

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 a right to express himself or herself. 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, drawing, or display through other artistic or communicative medium; and the distribution, publication and/or display of any of the above to others. This policy applies to all Academy sponsored programs, activities, and displays (including but not limited to student newspapers, yearbooks, plays, and performances) as well as to students while under IMSA’s jurisdiction. This policy also applies to “on-line” expression. Students should also refer to IMSA’s Information Technology System Policy (JBID).

**Guidelines**

This policy prohibits:

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 impinges on the rights of others;
2. Expression that is defamatory;
3. Expression that could result in liability to the Academy;
4. Threats of violence or other intimidating, harassing, or bullying statements, gestures, or symbols;
5. Expression 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;
  - c) Insulting or fighting words, statements, gestures, or symbols, the very expression of which is reasonably expected to or does, in fact, injure or harass 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 (stereotyping, negative comments or jokes, explicit threats, segregation, and verbal or physical assault) 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;
- 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 Director of Student Life or designee whose decision shall be final.

**ADOPTED: May 11, 1999**

**AMENDED: April 11, 2012**