with a qualified journalism instructor to serve as a professional role model, adequate classroom equipment, and space for a sound journalism program.
2. The JHS administration will offer equal opportunity to minority and/or marginalized students to participate in journalism programs.
3. The JHS administration cannot approve content and materials prior to publishing.

V. CONTENT OF THE BLACK AND WHITE

A. INTRODUCTION

All content decisions will be made in accordance to the following provisions, while keeping in mind that the overall purpose, role and goal is the Black and White is to

1. Inform, interpret, and entertain their viewers through accurate and factual reports where information has been thoroughly gathered and information has been thoroughly verified;
2. Serve as an educational laboratory experience for those on staff;
3. Be accurate, fair, and impartial in its coverage of issues that affect the school community;
4. The Black and White will not avoid publishing a story solely on the basis of possible dissent or controversy;
5. Cover the total school population as effectively and accurately as possible;
6. The staff of the Black and White will strive to report all issues in legal, objective, accurate and ethical manner, according to the [Canons of Professional Journalism](#) developed by the Society for Professional Journalists. The Canons of Professional Journalism include a code of ethics concerning accuracy, responsibility, integrity, conflict of interest, impartiality, fair play, freedom of the press, independence, sensationalism, personal privacy, obstruction of justice, credibility and advertising.

B. REGARDING PROFANITY

1. The media will not print unnecessary profanity. The decision on if the profanity is necessary will include all of the editorial board and will be put to a majority vote.

2. The editorial board will make the decision on whether content is considered profane or whether it is a cultural or non-vulgar slang term.
3. The editorial board reserves the right to edit quotes unnecessary profanity or unnecessarily offensive words, quotes that have been edited will be noted accordingly when published.
4. Any edited quote will be read back to the source prior to publishing and sources will have a chance to make changes.
5. Staff interviewers have the right to ask a source when necessary to repeat the quote without the use of profane language.

C. REGARDING STAFF WRITING

1. All writing in the media will be proofed by students of the newspaper staff and will not be accepted otherwise.
2. JHS students outside of the media staff will have the opportunity to submit writing to the Black and White.
3. Any writing submitted from an outside source will be accepted upon request of the editorial board or when open opportunities arise, and will be viewed by the Editor-in-Chief and the adviser for verification.
4. Any material submitted from an outside source can be edited by the editorial board and must comply with this policy.
5. Writing must be the original work of the writer and not previously published on any publication, unless otherwise specified by the adviser and Editor-in-Chief.

D. REGARDING EDITORIALS

1. All editorials will be printed without a byline, and include the results of the vote that was held among the editorial board.
2. Editorial ideas are submitted by staff but then selected by the editorial board.
3. All printed editorial subject matters will be determined by the board.
4. The media will not publish any material for which there is evidence that the author is using the paper for inappropriate personal gain.
5. The media will endeavor to provide a chance for comment on all sides of a critical issue in the same edition.
6. The editorial board, which consists of student editors, will determine the content, including all unsigned editorials. The views stated in editorials represent that of a

majority of the editorial board. Signed columns or reviews represent only the opinion of the author.

E. REGARDING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

1. All coverage of controversial issues will occur upon a timely subject.
2. The media will not publish material that is unnecessarily obscene, libelous, or unwarranted invasive of privacy.
3. If question on the veracity of publication persists, the issue will be brought to the editorial board who could consider the following questions before publication of the piece:

Why is it a concern?

What is it's journalistic purpose?

Is the information accurate and complete?

Are any important POV omitted?

How would we feel if the story was about ourselves or someone we know?

What are the consequences of the publication?

Is there a logical explanation to anyone who challenges the issue?

Is it worth risking our credibility?

What are the alternatives?

F. REGARDING BYLINES

1. All articles, graphics, photos, art, columns, pages, reviews, and other materials creatively conceived, with the exception of staff editorials, will be bylined with the producer's preferred first and last name.
2. All bylined writers will be accountable for their work.
3. When more than one person has contributed creatively to a piece of work, any person who has contributed to the work must be bylined as a producer. The order listed does not matter.

G. REGARDING NEWS AND FEATURES

1. The media will specialize in and emphasize informing their readers of school news and unique students of Johnston High school.

