

MEDIA RELATIONS

Background:

The Division believes in the proactive dissemination of information and supports the right of media to make inquiries regarding Division operations.

Definitions:

Media Relations:

are activities co-ordinated by the Director of Communication Services to ensure the accuracy and consistency of information.

Procedures:

1. The Director of Communication Services is responsible for overseeing media relations for the Division.
2. The Director of Communication Services shall:
 - 2.1. Provide advice on media matters.
 - 2.2. Prepare material such as statements, news releases and background materials required by the Board Chair, Superintendent, their designates and all schools.
 - 2.3. Distribute these materials after approval, if necessary, by the Board Chair and Superintendent.
 - 2.4. Co-ordinate a response and/or an appropriate spokesperson for the subject as required.
3. As per [Board Policy 5: Role of the Board Chair](#), the Board Chair shall act as the official spokesperson for the Board except for those instances where the Board has delegated the role to another individual or group.
4. The Director of Communication Services, in consultation with the Superintendent, will prepare news releases on behalf of the Division.
5. The Principal shall:
 - 5.1. Act as the primary spokesperson on school-specific matters. A designated school spokesperson may speak with the media, if appropriate.
 - 5.2. Consult with the Superintendent or the Director of Communication Services to request approval for the release of information to the media.
 - 5.3. Provide guidance and direction to staff members who are required to speak to the media.
6. The Director of Communication Services will co-ordinate the creation and distribution of media advisories and news releases for schools—when the Director deems it an appropriate method of communicating stories and information. Requests shall be submitted by the Principal or school-level contact. If approved, communication will be distributed by the Director of Communication Services.
 - 6.1. In accordance with [Administrative Procedure 180: Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy \(FOIP\)](#) and the *FOIP Act*, when a news release is issued for a

school event, the event is considered public and anyone in attendance may take photographs without first obtaining consent. Parent/guardian consent must be obtained in advance of a student being interviewed and identified by the media.

- 6.2. Parent/guardian consent must be obtained before allowing those outside the school, including parents/guardians, visitors or media, to take photographs of students in classrooms and at nonpublic events.

- 6.2.1. Consent is required only if individual students are identifiable in the pictures.

7. School administrators and employees who receive inquiries from the media shall contact the Director of Communication Services prior to responding.
8. Communication guidelines related to dealing with crisis situations shall follow those outlined in the Division Emergency Response Plan (see [Hour Zero](#)).
9. Media representatives shall not be allowed to disrupt the normal operation of the Central Services office, a school or a class for the sole purpose of information gathering. This includes the interviewing of Division employees and students during the regular school day.
10. Media representatives shall submit requests for interviews to the Director of Communication Services before interviewing staff and students. Media representatives may be asked by the Principal or Division staff to leave the premises or grounds where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the students and staff to do so.

Reference:

Section 52, 53, 68, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225, 256 *Education Act*
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act