



Uwharrie Charter Academy Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)	
Issued: 12/14/21	Revised:
SUBJECT: <b>Political Activities and Classroom Displays</b>	

**Purpose:** Uwharrie Charter Academy handbook, notes that UCA is committed to having a community in which every individual is treated with sensitivity and respect, and in which each student and teacher has an equal opportunity to work, learn, and develop to his or her full potential in an atmosphere free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate our employees' personal morality. It is to assure that in the workplace, each employee is able to accomplish his or her job and that all UCA students feel that their education is the primary focus.

**Procedure for General Operations:** UCA employees may exercise their right to participate fully in affairs of public interest on a local, county, state and national level on the same basis as any community member in a comparable position in public or private employment and within the law.

All school employees are privileged within the limitations imposed by state and federal laws and regulations to choose any side of a particular issue and to support their viewpoints as they desire by vote, discussion or persuading others. Such discussion and persuasion, however, will not be carried on during the performance of school duties, except in open discussion during classroom lessons that consider various candidates for a particular office or various sides of a particular political or civil issue.

On all controversial issues, employees must designate that the viewpoints they represent on the issues are personal and are not to be interpreted as the school's official viewpoint. No employee will use school facilities, equipment or supplies in connection with his/her political activities, nor will he/she use any time during the work day for such political activities.

**Ensuring a Learning Environment:** Subject to the exceptions set forth below, no UCA school employee shall, while acting within the scope of their employment, either during school hours, or inside their physical area of responsibility at a school (such as a classroom, meeting room, desk area) hang, post, erect, or otherwise display ( hereafter "display") any posters, signs, flags, banners, pictures or other digital or physical image that depicts support or opposition relating to a political, quasi- political, or controversial topic.

For purposes of this policy a controversial topic shall be defined as one that a professional educator could reasonably understand to have students on more than one side of said issue. For purposes of this policy a political or quasi-political topic includes contemporary issues being debated in the local, state or national political climate.

**Exceptions to Policy:**

- This policy does not apply to the offices of the head of school, principals, school counselors, social workers, psychologists, or other mental health staff.
- This policy does not restrict in any way students' First Amendment rights.
- This policy does not restrict in any way School employees First Amendment rights when not speaking in their official capacity, nor while not on the job or if they are not using a forum provided exclusively to them as an employee, or otherwise speaking on behalf of the School.
- This policy does not limit, nor apply to communications, nor the free exchange of ideas during classroom discussions, the course of approved educational events or exploration of approved curriculum.
- This policy does not apply to temporary displays used for purposes of classroom discussion, approved educational events or exploration of approved curriculum.
- The flags of the United States of America, the State of North Carolina, of any other States in the United States, of other Countries or Municipalities are not prohibited by this policy.