

# **The LHS Review 2016-2017 Editorial Policy & Staff Handbook**



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*Thanks to The JEA Model Editorial Policy and the Newtonite Staff Handbook  
for guiding us through this process.*

*“Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press....”  
–The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America*

*“The vigilant protection of constitutional freedoms is nowhere more vital than in the community of  
American schools.”  
–Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*

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The *LHS Review* Editorial Policy pertains to all *LHS Review* media, including the website, [thehsreview.com](http://thehsreview.com); any multimedia posted on the website; as well as any E-Mail and Social Media accounts such as Twitter, @lhsnews and Instagram, @lhsnews. The full editorial policy is also posted online at [thehsreview.com](http://thehsreview.com)

The *LHS Review* is the official student-produced newspaper of Lowell High School. *LHS Review* was established in 2014 as part of the Digital Journalism class, and now acts as the official publication of Lowell High School.

The mission of the *LHS Review* is to inform and entertain our audience, which includes the student body, faculty, the local community, and other schools' journalism programs, on subjects that may affect readers. The newspaper also aims to be a forum for the voices of the audience to be heard.

Finally, the *LHS Review* serves as a hands-on learning tool for the staff as they have the responsibility of putting out this information in a clear, meaningful and journalistic way.

The content of the *LHS Review* is determined by and reflects only the views of the student staff and not school officials or the school itself. Its student editors and responsible student staff members assume complete legal and financial liability for the content of the publication.

## **I. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

*The LHS Review* believes it is essential to preserve the freedom of the press in order to preserve a free society. Therefore:

- *The LHS Review* will serve the best interest of the students and faculty of Lowell High School, keeping itself free from any commercial obligations distracting from this purpose.
- Any decisions affecting the content of *The LHS Review* will be made by the Editorial Board with guidance from the Adviser. Although the staff of *The LHS Review* is allowed to give advice and opinion, the final decision rests in the hands of the Editor-in-Chief and the Adviser.
- The Editorial Board and the Adviser may prevent material it judges to be in violation of the media editorial policy from being printed.
- *The LHS Review* will vigorously resist all attempts at censorship, particularly pre-publication censorship.
- *The LHS Review* retains the right to publish any and all material obtained through an interview by a staff member of the publication staff, holding that the interviewee was made aware that the information could be published in any form at any time;
- *The LHS Review* will not publish any material determined by the Editorial Board or the Adviser that is libelous, obscene to minors, advocates illegal activities, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, is copyrighted, or may cause substantial disruption to the school.

## **II. THE EDITORIAL BOARD**

1. The Editorial Board, consisting of all staff editors, decides on all decisions that pertain directly to *The LHS Review* and their interests.

2. The Editorial Board shall interpret and enforce this editorial policy.
3. With guidance from the Adviser, the staff of *The LHS Review* will elect replacements for members of the Editorial Board that have been dismissed.

## **A. THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

1. The Editor-in-Chief of *The LHS Review* is a student of Lowell High School who has served on staff the previous year. He/she should have drive, leadership, insight and judgment.
2. The Editor-in-Chief is selected by the Adviser in consultation with the Editorial Board every May before the close of the current school year.
3. In special circumstances, the Editor-in-Chief may serve two terms; however, in the interest of continuity the Editor Emeritus should act as mentor to the following Editorial Board.
4. The Editor-in-Chief is responsible for all aspects of running *The LHS Review*, and must learn everything regarding the publication.
5. Editors-in-Chief must be prepared to solve any problems in general, especially last-minute issues.
6. Special responsibilities of the Editor-in-Chief include, but are not limited to:
  - Appointing, dismissing, organizing and evaluating staff.
  - Maintaining a climate of trust and cooperation among staffers.
  - Communicating crises in a timely fashion with the Adviser.
  - Working closely with the Adviser and the Editorial Board on a regular basis about all aspects of the Newspaper.
  - Setting the production schedule and deadlines for staff.
  - Running weekly meetings with the entire staff.
  - Proofreading final copies of each story before posting to the website.
  - Writing Editorials and/or Responding to Letters to the Editors.
  - Teaching beginners on staff.