2. The media will cover community, state, national, and international news if it is directly relevant to the school community, and includes local angles.
3. The media will strive to provide coverage to all school organizations and functions.
4. When faced with the undesirable news such as student or staff or faculty crimes, the publications will endeavor to publish the facts correctly, explain the issue, and put a stop to any speculative stories that inevitably develop.
5. Major district issues and news will be priority over school news (these major issues will be decided by the editorial board.)

H. REGARDING ILLUSTRATIONS, PHOTOGRAPHS, GRAPHICS, ETC.

1. All captions will contain the who and other necessary information in the photo.
2. All photographs must be captioned and bylined.
3. All illustrations must be bylined, but do not always need a caption.
4. Artwork represents the interpretations of the artist, not necessarily the staff or JHS.
5. Electronic manipulations changing the essential truth of the photo or illustration will be clearly labeled if used.

I. REGARDING ERRORS

1. Concerns about errors in the school media may be submitted through the adviser or the email jhsblackandwhite@gmail.com.
2. The editorial board retains the right to determine whether, in fact, an error has been made.
3. Known and or found errors that are brought to the attention of the school media will be addressed regardless if realized by the author, audience, or staff member.
4. Staff members strive to correct errors prior to publication; however, if the editorial board determines a significant error is printed, the editorial board will determine the manner and timeliness of a correction.
5. Major corrections are determined by a majority board vote of the Editorial Board. The board will consult the advisor before issuing a major correction, but it is ultimately the board's decision, not the advisors.
6. If changes are made to a web story once the story has been posted, the change will be noted along with the date and time the change was made at the bottom of the page.
7. Unless a story is factually incorrect or a reasonable request is presented to the board, it will not be changed after publication.

J. REGARDING STORY RETRACTIONS

1. Stories are not retracted or removed. If incorrect information is published, a correction will be made.

K. REGARDING ADVERTISING

1. The publications will not run advertising without a proper signature on the advertising contract that explains the terms of payment, content, and size.
2. The publication will not accept personal or classified advertising.
3. Any advertisement that is questioned by means of being appropriate will be reviewed by the editorial board.
4. The publication will cease to publish advertising of any advertiser that does not meet payment obligations specified in the advertising contract.
5. If a published advertisement is incorrect in substantive content, a reduced price or corrected run will be negotiated.
6. Web ads appear in a specified location on the homepage of the Black and White's website.
7. Advertising that appears in the media is not necessarily endorsed by the media or its staff members, editorial board or adviser.

L. REGARDING DISTRIBUTION AND CIRCULATION

1. The paper will begin at no less than 24 pages in magazine format unless it is a special edition. The number of pages can however be altered if need be under the decision of the adviser and/or editorial board.
2. There will be frequent updates to the website throughout the school year, and the updates will be less frequent over the summer and other school breaks.
3. The school newspaper will be distributed to students free of charge according to the distribution schedule made by the editorial board and adviser.
4. Current and past copies of the news magazine will be on news racks around the building.
5. Advertising revenues and fundraising are to be used to pay for the school media printing costs, supplies and other school media expenses.
6. Total press run issue is approximately 900 unless otherwise specified by the adviser and/or editorial board.

M. REGARDING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND ONLINE COMMENTS

1. Letters to the editor will be posted on the Black and White's website under the letters to the editor menu page.
2. Letters to the editor must be signed.
3. Like all material, letters may not be libelous, obscene or an invasion of privacy.
4. Letters to the editor must be submitted to jhsblackandwhite@gmail.com
5. Letters to the editor will be verified by a member of the editorial board to determine the authenticity of the writer.
6. The Black and White editorial board reserves the right to withhold a letter or column or other submission and/OR return it for revision if it contains unprotected speech or grammatical errors that could hamper its meaning.
7. All letters to the editor become the property of the Black and White upon receipt and will not be returned to the author unless it needs revision which will be decided at the discretion of the board.
8. All submissions may be edited for length, accuracy, and clarity and may be published in print, electronics, or other forms.
9. Online comments will require a name and email address submitted that are verifiable.
10. Alerts will be sent to staff editors each time a comment is posted to the site.
11. Online comments have to be reviewed and approved by editors before made public on the website.
12. Personal attacks are not allowed.

