

The Griffins' Nest

INFORMATIVE • IMPARTIAL • INDEPENDENT

CONSOLIDATED

REPORTER'S MANUAL & EDITORIAL POLICY GUIDE

Version 6.2

2023/2024

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CONSOLIDATED
**REPORTER'S MANUAL &
EDITORIAL POLICY GUIDE**
Version 6.1

Message from the Editorial Board

Thank you for choosing The Griffins' Nest!

The Griffins' Nest is Eric Hamber's **student-led, independent newspaper**. Publishing all year round, The Nest covers topics relevant to students and staff in an informative, impartial, and professional manner.

We value your membership and appreciate you choosing to spend some of your time with us as a club.

The Nest is an **extremely unique, rewarding experience**. **Unlike any other high school newspaper across Canada**, we have a history of exceptional quality, and a commitment to upholding such standards.

The Nest is a **nationally recognized paper** whose work has been applauded by the members of the **Canadian Association of Journalists, Student Press Law Center, Canadian Youth Journalism Project, British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, Canadian University Press, and Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University**.

As a student journalist, you become a part of the club's exceptional staff, expand your journalism, civics, and news media knowledge, all while getting a front row seat to history.

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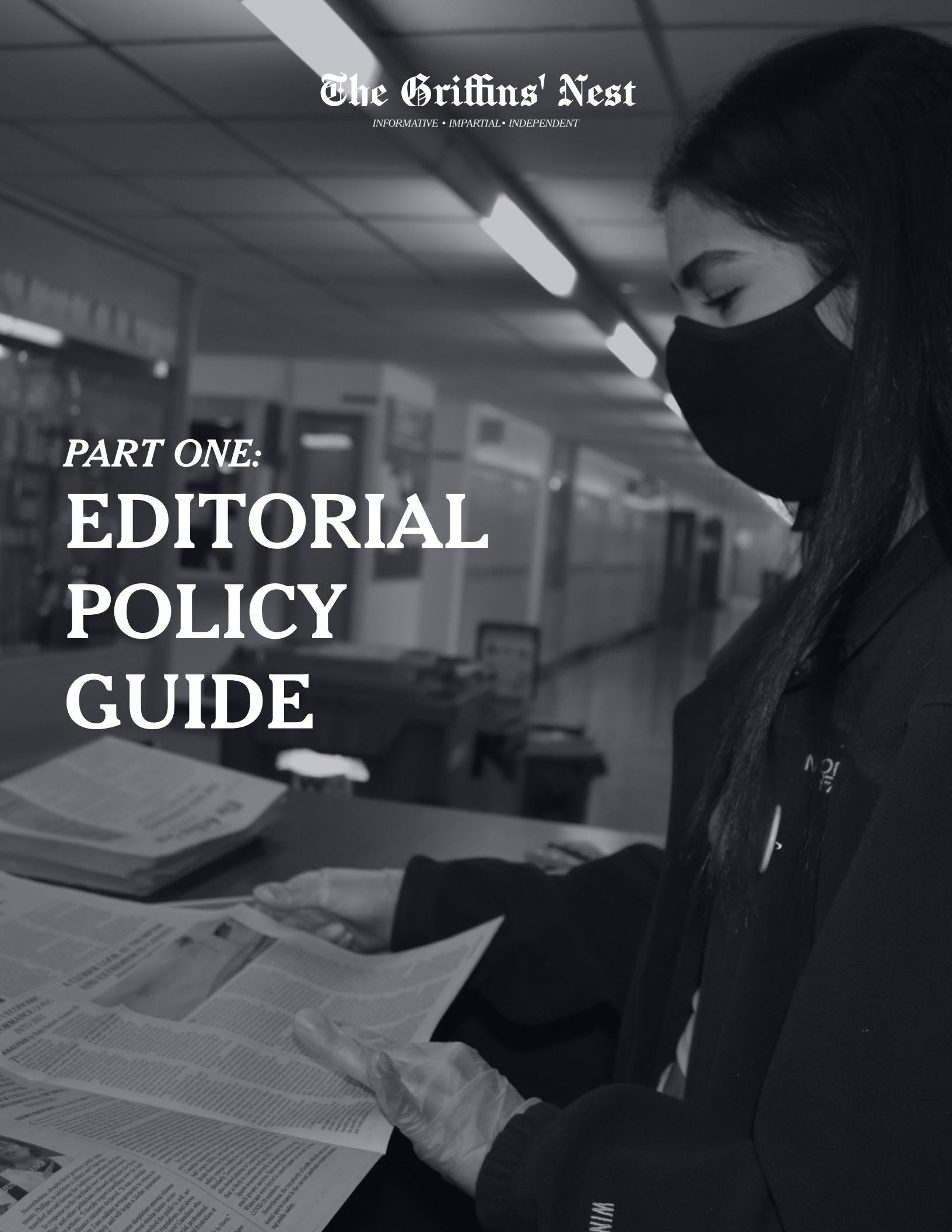
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The Griffins' Nest

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PART ONE:

EDITORIAL POLICY GUIDE



Part One - Editorial Policies

Policy I - Article Selection & Coverage Decision-Making

In general, all articles regardless of type, will possess at least two newsworthy qualities that form the basis of the article. The Editor-in-Chief will ultimately approve each individual article before assignment.

The specifics of the selection process are specific to the article type:

- (1) News Reports and News Analyses - Before each issue, the Editorial Board compiles a list of proposed articles for the Hamber News & Student Life, Vancouver & the Province, Canada, and International (news) sections of the newspaper. This process involves analyzing current professional news media coverage, causes, and issues the Hamber community cares about. The Editorial Board then determines both present proportionate significance and estimated significance by publication date. While it is primarily the Editorial Board preparing article selections, reporters are welcome and encouraged to propose their own.
- (2) Opinion Articles - proposed only by columnists (members who write opinion articles). Opinion articles may be proposed before article assignments to the Editorial Board. Opinion articles are strictly **NOT** assigned by the Editorial Board.
- (3) Editorials or Investigations - proposed by the Editorial Board. Editorials and Investigations primarily deal with topics related to school functions, which could include student and teacher issues, district issues, education system commentary and analysis, and public interest investigative reporting.

Additionally, **members of the community are encouraged to submit article ideas**, and an earnest aim should be taken to ensure that articles proposed by such are seriously considered.

Policy II - Article Cancellation

The Editorial Board reserves the right to cancel an article at any point if deemed to be inflammatory, defamatory, irresponsible, of poor quality, plagiarized, discriminatory, or any other disqualifying factor as seen fit pursuant to their judgement.

Policy III - Self-Restricted Reporting

Notwithstanding The Nest's commitment to cover news, the Editorial Board has restricted certain topics from discussion or coverage due to the increased sensitivity of a secondary school environment. Topics include but are not limited to:

- (1) Suicide,
- (2) Instruction related to the production, procurement, or usage of a weapon or weaponization of an item,
- (3) Instruction related to the production, procurement, and usage of narcotics, alcohol, vaporizers, e-cigarettes, tobacco, and other related or controlled substances.

Policy IV - Ownership of Intellectual Property

Ownership of intellectual property is a component of press freedom and The Nest's ability to disseminate content.

All contributions, as well as the newspaper as a whole, are the sole and exclusive property of The Nest. Articles are works commissioned by The Nest and can be republished in any medium at its discretion. See *Publishing Agreement*.

The Nest is its own entity separate from the school board in respect to copyright, regardless of financial or other support.

This policy allows The Nest to publish the newspaper digitally and is consistent with both industry collective and freelance agreements, and the *Copyright Act* of Canada.

Policy V - Advertising

Advertisements, as a source of funding, are permitted, so long as they do not feature or promote:

- (1) fraudulent or misleading information;
- (2) offensive weapons (firearms, knives, et al.);
- (3) violence;
- (4) environmental degradation;
- (5) alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaporizers;
- (6) negative body image stereotypes;
- (7) contraventions of the *Human Rights Code of British Columbia*;
- (8) non-prescription pills;
- (9) gambling;
- (10) illegal activity;
- (11) contraventions of public health advice;
- (12) obscenity.

All advertisements are subject to review by the Editorial Board and may be disqualified for a specific and articulable reason, including beyond this list.

All advertisements are to feature the tag “**ADVERTISEMENT**” in legible text.

Policy VI - Administrative Preview

As a courtesy, The Nest provides school administration with a copy of each issue prior to publication. The purpose of such preview is for administration to point out any contraventions of Policy III and any other justifiably harmful content that is specific and articulable, so that revisions or cancellations can be decided by the Editorial Board.

Policy VII - Journalistic Commitment

The following journalistic commitment is featured on the cover the print newspaper.

The Griffins' Nest is Eric Hamber's student-led, independent newspaper. Publishing all year round, The Nest covers topics relevant to students and staff in an informative, impartial, and professional manner.

All articles are curated by the Editorial Board (with the exception of opinion pieces). See the contact forms on our website for questions and complaints.