## **B. THE MANAGING EDITOR**

1. The Managing Editor of *The LHS Review* is a student of Lowell High School who has served on staff the previous year. He/she should be fiscally responsible, have energy and patience.
2. The Managing Editor is second in command to the Editor-in-Chief, and may take over for the Editor-in-Chief should the need arise.
3. The Managing Editor is selected by the Editor-in-Chief and the Adviser every May before the close of the current school year.
4. The Managing Editor is responsible for coming up with story ideas, keeping informed on news developments around the school community, and making sure the staff is set on deadlines.
5. Managing Editors need to be a leader, and should have a sound knowledge of journalism and advertising, as well as an excellent writer and critic of writing.
6. Special responsibilities of the Managing Editor include, but are not limited to:

- Working closely with the Adviser and the Editorial Board on a regular basis about all aspects of the Newspaper.
- Discussing deadlines with section editors and motivating staff to meet these deadlines.
- Helping the Editor-in-Chief proofread final copies of each story before posting to the website.
- Coordinating assignments, making sure that none overlap, as well as compiling a list of current articles on a weekly basis.
- Assigning news stories as quick and specific as possible.
- Writing Editorials and/or Responding to Letters to the Editors.
- Keeping articles timely, balanced and accurate.
- Keeping staff fed when necessary.

### **C. GENERAL EDITORS**

1. General Editors of *The LHS Review* are students of Lowell High School appointed by either the Editor-in-Chief or the Adviser.

## **III. THE ADVISER**

1. The Adviser is a professional teaching staff member of Lowell High School and is in charge of the class just as in a conventional classroom situation.
2. The Adviser is a certified journalism teacher that serves as a professional role model, motivator, catalyst for ideas and professionalism, and an educational resource.
3. The Adviser provides a journalistic, professional learning atmosphere for students by allowing them to make the decisions of the content for *The LHS Review* and ensuring the media will remain an open forum.
4. The Adviser guides the staff of *The LHS Review* in accordance with approved editorial policy and aids the educational process related to producing content.
5. The Adviser keeps the students informed about laws pertaining to libel, privacy, etc...
6. The Adviser keeps the students up to date with the latest trends in journalism.
7. The Adviser will submit *The LHS Review* and any of its content produced by the students to rating services and contests in order for the publication to receive feedback.
8. The Adviser will provide information to newspaper staff about journalism scholarships and other financial aid, and make available information and contacts concerning journalism as a career.
9. The Adviser will work with the faculty and administration to help them understand the freedoms accorded to the students and the professional goals of *The LHS Review*.
10. School officials shall not fire or otherwise discipline advisers for content in student media that is determined and published by the staff of *The LHS Review*.

## IV. THE NEWSPAPER STAFF

1. *The LHS Review* “Staff” are composed of students involved in the Newspaper Club and/or a member of the Digital Journalism course at Lowell High School.
2. Every member of *The LHS Review* is vital to the newspaper’s workflow. Therefore, all staff of *The LHS Review* is held accountable for the following shared responsibilities:
  - Completing all assignments **AND** adhering to deadlines. (If you know you are not going to meet deadline because of circumstances you can’t control, you must inform your editor.)
  - Making any changes that were requested by editor if work is handed back.
  - Contributing ideas that will improve the publication
  - Keeping in touch regularly with the Editors, Editor-in-Chief and Adviser.

## V. THE BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

3. The Lowell High School administration will provide the students of Lowell High School with a qualified journalism instructor to serve as a professional role model, adequate classroom equipment, and space for a sound journalism program.
4. The Lowell High School administration will offer equal opportunity to minority and/or marginalized students to participate in journalism programs.
5. Staff and/or the Adviser of *The LHS Review* may seek advice from the administration on content at any point in production.
6. The Lowell High School administration may provide some funding, but it is up to the staff to raise money for productions through the sale of advertising and fundraising events.

## V. CONTENT OF LHS DIGITAL NEWSPAPER

### A. INTRODUCTION

All content decisions will be made in occurrence to the following provisions, while keeping in mind that the overall purpose, role and goal of *The LHS Review* is to:



- Inform, interpret and entertain their readers through accurate and factual reports, where information has been thoroughly gathered and information has been completely verified.
- Serve as a hands-on learning tool for students on staff.
- Be accurate, fair and impartial in its coverage of issues that affect the school community.
- Cover the total school population as effectively and accurately as possible.
- Run as an open forum for the voices of the student body, faculty and local community to be heard, limited only by the United States constitution and applicable court decisions as they relate to public high schools.

