## Hawk Talk

### Editorial Policy

#### Purpose of the newspaper

* **The role of the *Hawk Talk* is to inform, interpret, analyze, entertain, and provide leadership.**
* **The *Hawk Talk* will serve as an educational learning tool for student journalists.**
* **The *Hawk Talk* will strive to be accurate, fair, impartial, and responsible in its coverage of school activities.**
* **The *Hawk Talk* will adhere to the Society of Professional Journalist’s Code of Ethics.**

##### Language

* **No profanity will be published in the *Hawk Talk*.**
* **Slang or sayings considered to be offensive, suggestive or which may carry hidden meanings, may be censored by the editorial board.**
* **Quotations containing any of the above will be edited.**

##### Content

* **Content of the *Hawk Talk* will be discussed during weekly brainstorming sessions involving all staff members.**
* **When necessary, the editorial board will make a final decision regarding content, placement, priority and space given to all materials.**

##### Staff writing

* All writing, except for letters to the editor and guest editorials, will be written by students in the newspaper class.

##### Editorials

* **Editorial topics must be approved by the editorial board and express the opinion of a majority of the board.**
* **Adhering to professional standards, editorials will not carry bylines.**
* **Editorials will appear in approximately the same location each issue for easy identification.**
* **Guest editorials will be reviewed by the editorial board which will make a decision regarding publication. Guest editorials will carry a byline and a disclaimer that states, “This is the opinion of the writer and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Hawk Talk* staff.”**

##### Controversial issues

* **The *Hawk Talk* will explore all sides of a controversial issue so as to provide unbiased reporting.**
* **All sides of an issue will be reported factually so as to provide information about rather than to promote a controversy.**
* **The editorial board will have the final decision regarding publication of controversial material.**

##### News and features

* **The *Hawk Talk* will emphasize coverage of school news.**
* **The *Hawk Talk* will cover community, state, local and national news if there is a local school angle.**
* **The *Hawk Talk* will not cover stories related to illegal acts committed by students or other school personnel.**
* **The *Hawk Talk* will provide equal time and coverage to all school organizations and activities. Unchartered school organizations and youth organization not related to the school or student life will be covered at the discretion of the editorial board.**

##### Letters to the editor

* **The *Hawk Talk* staff encourages students to submit letters to the editor on issues that compliment, criticize, encourage and inform.**
* **When appropriate, the *Hawk Talk* will respond in a timely manner to each letter.**
* **All letters to the editor must be signed and the signature will be verified by the assistant editor to determine the authenticity of the writer.**
* **A writer may request his/her letter be published anonymously. The editorial board will decide whether undue embarrassment or harassment of the writer will result if his/her identity is made known. If the editorial board agrees to publish the letter anonymously, each staff member knowing the writer’s identity is required to keep that information confidential.**
* **Letters to the editor need to be between 200-300 words. The newspaper staff reserves the right to edit for length, grammar, and punctuation as long as the writer’s intent remains intact. The edited letter will be shown to the writer before publication.**
* **The *Hawk Talk* will not publish letters that contain material that is libelous, obscene, an invasion of privacy or a catalyst for disruptions at school or in the community.**
* **Letters to the editors may be given to any staff member, dropped off at the journalism room or turned into the office to be placed in Mrs. Terpstra’s mailbox.**

##### Trivia

* Trivial writing such as advice/gossip columns will not be published.
* **When necessary, the editorial board will decide what materials are considered trivial.**

##### Bylines and photo credits

* All articles and graphics, except editorials and news briefs, will be bylined.
* **Photo credits will be given when possible.**
* **Bylines are used to give recognition, not to determine responsibility.**

##### Reviews

* Movies, books, music, plays, and musical performances may be reviewed.
* **The reviewer must have experienced first-hand the item/event being reviewed.**
* **Reviewers will evaluate rather than promote selections. A review will give the reviewer’s opinion and will use examples from the selection to support that opinion.**
* **To give credibility to the review of a school production or activity, the reviewer will interview and cite quotes from those sources directly involved.**

##### Photos, illustrations and cartoons

* All illustrations, photos and cartoons appearing in the newspaper will be selected according to their appropriateness and sensitivity to the subjects and news stories. No student, faculty member, administrator or community member will be ridiculed or portrayed in an unfavorable manner.
* **If photos need to be reshot due to inappropriate attire or actions by those pictured, those responsible will be held accountable.**

##### Obituaries

* **The *Hawk Talk* will treat the death of a student, faculty member or administrator in a tasteful, respectful manner.**
* **A short, factual obituary including the individual’s name, date of birth, school activities, and any other pertinent information will appear on page 1. Sensitivity to the manner of death will be taken into consideration.**
* **A photo of the deceased will be included at the discretion of the editorial board.**

##### Errors

* Any errors, excluding basic writing errors, will be corrected in the next issue.
* **Errors will be corrected and an apology given in a correction box placed on the same page where the original item appeared.**
* **Errors will be corrected whether identified by a reader or staff member.**

##### Dismissal of staff members

* A staff member will be relieved of his/her newspaper duties (demoted) if they fail to meet the standards set by the adviser or editorial board after intervention has taken place.
* **The intervention process includes a conference with the adviser, a representative from the editorial board and an administrator; documentation of the areas deemed substandard; creation of a plan to raise the student’s level of performance; a probationary period of one month in which to improve performance; and a re-evaluation at the end of the probationary period.**
* **If the student improves during the probationary period but then reverts back to substandard performance, there will be immediate demotion without a second intervention.**
* **Upon demotion, a student may submit a written appeal to the adviser within 3 days. The adviser, a representative of the editorial board, and an administrator, will consider this appeal.**
* **If, after an appeal, the demotion is revoked, the student must comply to the intervention guidelines or be permanently demoted for the remainder of the school year.**
* **If demoted, the student will remain in class and is expected to fulfill class requirements as outlined by the instructor in order to receive credit for newspaper class.**
* **Demotion may occur if the student is found in violation of the Good Conduct Code, is expelled from school, knowingly plagiarizes, willingly fabricates quotes, or misses more than 3 deadlines without just cause, as determined by the editorial board.**

##### Time, place and manner of distribution

* **The *Hawk Talk* is published weekly in the *Diamond Trial News*. Copies are available each Tuesday through subscription or copies may be purchased at various businesses in Sully, Lynnville or at the *DTN* newspaper office.**