The Griffins' Nest adheres to the Canadian Association of Journalists' *Principles for Ethical Journalism* and *Ethics Guidelines* and the Society of Professional Journalists' *Code of Ethics*.

Policy VIII - Guiding Principles

The Nest adheres to the following guiding principles:

1. Canadian Association of Journalists'

- (a) *Principles of Ethical Journalism*
- (b) *Ethics Guidelines*

2. Society of Professional Journalists'

- (a) *Code of Ethics*

While guiding principles represent the tenets of journalism, they are in no way inflexible and can compete with each other in editorial decisions. Guiding principles are meant to base, back, and inform the decisions of journalists in their work. Decisions that reference guiding principles are best made on the advice and input of participants in a discussion featuring all ethical viewpoints. Some parts may be covered or superseded by specific Editorial Policies or manual contents to account for the nature of a secondary school club and core readership.

ETHICS GUIDELINES

Submitted by the CAJ Ethics Advisory Committee, June 2011

PREAMBLE

This document – along with the accompanying “Principles for Ethical Journalism” – is intended to help both seasoned professionals and new journalists to hold themselves accountable for professional work. While many specific questions are considered here, it is impossible to capture all potential scenarios in a document such as this. Instead, it seeks to provide examples of the application of our general ethical principles, and to help journalists apply those principles and their best judgment when faced with scenarios not covered here. Updates will be issued periodically as new issues come under consideration by the association’s Ethics Advisory Committee; suggestions for additions or amendments should be directed to the [committee chair](#) or the CAJ president.

ACCURACY

- We are disciplined in our efforts to verify all facts. Accuracy is the moral imperative of journalists and news organizations, and should not be compromised, even by pressing deadlines of the 24-hour news cycle.
- We make every effort to verify the identities and backgrounds of our sources.
- We seek documentation to support the reliability of those sources and their stories, and we are careful to distinguish between assertions and fact. The onus is on us to verify all information, even when it emerges on deadline.
- We make sure to retain the original context of all quotations or clips, striving to convey the original tone. Our reporting and editing will not change the meaning of a statement or exclude important qualifiers.
- There is no copyright on news or ideas once a story is in the public domain, but if we can’t match the story, we credit the originating source.
- While news and ideas are there for the taking, the words used to convey them are not. If we borrow a story or even a paragraph from another source we either credit the source or rewrite it before publication or broadcast. Using another’s analysis or interpretation may constitute plagiarism, even if the words are rewritten, unless it is attributed.
- When we make a mistake, whether in fact or in context, and regardless of the platform, we correct* it promptly and in a transparent manner, acknowledging the nature of the error.
- We publish or broadcast all corrections, clarifications or apologies in a consistent way.
- We generally do not “unpublish” or remove digital content, despite public requests, or “source remorse.” Rare exceptions generally involve matters of public safety, an egregious error or ethical violation, or legal restrictions** such as publication bans.

FAIRNESS

- We respect the rights of people involved in the news.
- We give people, companies or organizations that are publicly accused or criticized opportunity to respond before we publish those criticisms or accusations. We make a genuine and reasonable effort to contact them, and if they decline to comment, we say so.
- We do not refer to a person's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender self-identification or physical ability unless it is pertinent to the story.
- We avoid stereotypes of race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status. And we take particular care in crime stories.
- We take special care when reporting on children or those who are otherwise unable to give consent to be interviewed. While some minors, such as athletes, may be used to being interviewed, others might have little understanding of the implications of talking to the media. So when unsure, or when dealing with particularly sensitive subjects, we err on the side of seeking parental consent. Likewise, we take special care when using any material posted to social media by minors, as they may not understand the public nature of their postings.
- We do not allow our own biases to impede fair and accurate reporting.
- We respect each person's right to a fair trial.
- We do not pay for information, although we may compensate those who provide material such as photos or videos. We sometimes also employ experts to provide professional expertise, and pay for embedded activities. We are careful to note any such payments in our stories. (See TRANSPARENCY, below).
- It is becoming common to be asked for payments in foreign countries, whether it's for guides, to make connections, or to help a source travel to meet reporters. But it's important to question the subject's motives in such cases, and to be transparent in telling audiences what occurred (See TRANSPARENCY, below).

Right To Privacy

- The public has a right to know about its institutions and the people who are elected or hired to serve its interests. People also have a right to privacy, and those accused of crimes have a right to a fair trial.
- However, there are inevitable conflicts between the right to privacy, and the rights of all citizens to be informed about matters of public interest. Each situation should be judged in light of common sense, humanity and relevance.
- We do not manipulate people who are thrust into the spotlight because they are victims of crime or are associated with a tragedy. Nor do we do voyeuristic stories about them. When we contact them, we are sensitive to their situations, and report only information in which the public has a legitimate interest.
- Journalists are increasingly using [social networking](#) sites to access information about people and organizations. When individuals post and publish information about themselves on these sites, this information generally becomes public, and can be used. However, journalists should not use subterfuge to gain access to information intended to be private. In addition, even when such information is public, we must rigorously apply ethical considerations including independent confirmation and transparency in identifying the source of information. (See DIGITAL MEDIA, below.)

INDEPENDENCE

- We serve democracy and the public interest by reporting the truth. This sometimes conflicts with various public and private interests, including those of sources, governments, advertisers and, on occasion, with our duty and obligation to an employer.
- Defending the public's interest includes promoting the free flow of information, exposing crime or wrongdoing, protecting public health and safety, and preventing the public from being misled.
- We do not give favoured treatment to advertisers and special interests. We resist their efforts to influence the news.
- We pay our own way whenever possible. However, not all journalists or organizations have the means to do so. So if another organization pays our expenses to an event that we are writing about we say so, and this includes when covering industries such as travel, automotive, the military and foreign trade (See TRANSPARENCY, below). (There are some generally understood exceptions; for instance, it is common practice to accept reviewers' tickets for film previews, concerts, lectures and theatrical performances.)
- We do not solicit gifts or favours for personal use, and should promptly return unsolicited gifts of more than nominal value. If it is impractical to return the gift, we will give it to an appropriate charity.
- We do not accept the free or reduced-rate use of valuable goods or services offered because of our position. However, it may be appropriate to use a product for a short time to test or evaluate it. (A common exception is unsolicited books, music, food, or other new products sent for review.)
- We generally do not accept payment for speaking to groups we report on or comment on.
- We do not report about subjects in which we have financial or other interests, and we do not use our positions to obtain business or other advantages not available to the general public.
- We do not show our completed reports to sources – especially official sources – before they are published or broadcast, unless the practice is intended to verify facts. Doing so might invite prior restraint and challenge our independence as reporters.
- We gather information with the intent of producing stories and images for public consumption. We generally do not share unpublished information – such as notes and audio tapes of interviews, documents, emails, digital files, photos and video – with those outside of the media organizations for which we work. However, sometimes such sharing may be necessary to check facts, gain the confidence of sources or solicit more information.
- Columnists and commentators should be free to express their views, even when those views conflict with those of their organizations, as long as the content meets generally accepted journalistic standards for fairness and accuracy-

Conflict of interest

- As fair and impartial observers, we must be free to comment on the activities of any publicly elected body or special interest group. But we cannot do this without an apparent conflict of interest if we are active members of an organization we are covering, and that includes membership through [social media](#).
- We lose our credibility as fair observers if we write opinion pieces about subjects we also cover as reporters.

- Editorial boards and columnists or commentators endorse political candidates or political causes. Reporters do not.
- We carefully consider our political activities and community involvements – including those online – and refrain from taking part in demonstrations, signing petitions, doing public relations work, fundraising or making financial contributions if there is a chance we will be covering the campaign, activity or group involved.
- If a journalist does choose to engage in outside political activity or espouse a particular political viewpoint, this activity could create a public perception of bias, or favouritism that would reflect on the journalist’s work. Any journalist who engages in such activities – including running for office – should publicly declare any real or potential conflicts.
- Our private lives online present special challenges. For example, the only way to subscribe to some publications or social networking groups is to become a member. Having a non-journalist subscribe on your behalf would be one solution, as would be joining a wide variety of Facebook groups so you would not be seen as favouring one particular constituency. (See DIGITAL MEDIA, below.)

TRANSPARENCY

- We generally declare ourselves as journalists and do not conceal our identities, including when seeking information through social media. However, journalists may go undercover when it is in the public interest and the information is not obtainable any other way; in such cases, we openly explain this deception to the audience.
- We normally identify sources of information. But we may use unnamed sources when there is a clear and pressing reason to protect anonymity, the material gained from the confidential source is of strong public interest, and there is no other reasonable way to obtain the information. When this happens, we explain the need for anonymity.
- We avoid pseudonyms, but when their use is essential, and we meet the tests above, we tell our readers, listeners or viewers.
- When we do use unnamed sources, we identify them as accurately as possible by affiliation or status. (For example, a “senior military source” must be both senior and in the military.) Any vested interest or potential bias on the part of a source must be revealed.
- We independently corroborate facts if we get them from a source we do not name.
- We do not allow anonymous sources to take cheap shots at individuals or organizations. (See FAIRNESS, above.)
- If we borrow material from another source we are careful to credit the original source. (See ACCURACY, above.)
- We admit openly when we have made a mistake, and we make every effort to correct* our errors immediately.
- We disclose to our audiences any biases that could be perceived to influence our reporting. (See CONFLICT OF INTEREST, above.)
- We openly tell our audiences when another organization pays our expenses, or conversely, when we have made payments for information.