## **B. REGARDING PROFANITY**

1. *The LHS Review* will not publish any profanity.
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 Student Editors reserve the right to edit quotes for profanity or offensive words and/or quotes. Any words and/or quotes that have been edited will be noted accordingly when published.
4. Any edited word(s) and/or quote(s) will be shown to the source prior to publishing if the editing changes the meaning of the word(s) and/or quote(s), and the source will have a chance to make changes without the use of profane language.
5. Staff interviewers have the right to ask a source when necessary to repeat a quote without the use of profane language.
6. The Adviser, with guidance from the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board. has the final decision whether or not to publish the questioned content.

## **C. REGARDING STAFF WRITING**

1. Writing in *The LHS Review*, other than letters to the editor, will be written by students in the Newspaper Club, as well as students enrolled in the school's Digital Journalism courses.
2. Lowell High School students outside of the Newspaper Club and/or Digital Journalism courses will have the opportunity to submit writing to *The LHS Review*, upon approval from the Editorial Board and the Editor-in-Chief.
3. Student editors reserve the right to edit any content received through an outside source and must comply to this policy.
4. Writing must be the original work of the writer and not previously published on any publication, unless otherwise specified by the Adviser and the Editor-in-Chief.

## **D. REGARDING EDITORIALS**

1. Editorials in *The LHS Review* will be published under the Opinions section of the website.

2. The Student Editors of the LHS Digital Newspaper will determine the content of the Editorial. Ideas for the Editorial may be submitted by any staff member of *The LHS Review*.
3. The views stated in the Editorial represent that of a majority of the Editorial Board. The stance of the Editorial require the consensus of the Editorial Board. Signed columns or reviews represent only the opinion of that author.
4. *The LHS Review* will not publish any material for which there is evidence that the author is using the paper for inappropriate personal gain.
5. See Section G. "Regarding Bylines" for guidelines on editorial bylines.

## **E. REGARDING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

*The LHS Review* welcomes letters from students, faculty, and members of the community as they give a constructive way for more people to express their opinions, criticisms, and reactions to school issues.

1. Letters to the Editor will be published under the Opinions section of *The LHS Review* website, [thelhsreview.com](http://thelhsreview.com).
2. Guidelines to writing Letters to the Editor is available in the Opinions section of *The LHS Review* website, [thelhsreview.com](http://thelhsreview.com).
3. Letters to the Editor may be dropped-off with the Adviser Mr. Brennan in Room 131, placed in the Adviser's mailbox in E-House or emailed to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Letters to Editor must be signed and must include the writer's email and/or phone number for verification.
5. Letters to the Editor will be verified by either by the Adviser, Editor-in-Chief or a member of the Editorial Board to determine the authenticity of the writer.
6. No material will be printed where content is obscene, invasive of another's' privacy, encouraging physical disruption of school activities and/or implies libel.
7. *The LHS Review* Editorial Board reserves the right to edit the letter for grammar and content if necessary by the staff as long as the changes do not affect the meaning of the letter.
8. *The LHS Review* Editorial Board reserves the right to withhold a letter or other submission and/OR return it for revision if it contains unprotected speech or grammatical errors that could hamper its meaning.
9. All Letters to the Editor become the property of *The LHS Review* upon receipt and will not be returned to the author.

## **F. REGARDING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

1. All sides of the issue will be presented and reviewed so as to refrain from any bias, with exception of opinions.
2. In news, all sides of a school, community, city, state, national, or international political issue will be presented factually so as to inform rather than promote or endorse.
3. *The LHS Review* will not publish material that is unnecessarily obscene, libelous or an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

4. The media will not attack people and/or organizations.
5. If question on the veracity of publication persists, the issue will be brought to the student editors who must consider the following questions before publication of the piece:
  - Why is it a concern?
  - What is its journalistic purpose?
  - Is the information accurate and complete?
  - Are any important POVs 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?

