Tinker v. Des Moines / How Does a School Identify "Disruptive Speech?"

In the case of *Tinker v. Des Moines*, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that student speech (expression) could not be punished or stopped unless officials could prove the speech would or did cause a substantial interference with the discipline required for the operation of the school. However, at what level of disruption must the school step in?

Directions:

Read each example below and determine whether you think the student expression described is potentially disruptive enough to be punished or stopped by the school administration.

- 1. Two students come to school wearing new pants. On the back of the pants, where pockets usually are, the students put patches of the American flag. Therefore, when the students sat down, they sat on the flag.
 - How disruptive are these actions?
 - Would it be constitutional for the school administration to restrict this form of speech?
 Why or why not?
- 2. The student government organizes a protest in response to the poor quality of the new cafeteria food offered at Valley High School. During both lunch periods, SGA officials lead a walk-out from the cafeteria and a group march to the local McDonald's.
 - How disruptive are these actions?
 - Would it be constitutional for the school administration to restrict this form of speech?
 Why or why not?

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3.	Local gang members wear colored plastic bracelets on their wrists to declare their affiliation - How disruptive are these actions?
	 Would it be constitutional for the school administration to restrict this form of speech? Why or why not?
4.	During a pep rally, a student leader uses very obscene language in a speech. - How disruptive are these actions?
	 Would it be constitutional for the school administration to restrict this form of speech? Why or why not?
5.	Atheist students want to publicize and educate others about their beliefs. To make their point, they begin wearing t-shirts that portray Jesus as a monster with three heads.

- How disruptive are these actions?

Would it be constitutional for the school administration to restrict this form of speech?
 Why or why not?

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