PROMISES TO SOURCES

- We only promise anonymity when the material is of high public interest and it cannot be obtained any other way. (See TRANSPARENCY, above.) And when we make these promises to sources, we keep them.
- Because we may be ordered by a court** or judicial inquiry to divulge confidential sources upon threat of jail, we must understand what we are promising. These promises – and the lengths we're willing to go to keep them – should be clearly spelled out as part of our promise. The following phrases, if properly explained, may be helpful:
 - **Not for attribution:** We may quote statements directly but the source may not be named, although a general description of his or her position may be given (“a government official,” or “a party insider”). In TV, video or radio, the identity may be shielded by changing the voice or appearance.
 - **On background:** We may use the essence of statements and generally describe the source, but we may not use direct quotes.
 - **Off the record:** We may not report the information, which can be used solely to help our own understanding or perspective. There is not much point in knowing something if it can't be reported, so this undertaking should be used sparingly, if at all.
- When we are not willing to go to jail to protect a source, we say so before making the promise. And we make it clear that the deal is off if the source lies or misleads us.

DIVERSITY

- News organizations – including newspapers, websites, magazines, radio and television – provide forums for the free interchange of information and opinion. As such, we seek to include views from all segments of the population.
- We also encourage our organizations to make room for the interests of all: minorities and majorities, those with power and those without it, holders of disparate and conflicting views.
- We avoid stereotypes, and don't refer to a person's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender self-identification or physical ability unless it is pertinent to the story. (See FAIRNESS, above.)

ACCOUNTABILITY

- We are accountable to the public for the fairness and reliability of our reporting.
- We serve the public interest, and put the needs of our audience – readers, listeners or viewers – at the forefront of our newsgathering decisions.
- We clearly identify news and opinion so that the audience knows which is which.
- We don't mislead the public by suggesting a reporter is some place that he or she isn't.
- Photojournalists and videographers do not alter images or sound so that they mislead the public. When we do alter or stage images, we label them clearly (as a photo illustration or a staged video, for example).
- We use care when reporting on medical studies, polls and surveys, and we are especially suspect of studies commissioned by those with a vested interest, such as drug companies, special interest groups or politically sponsored think tanks. We

make sure we know the context of the results, such as sample size and population, questions asked, and study sponsors, and we include this information in our reports whenever possible.

- When we make a mistake, we correct* it promptly and transparently, acknowledging the nature of the error. (See ACCURACY, above.)

DIGITAL MEDIA: SPECIAL ISSUES

- Ethical practice does not change with the medium. We are bound by the above principles no matter where our stories are published or broadcast.
- We consider all online content carefully, including blogging, and content posted to social media. We do not re-post rumours. (See ACCURACY, above.)
- The need for speed should never compromise accuracy, credibility or fairness. Online content should be reported ~~and edited~~ as carefully as print content, and when possible, subjected to full editing.
- We clearly inform sources when stories about them will be published across various media, and we indicate the permanency of digital media.
- When we publish outside links, we make an effort to ensure the sites are credible; in other words, we think before we link.
- When we correct* errors online, we indicate that the content has been altered or updated, and what the original error was. (See ACCURACY, above.)
- So long as the content is accurate, we generally do not “unpublish” or remove digital content, despite public requests to do so, including cases of “source remorse.” Rare exceptions generally involve matters of public safety, an egregious error or ethical violation, or legal restrictions** such as publication bans.
- We try to obtain permission whenever possible to use online photos and videos, and we always credit the source of the material, by naming the author and where the photo or video was previously posted. We use these photos and videos for news and public interest purposes only, and not to serve voyeuristic interests.
- We encourage the use of social networks as it is one way to make connections, which is part of our core work as journalists. However, we keep in mind that any information gathered through online means must be confirmed, verified and properly sourced.
- Personal online activity, including emails and social networking, should generally be regarded as public and not private. Such activity can impact our professional credibility. As such, we think carefully before we post, and we take special caution in declaring our political leanings online. (See CONFLICT OF INTEREST, above.)

**Note: The CAJ ethics committee is currently at work on guidelines for online corrections.*

***Note: For more information on legal implications on journalism practice see [the Canadian Journalism Project's law page at J-Source.ca](#).*

Principles for Ethical Journalism

Journalists have the duty and privilege to seek and report the truth, encourage civic debate to build our communities, and serve the public interest. We vigorously defend freedom of expression and freedom of the press as guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We return society's trust by practising our craft responsibly and respecting our fellow-citizens' rights.

WE STRIVE FOR ACCURACY AND FAIRNESS

- We avoid allowing our biases to influence our reporting.
- We disclose conflicts of interest.
- We give people, companies or organizations that are criticized in our reporting the opportunity to present their points of view prior to publication.
- We respect people's civil rights, including the rights to privacy and a fair trial.
- We don't alter photos, videos or sound in ways that mislead the public.

WE ARE INDEPENDENT AND TRANSPARENT

- We don't give favoured treatment to advertisers and special interests.
- We don't accept or solicit gifts or favours from those we might cover.
- We don't report about subjects in which we have a financial interest.
- We don't participate in movements and activities that we cover.
- Editorial boards and columnists or commentators endorse political candidates or causes. Reporters do not.
- We generally don't conceal our identities. When, on rare occasions, a reporter needs to go "undercover" in the public interest, we will clearly explain why.

WE KEEP OUR PROMISES

- We identify sources of information, except when there is a clear and pressing reason to protect anonymity.
- We explain the need for anonymity when we decide to grant it.
- We independently corroborate facts given by unnamed sources.
- If we promise to protect a source's identity, we do so.

WE RESPECT DIVERSITY

- We seek to capture in our stories the diverse values, viewpoints and lives of the people in our communities.
- We avoid stereotypes of race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, physical appearance and social status.
- We will not refer to a person's race, colour or religion unless it is pertinent.

WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

- We will answer to the public for our reporting and conduct.
- When we make a mistake, we correct it promptly and ungrudgingly, and in a manner that matches the seriousness of the error.

Society of Professional Journalists

CODE of ETHICS

PREAMBLE

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. Ethical journalism strives to ensure the free exchange of information that is accurate, fair and thorough. An ethical journalist acts with integrity.

The Society declares these four principles as the foundation of ethical journalism and encourages their use in its practice by all people in all media.

SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT

Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Take responsibility for the accuracy of their work. Verify information before releasing it. Use original sources whenever possible.
- ▶ Remember that neither speed nor format excuses inaccuracy.
- ▶ Provide context. Take special care not to misrepresent or oversimplify in promoting, previewing or summarizing a story.
- ▶ Gather, update and correct information throughout the life of a news story.
- ▶ Be cautious when making promises, but keep the promises they make.
- ▶ Identify sources clearly. The public is entitled to as much information as possible to judge the reliability and motivations of sources.
- ▶ Consider sources' motives before promising anonymity. Reserve anonymity for sources who may face danger, retribution or other harm, and have information that cannot be obtained elsewhere. Explain why anonymity was granted.
- ▶ Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.
- ▶ Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information unless traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public.
- ▶ Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.
- ▶ Support the open and civil exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- ▶ Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government. Seek to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open to all.
- ▶ Provide access to source material when it is relevant and appropriate.
- ▶ Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear.
- ▶ Avoid stereotyping. Journalists should examine the ways their values and experiences may shape their reporting.
- ▶ Label advocacy and commentary.
- ▶ Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information. Clearly label illustrations and re-enactments.
- ▶ Never plagiarize. Always attribute.

MINIMIZE HARM

Ethical journalism treats sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Balance the public's need for information against potential harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance or undue intrusiveness.

- ▶ Show compassion for those who may be affected by news coverage. Use heightened sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and sources or subjects who are inexperienced or unable to give consent. Consider cultural differences in approach and treatment.
- ▶ Recognize that legal access to information differs from an ethical justification to publish or broadcast.
- ▶ Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing or broadcasting personal information.
- ▶ Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity, even if others do.
- ▶ Balance a suspect's right to a fair trial with the public's right to know. Consider the implications of identifying criminal suspects before they face legal charges.
- ▶ Consider the long-term implications of the extended reach and permanence of publication. Provide updated and more complete information as appropriate.

ACT INDEPENDENTLY

The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Disclose unavoidable conflicts.
- ▶ Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and avoid political and other outside activities that may compromise integrity or impartiality, or may damage credibility.
- ▶ Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; do not pay for access to news. Identify content provided by outside sources, whether paid or not.
- ▶ Deny favored treatment to advertisers, donors or any other special interests, and resist internal and external pressure to influence coverage.
- ▶ Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two. Prominently label sponsored content.