## **G. REGARDING BYLINES**

1. All articles, graphics, photos, art, columns, pages, reviews and other material creatively conceived, with exception to staff editorials, mug shots and cutouts will be bylined with the producer's name.
2. Any editorials published in *The LHS Review*, except for Letters to the Editor and the EIC Column, shall be bylined "By The Editorial Board"
3. Any material produced by an Editor will be bylined "By \_\_\_\_\_, Editor".
4. Any material produced by the Editor-in-Chief will be bylined "By \_\_\_\_\_, Editor-in-Chief".
5. All bylined writers will be held accountable for their work.

## **H. REGARDING NEWS AND FEATURES**

1. *The LHS Review* will cover community, state, national and international news if it is directly relevant to the school community, and includes local angle.
2. The media will strive to provide coverage to all school organizations and functions.
3. When faced with undesirable news such as student, staff or faculty crimes, *The LHS Review* will endeavor to publish the facts correctly, explain the issue and put a stop to any speculative stories that inevitably develop.

## **I. REGARDING DEATHS**

1. Any current student, staff member, faculty member or building administrator that dies during the year will be recognized on *The LHS Review* website, [lhsdigitalnewspaper.wordpress.com](http://lhsdigitalnewspaper.wordpress.com).
2. *The LHS Review* will publish factual information (date of birth, date of death, survivors, organizations, hobbies, interests) in a 300-400 word obituary including one mug shot if possible.

3. *The LHS Review* will first obtain permission from the deceased's family before publishing any information regarding the cause of death unless the cause of death is public record. **Suicide will not be listed as a cause of death.**
4. The school media will treat all deaths in a tasteful and respectful way.

## **J. REGARDING ILLUSTRATIONS, PHOTOGRAPHS, GRAPHICS, ETC.**

1. All captions will record the who, what, where, when, why, how and other necessary information in the photo.
2. All photographs and online galleries must be captioned and bylined.
3. Any photographs that contain any inappropriate attire or actions must be or they will not be published.
4. Artwork represents the interpretations of the artist, not necessarily of the staff or Lowell High School.
5. *The LHS Review* will not publish any photos, illustrations etc. that ridicule, demean or misleadingly represent any individual or group.

## **K. REGARDING ERRORS**

1. Concerns about errors in the school media may be submitted through the adviser; email is [matthewbrennan@lowell.k12.ma.us](mailto:matthewbrennan@lowell.k12.ma.us).
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 author, audience or staff member.
4. Staff members will strive to correct errors prior to posting; however, if the Editorial Board determines a significant error is posted, the Editorial Board will determine the manner and timeliness of a correction. The change will be noted at the top of the article after the byline along with the date and time the change was made.
5. Major corrections are determined by the Editor-in-Chief and the Adviser.

## **L. REGARDING ADVERTISING**

1. *The LHS Review* will not accept advertising for products that are illegal for minors to purchase and/or use.
2. Students not of legal age whose photographs appear in an advertisement of *The LHS Review* are required to sign a model release form, as well as their legal guardian.
3. *The LHS Review* will not run advertisements without a proper signature on the advertising contract which explains terms of payment, content, size, publishing dates and includes attached layout.

4. All advertisements need to be approved by the Editor-in-Chief, any advertisement not deemed appropriate by the Editor-in-Chief will not run.
5. *The LHS Review* will cease to publish advertising of any advertiser who does not meet payment obligations.
6. Advertising that appears in *The LHS Review* website is not necessarily endorsed by *The LHS Review* or its Staff, Editorial Board or the Adviser.

## **M. REGARDING DISTRIBUTION AND CIRCULATION**

1. Daily updates will be made to the website throughout the week during the school year. While less frequent, updates will be made to the site during breaks.
2. Advertising revenues and fundraising are to be used to pay for web hosting costs, supplies and other expenses.
3. All budget surpluses, if any, are to be used for future production of the school media.

## **N. REGARDING REVIEWS**

1. The reviewer must have experience in the area in which they are reviewing.
2. All reviews will be to evaluate and inform, not to promote.
3. Review ideas may be submitted to the Editorial Board by all staff of *The LHS Review*.
4. The content of all reviews must be timely in nature.

## **O. REGARDING ONLINE COMMENTS**

1. Online comments will require a name and email address submitted that are verifiable.
2. Alerts will be sent to Editorial Board each time a comment is posted to the site.
3. Online comments that are found in violation of the editorial policy will be removed as quickly as possible.
4. Personal attacks are not allowed.

