

CHARTER FOR THE CLASSIC

Since its founding in 1984, along with the re-establishment of Townsend Harris High School, *The Classic* has enjoyed the *de facto* status of an open forum for the expression of student opinion. This charter formalizes the administration's commitment to First Amendment rights for students and spells out the policies of the newspaper which have led to sixteen years of outstanding, responsible student journalism.

1. Both the administration of Townsend Harris High School and *The Classic* sanction and scrupulously adhere to the limitations on student expression delineated in the Tinker decision of 1969. Under no circumstances will the paper knowingly commit libel, breach the privacy of an individual, incite disorderly conduct, violate copyrights or use obscene language. For legal definitions of these forms of unprotected speech, see the attached guidelines prepared by the Student Press Law Center.

2. The administration will refrain from demanding prior review of any article and will place no subjects off limits to student reporters.

3. *The Classic* is committed to fair, balanced coverage of the news. Expressions of authors' opinions will be reserved for opinion pieces (editorials, columns, etc.) and not be injected into news stories. *The Classic* is permitted to print articles on any subject so long as these articles are fair, balanced and accurate and do not violate any of the strictures mandated by the Tinker decision, as stated in #1 above.

It is the policy of *The Classic* to select content based on its relevance to Townsend Harris High School and/or adolescent life. Stories that report "outside" news better covered by the professional media will be considered only if the articles are "brought home."

4. *The Classic* will strive to uphold the highest level of accuracy in reporting and will conscientiously cite all sources used for research. The paper will publish a correction when an error is brought to its attention.

5. *The Classic* regards the honing of writing skills as a top priority. All copy will be reviewed by one or more editors for precision of language as well as correct sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation.

6. *The Classic* recognizes the special, family-like nature of the community it serves, and will not target individual students or faculty members for criticism so long as there are viable official channels available for the redress of any legitimate grievances. Any school, departmental, or student organization policies, on the other hand, are considered permissible topics for coverage and commentary.

7. Should students seriously violate the trust placed in them, as outlined in the above provisions, it is understood that this charter will be placed in jeopardy. The

administration agrees to meet with *The Classic* staff and advisor in an attempt to resolve problems before revoking the charter.

8. The advisor of *The Classic* has the dual role of advisor and teacher. He/she will work with students to meet the highest possible standards of journalism, both in content and language, but will not censor the protected free expression of student journalists. No advisor of *The Classic* will be fired, transferred or removed from the position of advisor for refusing to engage in such censorship.

9. *The Classic* will include the following statement in its staffbox:

***The Classic* is an open forum for the expression of student views. The opinions expressed therein should not be taken to represent those of the administration or faculty or student body as a whole.**

10. Because *The Classic* is granted the status of "open forum for the expression of student views," it legally comes under the purview of the Tinker decision of 1969 rather than the more restrictive Hazelwood decision of 1988.

11. The above provisions shall apply to the online version of *The Classic* as well as the printed edition.

Principal

Editor-in-Chief

Editor-in-Chief

Renewed _____