BE ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT

Ethical journalism means taking responsibility for one's work and explaining one's decisions to the public.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Explain ethical choices and processes to audiences. Encourage a civil dialogue with the public about journalistic practices, coverage and news content.
- ▶ Respond quickly to questions about accuracy, clarity and fairness.
- ▶ Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently. Explain corrections and clarifications carefully and clearly.
- ▶ Expose unethical conduct in journalism, including within their organizations.
- ▶ Abide by the same high standards they expect of others.

The SPJ Code of Ethics is a statement of abiding principles supported by additional explanations and position papers (at spj.org) that address changing journalistic practices. It is not a set of rules, rather a guide that encourages all who engage in journalism to take responsibility for the information they provide, regardless of medium. The code should be read as a whole; individual principles should not be taken out of context. It is not, nor can it be under the First Amendment, legally enforceable.

Policy IX - Recordings

[Repealed January 4, 2022]

Policy X - Article Type Distinction

All articles will all be tagged with the corresponding article type, as a component of the print byline or in the title of the online version.

Policy XI - Legal Matters

All legal matters are immediately communicated to the Editor-in-Chief. Legal matters are distinct from public inquiries and complaints.

Policy XII - Interviews, Surveys, and Freedom of Information Requests

Interviews, surveys, and freedom of information requests must be approved by the Editor-in-Chief.

Policy XIII - Quotation Editing

[Repealed January 4, 2022]

Policy XIV - Coverage of Student Voice and Student Government

The Nest will not create false balances in the coverage of activities of student voice and student government. However, we remain cognizant of the sensitivity of a secondary school environment and keep that in mind when covering such topics.

Policy XV - Conflict of Interest Avoidance

Whenever possible, journalists should avoid reporting on stories that involve themselves or something they are involved in. Journalists are responsible for disclosing conflicts, and editors are for finding and extinguishing them.

With that in mind, The Nest recognizes that there are some instances where a student journalist's identity or experiences would serve the public interest more so than if a student journalist were to report the same story without that background. Situations like this are to be judged on a case-by-case basis, considering the subject, the attainability of the objectivity required, and guiding principles.

If affirmed by the Editorial Board, a written record of the decision is required so that it may be provided upon request.

Policy XVI - Email & External Communication

All email communication sent from a personal email account or another unofficial email account must copy The Nest's official email. An editor should approve any external-bound communication.

The purpose of this policy is to make clear to sources that a student journalist is communicating on behalf of the newspaper, and not themselves.

Student journalists must have special permission from their editor to communicate with sources in formats other than email.

Policy XVII - Anonymity Promises

Members must receive the Editor-in-Chief's permission before promising anonymity to a source, except in circumstances requiring immediate action.

Policy XVIII - Citations for Graphic Works

Citations in the form of "*Author_Name/Source*" are required for all photographs, images, artwork, and other graphical works in line with the *Copyright Act's* Fair Dealing provisions, requiring a mention of the two items that comprise a citation.

Policy XIX - Reporting and Identity

Journalists must take care to respect race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age, and only mention when identity details when relevant.

Policy XX - Request for Student or Staff Source Disclosure

Anonymous student sources will not be disclosed to school officials, unless for the occurrence of extremely exceptional circumstances where school officials must describe a specific and articulable concern, related to student or public health and safety.

The Editor-in-Chief may choose to reject a school official's request for disclosure.

The 2017 *Journalistic Sources Protection Act* has never been litigated in the context of student journalism and its application is undetermined.

Policy XXI - Public Inquiries and Complaints

The Nest replies to public inquiries and complaints quickly, efficiently, and with a reasonable sufficiency of response.

The Nest does not employ a Public Editor, so the administration and adjudication of complaints are carried out by the collective of the Editorial Board, who must complainant with a written response within 30 days. A record of all complaints received should be kept.

The Nest is prepared to alter its editorial policies and practices based on complaints and feedback from readers.

Policy XXII - Funding Transparency

A graphic or logo representative of whoever is funding an issue will be featured on the cover and back of the print edition, relevant Instagram posts, and website.

Funding from the school or school board does not constitute ownership or right to dictate editorial content or leadership of the newsroom. The Nest will maintain editorial independence from the school or school board regardless of financial or other support.

Policy XXIII - Qualification to Analyze

Any journalist who wishes to write a news analysis must present to their editor reasonable qualifications to undertake an analysis.

Policy XXIV - Editing Process and Approval for Print Publication

The Nest's editing process consists of the following for all print-publication articles:

- Stage 1 — Preliminary Assignment Edits, macro-editing by the assigned editor/author.
- Stage 2 — Final Assignment Edits, micro-editing by the assigned editor.
- Stage 3 — Preliminary Review, by the Editor-in-Chief.
- Stage 4 — Secondary Review, by any editor (time permitting).
- Stage 5 — Final Review and Approval, by the Editor-in-Chief.

By publication, every article should have received four to five rounds of editing.

Policy XXV - Social Media, Email Responsiveness, and Public Engagement

The Nest should maintain an active social media presence and make efforts to appear open and receptive to engagement with readers in the promotion of good journalism.

Communications should be replied to within 12 hours, unless they involve sensitive items such as the functional continuance of the publication or legal matters.

Policy XXVI - Online Updates and Corrections

Articles may be updated with relevant contextual information, as long as the date and a brief description are provided at the top of the article.

Should a correction be necessary, the correction must be made quickly and transparently, which includes disclosing that a previous version of the articles contained incorrect or inaccurate information, what information was changed, the date it was changed, and an apology to readers. Corrections may come from any person that can supply verifiable information.

Policy XXVII - Reporting Related to the United States

Canada and the United States have a long-acknowledged special relationship and share deep economic and cultural ties. Reporting on events in the United States is an important part of The Nest's international coverage, as events south of the border may have implications for Canadians. However, United States reporting should always, when appropriate, include a reference to a Canadian perspective and demonstrate acknowledgment of Canadian sovereignty.

Policy XXVIII - Dangerous Sources

The Nest is committed to covering stories in their most true and accurate form, which may include contacting sources with confrontational questions or requests for comment. It is a reader's right to have relevant sources contacted by The Nest. But, no student journalist will be put in harm's way, and their personal and academic safety and security is The Nest's top priority.

The Editorial Board may, upon substantial apprehension and reasonable evidence that a source or student journalist is at risk of harm, declare a body or individual a Dangerous Source, and interact with them as such, which may include reduced period or opportunity to respond, greater complainant protection, or refrain from making contact in the most serious instances.

Any declaration of a Dangerous Source should be made known to readers and only last for the duration of the story, but may be renewed.

Policy XXIX - Threats, Intimidation, and Harassment

Highlighting the truth regardless of convenience is a necessary part of journalism. Such coverage can involve situations that place a student journalist at odds with the preferences of an official with statutory power over them. Journalists, including editors, who encounter or are the subject of behaviour or actions that could be considered threatening, intimidating, or harassing in connection with their journalism have the responsibility to inform the Editorial Board of those incidents. When ethical, reports of such activity will be made public.

Policy XXX - Interview Preparation

The process for preparing for an interview is as follows:

- (1) Student journalists must contact their editor about conducting an interview, including the scope and questions they intend to ask. They should also establish what type of story the interview is for, and demonstrate appropriate research.
- (2) If their editor approves step (1), student journalists should attempt to contact the interviewee and inform the scope and purpose of the interview they would like to organize. Editors should approve this step as well.

Policy XXXI - Prepublication Review by Sources

While guiding principles offer some insight into prepublication review, editorial decisions surrounding them are generally left to individual news media organizations. For the purposes of this policy, prepublication review does not include administrative preview, which is governed by a separate policy.

The Nest generally does not allow student journalists to show their completed reports or quoted content to sources prior to publication. This is to protect the newspaper's editorial independence and discourage source dictation. Requests for prepublication will be

considered for stories that feature debate, controversy, or complex details where the public interest, especially regarding accuracy, would likely be furthered by having a source examine a draft. Subjects in human interest stories may also request prepublication review. Official sources may not.

If the story does not meet this threshold, the requester should provide some rationale for their request.

Decisions regarding prepublication review requests will be made by an editor.

As an alternative to prepublication review, The Nest encourages sources to explain certain emphases regarding the accuracy or discussion of attributed material so student journalists have the opportunity to balance precision with independence.

Policy XXXII - Review of Practices and Editorial Policies

Editorial Policies are to be continually reviewed with the aim of producing good and ethical journalism. Editors should independently consult guidance items including but not limited to the CAJ and SPJ ethics codes, columns and information from the Columbia Journalism Review, Nieman Labs, Poynter, Toronto Metropolitan University Review of Journalism, and TrustingNews, and the specific editorial policies and codes of conduct employed by professional news media.

