



CITIZEN ADVOCACY CENTER

Internet Freedom

LESSON PLAN AND ACTIVITIES

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Internet Freedom

Lesson Plan and Activities

Grade Level: 9, 10, 11, 12

Subject(s):

- Social Studies: Government; and
- Language Arts: Reading, Writing

Duration: 1-2 class sessions

Description: This lesson will prompt a student discussion about the goals and policies of their school district when considering their freedom on the Internet. Also, it will give students the opportunity to rewrite the goals and policies that are currently in place.

Goals:

ISBE Standards

A. Social Science: 14D, 14F; and

B. English/Language Arts: 1A, 1B; 3B, 3C.

CCR Anchor Standards

Objectives:

1. Understand the goals and policies of the high school in relation to freedom of students on the Internet;
2. Identify how the goals and policies might better suit the students of the high school;
3. Successfully rewrite the high school goals and policies regarding internet freedom; and
4. Present proposed changes to the district school board.

Materials:

1. Notebook paper/pen;
2. High school handbook or Board of Education policies;
3. Copies of four scenarios for each student or each group of students; and
4. Chalkboard, whiteboard, or overhead projector.

Instruction and Activity

1. Begin by reviewing the school district's student policy handbook as it relates to penalties received by students involved in online activity, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instant Messaging, MySpace, etc. If the district does not have a policy, the focus of the lesson is to create a policy.
 - Ask for a show of hands of how many students have profiles on social networks or who have instant message accounts.

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- Ask students if they have personally encountered situations or heard about other students who have been punished as a result of their online activities (e.g. posting pictures, commenting about teachers, etc.)
2. Break the students into four groups, giving each a different scenario from below to work with.
 - Have each group read its scenario and discuss the questions that follow.
 - Have the students work together to answer the questions in writing. The teacher should monitor discussions to make sure students are on the right track.
 - Have a reporting member from each group share with the class the potential changes to high school goals and policies that the group came up with. If a group determined that no changes are necessary, the reporting member should explain the reasoning.
 3. Make a list on the board or overhead projector of the changes suggested by the groups;
 4. Lead a discussion regarding the list of proposed changes and create a composite suggestion for rewriting the student handbook;
 5. As a class, present the proposed changes to the student handbook to the school board; and
 6. As an additional activity, students may search the internet for other stories about how schools have responded to various student on-line undertakings.

Scenario 1

Based on: www.startribune.com/local/west/13549646.html

Abby and Stacy were best friends in high school. Abby was captain of the school's state championship volleyball team and Stacy always landed the lead role in the school play. The friends were well-liked by most of their peers and their families were well-respected in the community. Abby and Stacy enjoyed going to parties on weekends. One of the girls usually had a camera and they often took pictures together and later posted them on Facebook.

One Monday morning, Abby and Stacy were pulled from class and directed to the principal's office. They were met in the principal's office with printed versions of their party pictures from Facebook and a stern look of disapproval. Because the girls were holding red party cups in their hands in several of the pictures, they were each given a five-day out-of-school suspension and were required to enroll in a substance abuse program. To make matters worse, they were also suspended from their extracurricular activities for the season. Colleges and universities that were once interested in recruiting the girls stopped communicating with them.

Questions:

1. Did Abby and Stacy receive fair punishments for their actions? What policy did you use to reach your conclusion?
2. When considering the goals outlined in your current Student Handbook, do you feel that the current policy regarding student use of Facebook meets the reported goals? Why?
3. What do you believe the goals of your high school should be regarding student use of Facebook? Should current policy be changed to meet these goals, and if so, how?
4. Rewrite the Student Handbook to fulfill the goals and policies that you believe would better address the issue of students and their involvement on Facebook.

Scenario 2

Based on: http://news.cnet.com/Police-blotter-Student-sues-over-im-related-suspension/2100-1028_3-6090123.html

Jake was a technologically savvy high school student who strongly disliked his English teacher, Mr. Johnson. As a joke, Jake created an icon for his instant messaging account that depicted a gun shooting a man in the head along with the phrase “Kill Mr. Johnson.” This icon was displayed on Jake’s Instant Message (IM) account for nearly three weeks before a fellow student tipped off Mr. Johnson about Jake’s creation. Mr. Johnson, fearing for his own safety and that of his young child, requested that he be removed from teaching his current classes. Mr. Johnson’s coworkers noticed that he had become anxious and depressed. Although Jake had had no disciplinary problems in the past, the school board suspended him for an entire semester as a result of his threatening IM icon.

Questions:

1. Did Jake receive fair punishments for his actions? What policy did you use to reach your conclusion?
2. When considering the goals outlined in your current Student Handbook, do you feel that the current policy regarding student use of IM accounts meets the reported goals? Why?
3. What do you believe the goals of your high school should be regarding student use of IM? Should current policy be changed to meet these goals, and if so, how?
4. Rewrite the Student Handbook to fulfill the goals and policies that you believe would better address the issue of students and their use of IM.