

**NATIONAL
COALITION
AGAINST
CENSORSHIP** **YOUTH
FREE
EXPRESSION**

November 14, 2022

Principal Lee Ann McBryar
Lookout Valley Middle/High School
350 Lookout High Street
Chattanooga, TN 37419

Dear Principal McBryar,

The National Coalition Against Censorship is an alliance of national nonprofit groups dedicated to protecting freedom of expression, including the rights of K-12 students, teachers and staff. We are writing in regard to a complaint we received concerning a provision in your school's dress code that violates students' First Amendment rights.

The dress code in the student handbook forbids shirts with "designs, pictures, symbols, or writing" that are "political." As you know, the Supreme Court declared in its landmark decision in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969), that school officials may not forbid students from expressing political views unless they substantially disrupt school activities. Just last year, the Court reaffirmed this principle in *Mahanoy Area Sch. Dist. v. B. L.*, 594 U.S. ___, 141 S. Ct. 2038, 2046 (2021).

Therefore, we urge you to remove this provision from the dress code, as other schools in your district have done, and ensure that students' free expression rights are respected.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely yours,



Christopher Finan
Executive Director
National Coalition Against Censorship