Policy XXXIII - Intake/Collection Form Journalism

Intake/Collections Forms are an important part of The Nest's journalism. They are methods for the mass aggregation of opinion and data, similar to such as could be obtained through interviews. However, they should only be used in specific circumstances and are distinctly not surveys. Intake/Collection Forms should only be used when all the following criteria are satisfied:

- (1) the subject of the form relates to a group of individuals;
- (2) the only qualification for an individual to provide complete a form is their relation to the subject;
- (3) the information sought through the form is obtained primarily by written responses;
- (4) a large number of responses is the aim of the form; and
- (5) individuals are given:
 - (a) the option to remain named or unnamed, and

- (b) the ability to provide a contact method for a subsequent follow-up or verification.

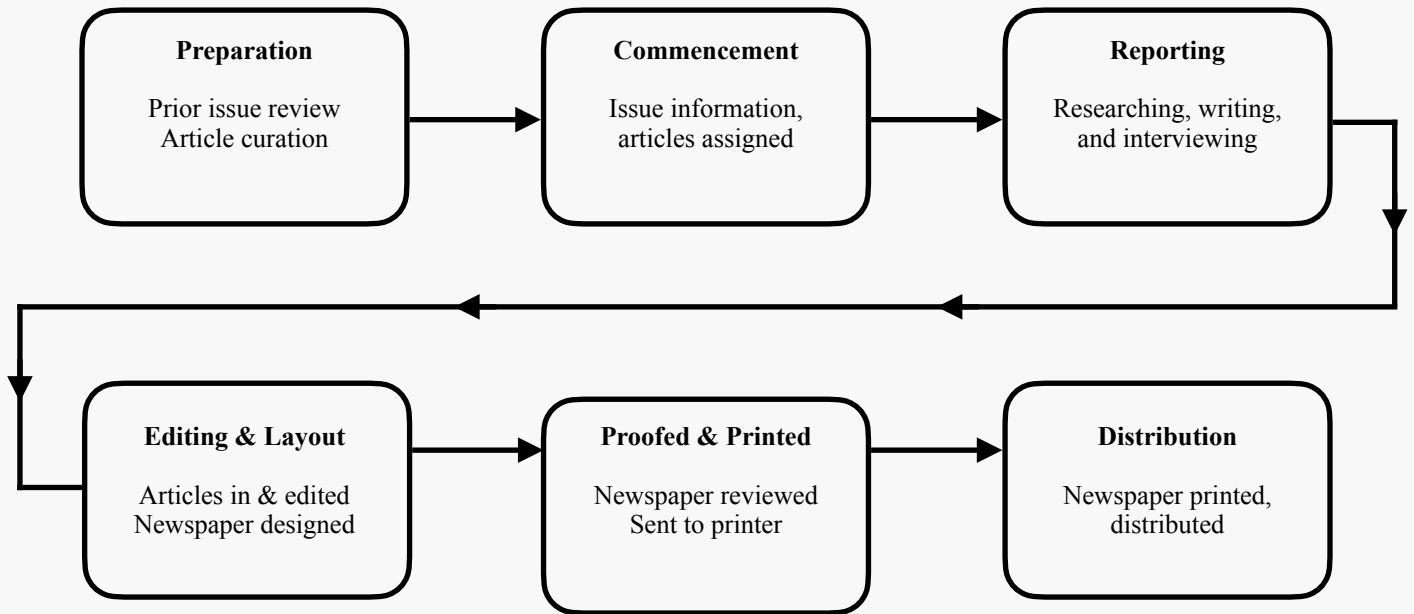
Policy XXXIV - Data Retention and Security

The Griffins' Nest will never store privileged or otherwise sensitive information obtained through newsgathering on servers directly controlled by school authorities. All reasonable data security measures are expected to be taken by student journalists.

Policy XXXV - Minimizing Harm

In accordance with the ethical tenet of minimizing harm, reporters must conduct all interviews with empathy and respect, sensitive to the idea that news gathering may cause discomfort or harm.

Editorial Process - Flowchart





The Griffins' Nest

INFORMATIVE • IMPARTIAL • INDEPENDENT

PART TWO:

REPORTER'S MANUAL

“It will be my earnest aim that THE NEW-YORK TIMES give the news, all the news, in concise and attractive form, in language that is parliamentary in good society, and give it as early, if not earlier, than it can be learned through any other reliable medium; to give the news impartially, without fear or favor, regardless of party, sect, or interests involved; to make the columns of THE NEW-YORK TIMES a forum for the consideration of all questions of public importance, and to that end to invite intelligent discussion from all shades of opinion.”

-ADOLPH S. OCHS

Publisher of The New York Times 1896 - 1935

ASKING FOR HELP

Student journalists are encouraged to contact their assigned editor for help. Editors are there to provide guidance and support throughout the reporting period, in addition to their role in editing articles upon submission. They are expected to be fast responders and will reply quickly to inquiries from their assigned journalist(s).

The Griffins' Nest, aside from its purpose as a newspaper, is an educational organization formed as a club by and for the students of Eric Hamber Secondary. This manual is the primary "textbook" for the club.

EDITORIAL DOCTRINE

The Griffins' Nest is Eric Hamber's student-led, independent newspaper. Publishing all year round, The Nest covers topics relevant to students and staff in an informative, impartial, and professional manner.

The Nest exists for the purposes as outlined in our Constitution and operates in accordance with our Bylaws, Editorial Policies, and Reporter's Manual. Our motto is "**Informative, Impartial, Independent**", as appears in our nameplate.

Informative: We owe our readers nothing less than the truth. We inform them with accurate, relevant reporting that serves our community.

Impartial: We, as journalists, "take no side, tell all sides," as described in the Freedom from Bias section of the *Reuters Handbook of Journalism*. We avoid false balance and are objective and our news reporting.

Independent: We vigorously defend without, fear or favour, our *Charter* right to freedom of expression and of the press. We do not allow others to influence our reporting, nor do we allow others to obtain editorial decision-making authority.

The Nest is the only independent media outlet that covers and publishes student concerns in District 39, and we take our role as student journalists seriously.

The Nest is a forum for free expression, grounded in the idea that the freedoms of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, are essential human rights, and in the context of a newspaper, freedoms that invite a myriad of perspectives that can inspire and bring about social, economic, scientific, and political change.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF THE PRESS

James Madison, co-author of the *Federalist Papers* and the fourth President of the United States, once wrote the "right of freely examining public characters and measures, and of free communication among the people thereon, [is] justly deemed the only effectual guardian of every other right." Madison was referring to freedom of expression and freedom of the press, rights recognized as universal protectors of democracy and other fundamental rights.

Freedom of expression and freedom of the press is protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, part one of the Canadian Constitution. The *Charter* applies to acts of government, not acts of private individuals. As a governmental public body, the Vancouver School Board, its teachers, administrators, directors of instruction, superintendents, and other agents are constitutionally obliged to respect the *Charter* rights of students.

The most relevant rights to student journalism are contained in s. 2(b) of the *Charter*. S. 2(b) is the guarantee that all Canadians have the right to "freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication."

Charter rights are not without limits however, with the very first section, the "reasonable limits clause" stipulating that *Charter* rights are "subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." If a government actor means to limit a *Charter* right, it has the legal onus of proving that any such limitation is as described in s. 1. Sections 4 and 5 of the *School Regulation* under the *School Act* describe the role of teachers and administrators regarding school programs.

It is important to recognize that public school student journalism is protected by the *Charter*, and that schools must not unreasonably infringe upon rights to freedom of expression and respect press freedom.

DEFINING JOURNALISM

Journalism is commonly understood by many to be the practice of gathering and disseminating news to the public, through mediums such as newspapers, news websites, radio broadcasting, and television. However, journalism has a much broader definition,

and in order to be an effective journalist, it is important to understand what makes journalism distinct from other forms of communication.

In 2012, the Ethics Advisory Committee of the Canadian Association of Journalists released a discussion paper outlining the definition of journalism. The committee's conclusion - which has since been cited multiple times by the courts - was that journalism is a practice best defined through specific action, rather than words:

(1) Purpose: An act of journalism sets out to combine evidence-based research and verification with the creative act of storytelling. Its central purpose is to inform communities about topics or issues that they value.

(2) Creation: All journalistic work -- whether words, photography or graphics -- contains an element of original production.

(3) Methods: Journalistic work provides clear evidence of a self-conscious discipline calculated to provide an accurate and fair description of facts, opinion and debate at play within a situation.

Thus, we can understand journalism generally as the practice of researching and verifying information in a regulated manner for the purpose of compiling said information into an original work to be published and disseminated to the public.

Student journalism is a form of journalism with a unique focus on the perspective and matters relevant to students and campus communities.

In-depth coverage of the Vancouver School Board, School District 39, and critical examination of Eric Hamber and scholastic power are what readers demand of the Nest and its journalists. Student journalists are real journalists.

QUALITIES OF NEWSWORTHINESS*

Generally, a good news story has a least one or more of the below qualities that determine its newsworthiness. These qualities are what reporters focus their articles on and are the basis of a news story.