## **P. REGARDING SOCIAL MEDIA**

1. Social media will be used to promote *The LHS Review's* published content and to engage the Lowell High School community.
2. The Social Media Editor will work with the student staff to promote the publication of content through outside sources such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
3. The Editorial Board reserves the right to remove posts that violate any provisions hitherto outlined by this policy.
4. Information posted on social media platforms should be held to the same standard as all other reporting in terms of information gathering and fact checking.
5. The official social media accounts should avoid promotion of events and remain objective, reporting what is fact. Reporters using personal social media to cover events should do the

same. Content posted by specific clubs' accounts promoting events may be shared by *The LHS Review* social media accounts on a fair basis.

6. Information gained through social media channels should be verified through multiple channels before passing it along to others.
7. Audience engagement through social media should be done in a professional manner.
8. Staff members using applications to post updates to social media accounts should have separate applications for their personal account and for the school media accounts. This will limit the chance of a post being sent from the wrong account.
9. 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.

## **Q. PRIOR REVIEW POLICY**

1. Sources will be able to have quotes read back at the time of the interview or at reporter's initiative.
2. Sources will not be able to arbitrarily demand to read the reporter's completed story and then perform editing tasks on that story.
3. *The LHS Review* 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, emotional anguish for the source.
4. Reporters will not, within all boundaries of law, reveal a source who asks to remain nameless.
5. All reporters will respect the interviewees rights to have information remain "off the record" if the fact is known before giving the information to the interviewer.

# **VI: STAFF POLICY FOR SELECTION AND DISMISSAL**

## **A. EDITOR AND STAFF SELECTION PROCESS**

1. Applicants are not turned down because of age, race, sex, religion, mental or physical handicap that do not impair editorial responsibilities.
2. Editor-in-chief(s) and other editor level positions are chosen by the Adviser, with input from the previous year's student editors.
3. New staffers will be recruited through an Introductory Interest Meeting to be held in the beginning of each school year, except for 2016-2017 when the meeting will be held in January 2017.
4. New and returning staffers are judged by application, previous work, potential and perquisite class work.

5. The Editorial Board and the Editor-in-Chief(s) for the new school year are selected every May before the close of the current school year. The Adviser reserves the right to make changes to the list as he/she deems necessary.

## **B. REGARDING STAFF DISMISSAL**

All individuals involved with *The LHS Review* are considered a team. Each member is expected to complete all assigned stories, pages, photos, etc. on or before the assigned deadline.

1. Staff members, including editors, may be dismissed from their positions and/or the *The LHS Review* staff itself if any of following violations occur:
  1. continuously missed deadlines (dismissal procedures will take place by choice of adviser and EICs)
  2. Plagiarism
  3. Quote falsification
  4. Vandalism or theft of publication equipment
  5. Continuous negative or pessimistic attitude toward staff member or adviser
  6. Two suspensions in one academic year
  7. Failing to fulfill job as outlined in job description
2. Major infractions will result in immediate dismissal from staff duties and immediate dismissal from the Newspaper Club. (major infractions include but are not limited to following: plagiarism, vandalism, theft).
3. Minor infractions will be given a written warning for the first one. The second one is immediate dismissal from staff duties and dismissal from the Newspaper Club.
4. Warnings will be written and signed by the Adviser and Editor-in-Chief(s), as well as the staff member in question.
5. The Editor-in-Chief and the Adviser will attend a meeting with potentially dismissed student to discuss the issue. The Adviser will make the final decision.
6. The above list infractions could all result in dismissal however, staff dismissals are not limited to the listed infractions.
7. A dismissed staff member receiving academic credit may be given a grade of F and will not be allowed to register for any other journalism courses (will not preempt school policy).
8. Dismissal procedures are reviewed and approved by the Editorial Board.
9. The dismissed staff member may appeal their dismissal in writing to the Editorial Board within three school days following dismissal. All dismissal appeals will be directed to the Adviser.

## **VII. QUERIES**

Questions or complaints concerning material published in the media should be made in writing to the Editor-in-Chief(s) who will present the concern to the Editorial Board and Adviser at the next meeting.

## **VIII. PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION**

The Lowell High School newspaper should be a member of state, national and/or international high school journalism organizations.