

MCCPTA update on Policy CNA: November, 2006

What does Policy CNA cover?

Policy CNA is concerned only with printed informational material sent home with students, i.e. backpack mail, and displaying printed informational materials and announcements at schools. Policy CNA does not cover, or impose any restrictions on, PTAs' uses of their own listserves, websites, or mailings through U.S. mail.

Which groups are allowed to send home information under the new policy CNA?

Four groups have backpack privileges at any time during the school year. They are: 1. MCPS, 2. Federal, state, or local governmental entities, 3. Nationally affiliated PTAs operating within MCPS and MCCPTA and 4. Parent teacher organizations at special education schools and alternative centers that operate in lieu of nationally affiliated PTAs.

Other nonprofit community organizations shall be permitted to distribute materials through students 2-4 times per year.

Community organizations and businesses shall be permitted to display printed materials at schools.

My PTA uses backpack mail to distribute its newsletter. Can we attach flyers from other groups to it or send them home separately?

The Board of Education has not placed any restrictions on the materials PTAs send home via backpacks. MCCPTA recommends that you wait until it can issue a further clarification on any situation not covered below.

My PTA mails its newsletter home. Can it attach flyers or include information from other groups in it?

Policy CNA does not pertain to any materials your PTA chooses to mail to parents. Your PTA can include information in its mailed newsletter from other groups, including flyers.

The NAACP Parent Council Representative is a member of our PTA's Executive Board, as specified in our bylaws. Can our PTA distribute NAACP Parent Council materials through the backpacks?

If your PTA concludes that NAACP Parent Council materials are appropriate for PTA distribution, then the PTA may reasonably decide to distribute the material through backpacks. The fact that your PTA has chosen to include the NAACP Parent Council Representative on its executive board reflects a reasonable judgment that the organization's mission is related to and consistent with the PTA's mission, and that the information supplied by the NAACP Parent Council will also be useful to parents.

Our PTA provides financial support to an Asian Parent Group within our school; we have a line item in our budget for this. Can our PTA distribute information from this Asian Parent Group in the backpacks?

The fact that your PTA has chosen to provide financial support on regular basis, such as in a budget line item, to the Asian Parent Group at your school reflects a reasonable judgment by your PTA that this Asian Parent Group's mission is related to and consistent with the PTA's mission and is useful to parents. If your PTA concludes that Asian Parent Group materials are appropriate for PTA distribution, then your PTA may reasonably decide to distribute the materials through backpacks.

Can my PTA send out information from other groups on our list serve?

If your list serve is owned and maintained by your PTA (this could be true even if your school administrators use the list for announcements) then you have complete control over what you choose to send out via this list.

Can my PTA post information from other groups on our web site?

If your PTA owns the domain name it can post anything it likes on its web site including announcements, flyers, and links to other organizations.

What if our school site has a link to our web site, can we still post materials on our web site?

If your PTA owns the domain name it can post anything it likes on its web site including announcements, flyers, and links to other organizations. MCPS regulation KBA-RB *Educational Purposes and Administration of the MCPS Web* states regarding its web sites "Web pages with links to non-MCPS sites will include the disclaimer, "This Web page may contain links to one or more pages that are outside the MCPS. MCPS does not control the content or relevancy of these pages." A link on the MCPS Web to a non-MCPS site does not represent MCPS sponsorship of the linked entity." You may wish to recommend to the school that it post a notice on its own web site such as "you are now leaving the MCPS web site" when users click on the PTA link from the school web site. Your PTA may want to place a disclaimer on its web site stating "This is a web site of the PTA, not the school."

What if our web site is part of the MCPS site? Are there any restrictions?

Policy CNA does not address MCPS web sites; MCPS released regulation KBA-RB in October, 2006, which addresses MCPS web sites. This regulation outlines what can and can be posted on MCPS sites, and contains restrictions on allowable web technologies. This regulation does not contain restrictions specifically addressed to PTA content (there are restrictions on advertising that PTAs may find relevant) but individual schools may have agreements with their PTAs about what materials the PTA posts. MCCPTA recommends that your PTA purchase its own domain name so that you can maintain complete control over your site. If you need advice on this, you may contact our web site committee chairs at webmaster@mccpta.com.