- (1) Prominence (who) - news because of the people involved
- (2) Importance (what) - news because a citizen should know
- (3) Human Interest (interesting what) - news because it is uncommon or unique
- (4) Timeliness (when) - news because of when it happened, happening, or will happen
- (5) Proximity (where) - news because the location of the event is significant
- (6) Meaning (why/how) - news because it provides context, or explains something

**Qualities of Newsworthiness adapted from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies*

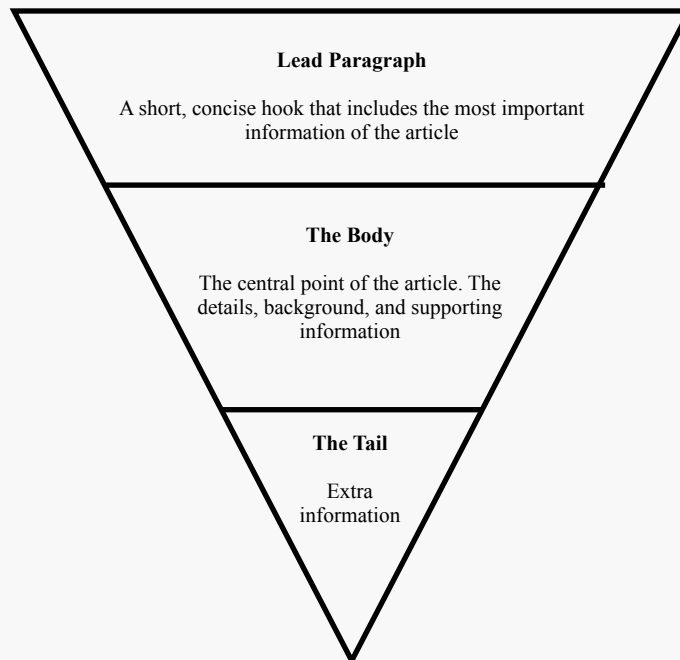
THE INVERTED PYRAMID

The Inverted Pyramid is a widely utilized structural tool for news writing. It is meant to be read top to bottom, detailing information's importance in descending order. An Inverted Pyramid style story is organized so that readers' attention is drawn to crucial information first, followed by supporting details.

The first level of the pyramid is called the **lead paragraph**. The lead's purpose is to garner attention and share the most basic, important information about a story (5Ws and H). It can be written in paragraph form, as well as a question or quotation. It is up to reporters to determine what is most newsworthy and goes in their lead paragraph. Developing a lead will help determine the angle of a story, while also providing a simple and concise brief of what should be discussed in the subsequent parts of the article.

Next is the **body**, the bulk of the article. The body elaborates on the lead, adding details such as statistics, background information, quotations, and descriptions. This is where an article builds presents an in-depth look at the story.

The final part is called the **tail**, which is where the article wraps up with any additional information not previously included and closes.



NEWSWRITING STYLE

Newswriting is designed to be extremely clear, readable, and informative. Reporters can become more familiar with the style by writing news, but also reading print and digital news. See *Article Bank*. These tips are flexible and have room for personal style.

- (1) **Focus on your lead.** This is the introduction to the story that features the 5Ws and H. See *Inverted Pyramid*.
- (2) **Use short sentences.** Notice that most news articles contain short, clear sentences that do not contain many commas unless necessary. Sentences are best kept short, with one specific idea per sentence. Sentences should be declarative to convey reliability.
- (3) **Avoid technical terms.** Technical terminology is usually only understood by those who have specific knowledge. Only use technical terms if an explanation will be provided.
- (4) **Third-person only.** News articles are generally written in the third person. (Opinions and analyses may differ)
- (5) **Use plain language.** All articles are intended to be read by the general population and should be written in a way so somebody with little to no prior understanding of a topic will be able to understand the article. Plain language does not mean using informal language or slang.
- (6) **No Cliches.** Avoid unless necessary.
- (7) **Use Transitions.** Transitions such as connectors (and, but, for, meanwhile), hooks (repeated words for uniformity), and pronouns are all devices that can be used to make articles flow.
- (8) **Omit unnecessary words.** e.g. "12 different cities". Remove "different". It is understood by common sense and by virtue of enumeration that the cities are distinct.
- (9) **Title your article well.** Titles should contain the most critical point of the story and should reflect its newsworthy qualities.

- (10) **Emphasize nouns and verbs.** The overuse of adjectives and adverbs will skew the objectivity of an article. Use formal, declarative, language that is not promotional or dramatic.
- (11) **Avoid repetition.** Do not repeat information. Don't say the same thing twice. Don't mention the same thing twice even if you wrote it differently.

NEWSWRITING SYNTAX

This syntax guide is based on *News Writing for Print* by Ricky Telg and Lisa Lundy. For all other syntactical practices, The Griffins' Nest uses *Canadian Press Style*.

- (1) **Spell out numbers below nine.** *"one", "two", "seven", etc.*
- (2) **For numbers 10 and above, use figures.** *"a fleet of 17 ships"*
- (3) **Rounded numbers above one million should be followed by "million" or "billion".** *"an investment of \$13 million"*
- (4) **Years and Measurements are represented by numbers.** *"a distance of 5 metres"*
- (5) **"Thousands" are represented by numbers.** *"The shipment's 1,512 containers"*
- (6) **Ages are represented by numbers.** *"a 35-year-old male"*
- (7) **If a number (except for years) starts a sentence, spell it out.**
- (8) **Spell titles out if they appear after a name.** If they appear before the name, they may be abbreviated.
- (9) **Months should be spelled out unless they appear before a date.** *"The election was called for September,"* or *"The election was called for Sept. 17."*
- (10) **When referring to a student for the first time in an article, bold their name and put their grade following it.** *"**John Smith (10)**"*
- (11) **Percentages are written "per cent".** *"The economy grew 4 per cent last year."*

TYPES OF ARTICLES

The Griffins' Nest generally publishes news articles under one of three designations:

- (1) **News Report:** A concise, fact-driven, objective and impartial account of a newsworthy story. See *False Balance*.
- (2) **News Analysis:** An in-depth interpretation or explanation of a news story through a close examination of the facts and their contextual significance or meaning. They are not persuasive, but an informative, sufficiently non-editorialized discussion based on the weight of evidence. They are distinct from Opinions. See *False Balance*.
- (3) **Opinion (also called a "column"):** A person's perspective on a particular news story. Opinions represent an argument or stance that is solely representative of the author and not of the newspaper as a whole. Opinions are tagged prominently with the following message:

The views expressed in this article are the author's alone. Responses may be sent to ehnewspaper@gmail.com.

For further discussion on the difference between the three, visit [Allsides' website](#) annotated for examples.

Other types of articles include;

- (1) **Editorials:** Opinions written by the Editorial Board. They are the editors' stance on a story or subject.
- (2) **OPEDs (also called "Guest Essays"):** Opinions submitted by people who are not registered members (or all other news organizations: people who are not employees of the news organization).
- (3) **Reviews:** Critiques and commentaries of books, art pieces, films, theatre shows, fashion styles, and other works and performances.

Types are assigned along with the article itself and the final classification is left to the Editor-in-Chief before publication. All articles except for news reports receive a type designation in their byline. (e.g. *News Report by Emily Shi*)

BIAS MITIGATION

Mitigating bias in reporting is an essential part of what it is to be a journalist. It is important to acknowledge that there is no such thing as a bias-free report or a 100 per cent balanced article. Articles are written by people who inherently have views, stances, and opinions that even of the smallest magnitude can their way into news writing. Journalism requires the establishment of those views, stances, and opinions, and being conscious enough of them to separate oneself from the objective news report being written. A journalist's role is to "**take no side, tell all sides,**" as described in the Freedom from Bias section of the *Reuters Handbook of Journalism*.

Strategies to avoid bias:

- (1) As stated above, be **conscious of your own biases**
- (2) Have your article reviewed (and edited by an Editorial Board member!)
- (3) Establish all the relevant parties in a story, which is essentially anyone important to the story who has a stance. Upon finding who those parties are, you can then take action to ensure those parties are equitably and accurately represented and portrayed in your article. *See False Balance*
- (4) Be **conscious of word choice and tone**. Words have a very specific meaning, so ask yourself when writing whether the language used is giving the reader an objective, clear, and accurate picture of the story.
- (5) Consult an editor about specific issues with bias, and remember to seek review for your story.
- (6) Consult the **CAJ & SPJ ethics guidelines for best practices** regarding bias, conflict of interest, and reporting on subjects that involve criticism or accusations of a person, group, or organization within an article or series.
- (7) Do not make inferences.

News organizations can have their own biases, most commonly political. The [Ad Fontes Media Chart](#) can be used as a reference to major media organizations' biases, tracked and organized with an empirical basis.

FAIR AND HONEST REPORTING

The credibility of a news organization is built upon its adherence to ethical and editorial standards. As discussed earlier, journalism is a practice regulated by various codes and methodologies in search of the truth. A vital component of keeping journalism fair and

honest is ensuring a reasonable and accurately weighted comment is present from all sides and perspectives on a news story.