N. REGARDING REVIEWS

1. All reviews will be bylined and all reviews will be expressed opinions of authors, the editorial board and newspaper staff does not express opinions on the subject matter. The review will however be considered for a conflict of interest situation, if the needed arises.
2. All reviews are to evaluate the product and inform, not to promote.
3. Evaluative criteria used will be determined by the editorial board depending on whether the event or item being reviewed is professional or amateur in nature.
4. Review ideas are submitted by the Black and White staff.
5. All reviews need to be reviewed and printed in a current and timely manner.

O. REGARDING SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Social media will be used to promote the Black and White, to promote published content and to engage the JHS community.
2. The editorial board reserves the right to remove comments that violate any provisions hitherto outlined by this policy.
3. The Editor-in-Chief will have control of all social media accounts however will allow the usage to other Editorial Board members if needed.
4. Information posted on social media should be held to the same standard as all other reporting in terms of information gathering and fact checking,
5. Information gained through social media channels should be verified through multiple channels before passing it along to others.
6. Audience engagement through social media should be done in a professional manner.
7. Transparency is important. Mistakes made on social media posts should be corrected as soon as possible and any deleted posts should be acknowledged in subsequent postings.

P. PRIOR REVIEW POLICY

1. Sources will be informed of what their quote says before the publishing of the story through something called, The Fine Print. The Fine Print reads, “Thank you for taking the time to sit down with me for an interview. As a courtesy, I have included the quotes that I will be using down below. The Black & White staff believes in keeping the authenticity of stories by interviewing sources to gain direct information and perspectives. Thus the modification of quotes will be limited to instances of inaccuracy only. Failure to respond to this email within 24 hours results in the quotes being published as they are.”
2. Sources will not be able to arbitrarily demand to read the reporters completed story and then perform editing tasks on that story.
3. The media reporters will endeavor to include the name and identity of all sources if the reporter believes that doing so will not result in endangerment, harassment, or any other form of undue physical, mental or emotional anguish for the source.
4. The media reporters will not, within all boundaries of the law, reveal a source who asks to remain nameless and is in accordance with the anonymity requirements unless legal action is taken.
5. All media interviewers will respect the interviewees rights to have information remain ‘off the record’ if the fact is known before giving the information to the interviewer.
6. The media will not be reviewed by any one outside of staff members and the adviser prior to its release to the public. The adviser is allowed to review the publication, but

not required to, for the sole purpose of acting as legal consultant and educator in terms of unprotected speech. The advisor is allowed to review content before publication for the sole purpose of acting as consultant and educator. The content of a publication may only be modified by student editors, subject to review by the editorial board.

Q. REGARDING ANONYMITY

1. The source of information helps the reader decide if it is credible. For this reason, the Black and White believes that using the full name of a source represents sound journalism. There could be situations when a source's name would not be used, but these occurrences are rare and would be at the discretion of the editorial board. Use of pseudonyms will also be rare because the audience could easily mistake the actual identification of the source, which among other problems could cause a legal situation.

VI: STAFF POLICY FOR SELECTION AND DISMISSAL

A.EDITOR AND STAFF SELECTION PROCESS

1. Editor-in-Chiefs are chosen by the prior EIC. Other editorial level positions are chosen by EIC with input from the faculty adviser of the previous year's editorial board.
2. All students at JHS have the opportunity to be on the Black and White Staff, if they sign up for the class.
3. Editor titles and positions are not named until after all media have finalized publication for the previous year.

B. REGARDING EDITOR DISMISSAL

1. Very rarely will editors be asked to step down however if they are consistently not completing things listed in their job description, which can be found in the staff manual, then the topic will be visited.
2. There will be a three strike policy where the editorial board will talk with said editor, then if the behavior continues, a conversation with said editor and adviser will need to be held and finally if the behavior still persists the editor and their parents will be called to talk about the issue with the EIC and adviser present.
3. It is a decision made by the editorial board to remove a member from the board, not the advisor.

VII: QUERIES

1. Questions or complaints concerning material published should be made in writing to the EIC through jhsblackandwhite@gmail.com who then present the concern to the rest of the editorial board.

VIII: PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

1. The Black & White is a member of CSPA, NSPA, Quill & Scroll, and IHSPA.
2. Recent issues of the paper earned these honors: Columbia Scholastic Press Association Silver Crown Award, National Scholastic Press Association First Class rating, Quill & Scroll Gallup Award, IHSPA state placings and third in the National Best of Show.