For example, an article regarding upcoming telecom regulation legislation should contain the perspective of all reasonable stakeholders, which could include those proposing the legislation, those in the legislature with a dissenting viewpoint, members of the telecom industry, think tanks, academic institutes, researchers, those with specific anecdotal connections to the legislation, and members of the public who would be affected by it.

It is important to analyze all and identify all perspectives on any news story, not only for the aforementioned purposes of bias mitigation, but to prepare to seek balance through reviews of statements, conducting interviews, requests for comment, and further research.

Ethical guidelines dictate individuals or entities that are criticized or accused of wrongdoing have a right to respond to criticism of accusations made against them within the same story. Journalists have an ethical and legal responsibility to uphold this right.

It is profoundly important that student journalists are aware of this right during situations that warrant its application. Failure to afford opportunities to respond constitutes unfair reporting, under-informs readers, and can be defamatory.

Returning to the telecom legislation example, let us say that a hypothetical pro-legislation lawmaker speaks to their position by citing what they perceive to be improper corporate activities that are bad for consumers, and criticizes specific telecom companies. The journalist covering these developments should then seek to include the perspectives of the criticized companies and ensure they may “reply” to the lawmaker’s comments.

The same theory applies if a student criticizes the actions of Vancouver School Board staff. Student journalists should seek comment from the person or entity criticized.

It is in the readers’ interest to hear the different perspectives on a story. Sometimes, however, individuals or entities do not act upon their right of reply and do not respond to requests for comment. This can sometimes happen when an individual or entity determines that it is not in their interest to reply, and while a journalist should make diligent and necessary efforts to obtain their comment or answers to important questions, they cannot force such responses. When this arises, journalists will disclose that the individuals or entities did not respond to their inquiries.

FALSE BALANCE

The Nest avoids **false balance(s)**, described as the following by Liz Spayd of the New York Times:

“False balance, sometimes called “false equivalency,” refers disparagingly to the practice of journalists who, in their zeal to be fair, **present each side of a debate as equally credible, even when the factual evidence is stacked heavily on one side.**”

Another description comes from Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Orstein, writing in their 2012 joint OPED in the Washington Post:

“We understand the values of mainstream journalists, including the effort to report both sides of a story. **But a balanced treatment of an unbalanced phenomenon distorts reality.** If the political dynamics of Washington are unlikely to change anytime soon, at least we should change the way that reality is portrayed to the public.”

In other words, false balance, is an objectivity flaw where a debate or issue is disproportionately presented with defined, equally credible sides, when in actuality the subject is far more reliably and credibly centred around a specific perspective, with significantly with lessened debate or legitimacy towards another side. Being blinded by a crusade for impartiality can obscure the truth and accuracy of information. Always avoid creating false balances.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Hamber Community is a diverse one, with many members **coming from different ethnic, religious, linguistic, national, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and of varying gender and sexual identities.** It is of paramount importance, and essential to journalistic duty, that The Nest reflects that diversity.

Journalists must be aware of the impact that journalism holds in different communities, groups, and contexts. It should provide an understanding amongst all peoples, and generalizations are to be strongly avoided.

Articles should represent and resemble the Hamber Community in their full and truest form, and include to the best of its ability a variety of perspectives. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are all vital components of both bias mitigation and accurate reporting.

SOURCES

Sources are the basis for a reporter's knowledge and information. They are the origin of the specifics of a topic. A source can be a person, document, report, photograph, recording, or any other verifiable format or example that allows for information to be extracted.

Primary Sources: sources that are **first-hand accounts** of those who are connected to an event. This includes original documents, text, speeches, journals, notes, quotes, letters, original research, datasets, surveys data (census, labour statistics), and newspaper reports (by reporters who were present an event or quote a person who was).

Secondary Sources: sources that **add a layer of interpretation or analysis**. This includes (most) books, data analysis, newspaper articles (written by reporters who were not involved), documentaries, and reviews.

Reporters should look for primary sources whenever possible, but remember that it is important to use both primary and secondary sources in articles.

When evaluating the quality of a source, consult the four principles:

- (1) Purpose and intended audience
- (2) Reliability, credibility, accuracy, and quality
- (3) Time of production and currency
- (4) Creator & bias

Verification

Verification is an essential element of good journalism. Its importance cannot be overstated. Reporters are expected to verify their sources, in order to establish that the truth is being told and that accuracy is upheld. This is where common sense can serve as a guide. If the information presented seems wrong, exaggerated, or out of context, dig deeper and confirm its accuracy. **Write what you know, not what you think.**

RESEARCH & SOURCING TOOLS

Below are some examples of resources to assist in finding these types of information that may not be easily found or accessible.

FOI Requests: An FOI request, or Freedom of Information request, is a legal document made out to a public body requesting a copy of a record. In British Columbia, the right to information regarding provincial public bodies is granted in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, or FOIPPA. Upon receiving an FOI request, a public body is required to respond within a prescribed period and supply the applicant with the requested information, unless the information falls under specified FOIPPA-designated exemption. See *Editorial Policy XI*.

The **Carleton University Macodrum Library** has a [special page](#) for journalists that contains a collection of resources.

Bellingcat, an investigative journalism group that uses open-source intelligence (OSINT), has a [guide to such types of research](#).

The **Government of Canada's**, [Open Data](#) database portal, is a strong reference for publicly available Canadian governmental information.

The **Eastern Washington University Libraries'** [journalism section](#) contains further sets of US-oriented databases and information

The **Society of Professional Journalists'** [OSINT handbook](#) contains 510 pages of links and resources.

INTERVIEWING & HUMAN SOURCES

Interviewees are human sources. They are valuable, insightful, and an essential component of good journalism.

When developing questions, members should ask themselves “*What do readers want to know? What’s important? What’s interesting?*” to better understand what information should be extracted and communicated.

Principles of Interviewing:

- (1) Be professional and polite
- (2) Research the person who is being interviewed.
- (3) Know the topic of the interview well.
- (4) Plan out your questions – make sure they address the topic at hand. Keep in mind what information the audience would want to know.
- (5) Be prepared: recording device, notepad, pencil, etc.

- (6) Be prepared to ask for clarification and make sure the person answers the question
- (7) Silence can be just as important as speech.
- (8) Make eye contact and pay attention to your body language. Show your interviewee you're interested and listening to them.
- (9) Respect your attribution agreement.
- (10) At the end of an interview, always ask if the person would like to add anything or provide information they didn't have an opportunity to.

Reporters should always seek in-person interviews when feasible, as they generally yield more honest and candid responses than interviews conducted via email, telephone, etc.

Reporters are also encouraged to conduct "person-on-the-street" interviews, where the interviewees are random passersby. These interviews can be very helpful in garnering more personable and relatable input on a story. Reporters should attempt to get a reasonable amount of interviews to make a story more credible. When conducting these types of interviews, be sure to be honest with readers and disclose how many people were spoken with, and explain to them why their opinions and views matter and are relevant.

Human Sources - Contacting

Reporters are encouraged to contact human sources for comment and analysis, and if they are **close to the original event**, as a **primary source**. For example, a reporter writing about a curriculum change the reporter could contact a Director of Instruction at the school board, a representative of the BC Teachers Federation, a teacher whose subject area is relevant, or if available, somebody directly involved in the curriculum's development.

Reporters should contact sources through their email account, and make that they are **friendly, polite, and professional**. In their email, they should include the following:

1. "My name is [insert]"
2. "I am a student journalist for The Griffins' Nest, the independent student newspaper based out of Eric Hamber Secondary"
3. "I am working on an article regarding [insert topic]"
4. "My editor is copied on this email, as required by our policies" - see Editorial Policy XV
5. "Thank you" - remember to thank your source!

Before emails are sent, reporters must have their emails reviewed by their editor for clarity. All editors are available to help write emails should a reporter need assistance.

Email Examples

Spencer Izen

RE: Media Inquiry - VDSC Comment Re Winter Break Extension
From: <sjizen@icloud.com>
To: <vdsc.vsb.bc.ca>
Cc: <ehewspaper@gmail.com>

Hi VDSC,

I'm a journalist doing a story on BC's recent extension of Winter Break, and I'm looking into what it means for the Vancouver School District.

I'd like to know if VDSC has a comment on the extension, and what council would like to see from the District. Additionally, I'd like to know the questions or concerns that council has raised or intends to raise with VSB re the surge of Omicron in BC if any.

There'll likely be more developments from the VSB in a few days so if I have more questions I'll reply here.

I appreciate your attention over the Holidays.
Have a great night!

--

Spencer Izen
Student Journalist & Editor-in-Chief | The Griffins' Nest
Official Nest Website | Instagram | Email
Informative • Impartial • Independent

I would like to acknowledge that I work, live, and play on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples.

Spencer Izen

RE: Request for Comment

From: <sjizen@icloud.com>
To: <communications@vsb.bc.ca>
Cc: <ehewspaper@gmail.com>

Hello,

My name is Spencer and I am a student journalist with The Griffins' Nest, the independent student newspaper based out of Eric Hamber Secondary.

I'm working on an article regarding student & teacher involvement in the VSB decision making process, and would like to include statements from the school board in that article.

I would like to get an answer/comment on the following:

1. How, and to what extent, does the VSB currently involve a) students, and b) teachers, in the decision making process?
2. In a series of interviews, teachers expressed to The Nest a lack of clarity regarding the extent that their opinion is considered in the decision making process.
3. How are the results of surveys issued to a) students, and b) teachers used in the decision making process?

If you could provide a response by April 29 so that we are able to include the VSB's comment in my article, that would be most appreciated.

Thank you so much & have a great day.

Best,

--

Spencer
Reporter | The Griffins' Nest

LEVELS OF ATTRIBUTION

Levels of attribution are deals agreed upon prior to an interview that describes the different variations of attribution a reporter can provide to the information received.

Levels of attribution are highly variable among journalists and news media organizations, so the explanations provided here pertain solely to The Nest, based on the term definitions from the *Associated Press*, *Reuters*, and the *New York University Journalism Handbook*. Attribution agreements are not legally binding but are based on the **principle of trust**.

All information should generally be accompanied by some form of attribution, whether that attribution is to a person, company, government, organization, or first-hand account.

Unless otherwise agreed upon, all interviews are assumed to be **“on the record”**, where everything said can be used and quoted.

“Off the record”

If an interviewee says that a certain portion or segment of an interview (or the whole interview) is off the record, that means that the information they are about to give an interviewer is not to be used or published. It is information only for the interviewer, usually to give the interviewer context or explain the circumstances around a particular subject. The exception to using “off the record” information in a story is when it can be obtained and confirmed by another source, but only when shared it on the record.

“Not for Attribution”

“Not for attribution” allows for the information provided by the source to be quoted and used, but the source cannot be identified by name. Their position is commonly used instead. (e.g. “a public health official”, “a company director”, “a teacher”).

“On background”

“On background” is similar to “not for attribution”, except the source cannot be named directly, by name or position, and direct quotes are not used. (e.g. “sources say”).

"Deep background"

"Deep background" is when the information provided by the source can be published on the condition of anonymity. Generally, information received on deep background is attributed as "The Nest has learned" or "The Nest understands" (in reference to the publication or news organization attaining the information.)

QUOTATION EDITING

There are two types of quotes used in articles; direct and indirect quotes.

Direct Quotes: The exact words of a person or a document, surrounded by quotation marks. Minor edits for grammar, spelling, context, are permitted.

"across the district, school WIFI services will be getting an upgrade over the course of the next year," said Superintendent Suzanne Hoffman.

Indirect Quotes: These quotes are paraphrased by reporters (while keeping the original & intended meaning). They are not surrounded by quotation marks.

The Superintendent stated that school WIFI services would receive an upgrade over the course of the upcoming year.

Whenever using quotes, it is paramount that its original context of the quotes is respected and maintained.

Always make sure quotes are attributed! See *Levels of Attribution*.

PHOTOGRAPHS & COPYRIGHT

Photos for articles can either be submitted by the reporter or a supplementary image may be found by the Editor-In-Chief at their discretion. If submitting a photograph, reporters should indicate the source for ease of attribution in the designing process. Photographers/sources will always be credited alongside the photos. Reporters working on *Hamber News & Student Life* stories may supply their own photographs taken on their phone or camera.

The Fair Dealing provisions of the *Copyright Act* allow The Nest to use photographs without infringing copyright when the source, and if given by the source, the author, performer, maker, or broadcaster are mentioned. This is commonly referred to as the process of creating "citations" and crediting a source.

Citing photographs and other works is *essential* for three reasons:

- (1) To avoid copyright infringement;
- (2) To afford the author or creator credit for their work; and
- (3) To certify with authority the authenticity and reliability of a work.

ARTICLE BANK

The Article Bank is a list of selected articles for reporters to view as references to style, organization, language, and editorial decision-making. Note the inverted pyramid use.

“Biden kicks off effort to reshape U.S. economy with infrastructure package”

Jarrett Renshaw - Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biden-infrastructure/biden-kicks-off-effort-to-reshape-u-s-economy-with-infrastructure-package-idUSKBN2BN13C>

“France to close schools, ban domestic travel as virus surges”

Sylvie Corbet - AP (Associated Press)

<https://apnews.com/article/france-close-schools-domestic-travel-ban-coronavirus-surge-b5ead689529516dc369170f695bfd58>

“PBO predicts \$363-billion deficit, issues warning about stimulus spending”

Adrian Wyld - Canadian Press (wire for CBC)

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/pbo-report-liberals-covid-deficit-1.5971178>

“Ford says 'stay tuned' for announcement Thursday as Ontario's COVID-19 ICU admissions hit new high”

Lucas Powers - CBC

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/covid-19-ontario-march-31-2021-icu-admissions-new-high-1.5970884>

“COVID-19: B.C. hit with 'overwhelming' response to book AstraZeneca vaccines”

Tiffany Crawford - Vancouver Sun

<https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/covid-19-london-drugs-all-booked-up-for-vaccine-appointments>

"BC's Vaccine Plan Is Failing People with Disabilities, Advocates Say"

Maira Wyton - The Tyee

<https://thetyee.ca/News/2021/03/31/BC-Vaccine-Plan-Failing-People-With-Disabilities/>

"'Dollar clearing' doesn't give U.S. jurisdiction to charge Meng Wanzhou: lawyer"

The Canadian Press - Toronto Star

<https://www.thestar.com/politics/2021/03/31/dollar-clearing-doesnt-give-us-jurisdiction-to-charge-meng-wanzhou-lawyer.html>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sections

The sections or contents of each issue are subject to change but the standard sections are *Hamber & Student Life*, *Vancouver & The Province*, *Canada*, *International*, and *The Hamberger*. Underneath those sections are the individual articles reporters have written.

Submission and Editing Process

Each article is assigned to an editor, who will make suggestions and changes and work with the reporter to publish a solid piece. The final copy of the article is sent to the Editor-in-Chief to be reviewed one last time before being forwarded to design operations.

The Nest uses Google Docs' collaborative editing platform to allow reporters to have direct input with their editors. Editors will initially make large-scale suggestions during the first rounds, ensuring the article is "on course" with its objective. This is called macroediting. The subsequent editing rounds will catch more nuanced issues, including spelling and grammar, in a process called microediting. The specific editing process is described in the Editorial Policy XXIV.

The Nest uses a free Google Drive subscription to manage articles, registration data, and certain types of sourced information. The print edition is produced with Adobe InDesign.

Publishing Agreement

All members of The Nest are required to review and complete the publication agreement upon registration, containing the following terms. This Agreement allows The Nest to republish articles online.

Assignment and Ownership of Intellectual Property *

- I understand and agree that as a member of The Griffins' Nest, all letters, articles, or other materials submitted to The Griffins' Nest for publication ("contributions") are works commissioned by The Griffins' Nest over the course of my membership. I hereby assign to The Griffins' Nest all rights to publish, distribute, disseminate, archive, republish, edit, enhance, redesign, repackage, or revise any contributions in any tangible medium of expression from which it can be communicated

Contribution Authenticity *

- I hereby certify that any contributions of my origin are original works, that the contributions are not owned by a third party, that the contributions were not obtained by unlawful means, and that the contributions' publication will not violate any copyright or intellectual property rights of a third party.

PARTS OF A NEWSPAPER

Terminology used to refer to newspaper layouts vary. Below are two examples.

Nameplate or Masterhead:
A newspaper's name printed in special type on the front page.

Cut:
A photo or illustration

Deck:
A secondary headline which provides additional info about the story.

By-Line:
Name of the writer appearing above the article.

Lead:
The first sentences of a news story informing the reader of WHO, WHERE, WHAT, WHEN, and sometimes HOW AND WHY.

Headline:
The title given to a story.

Photo Credit:
A reference to the source of a photograph.

Cutline:
Descriptive info appearing with a piece of "art", also called a caption.

From portal.dds.ca via Pinterest. <https://www.pinterest.com.mx/pin/493355334156827595/>

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Lead:
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Jumpline:
Line telling a reader where the story is continued

Graphic:
A combination of artwork and words which helps to visually explain a story

Cutline:
Descriptive info appearing with a piece of "art", also called a caption.

Index:
An alphabetized table of contents of the newspaper

RESOURCES USED IN MANUAL

1. *NYU JOURNALISM HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS* - Adam L. Penenberg
 2. *News Writing for Print* - Ricky Telg and Lisa Lundy
 3. *James Madison's Report to the Virginia House of Delegates, 1800* - First Amendment Watch
 4. *Writing Style Differences in Newspaper, Radio, and Television News* - Irving Fang
 5. *Reuters Handbook of Journalism*
 6. Poynter Institute NewsU Program
 7. Canada's National Observer - Ethics and Guidelines
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