

MEDIA RELATIONS

Background

The Superintendent has been given the responsibility to ensure positive external and internal communications are developed and maintained. The news media are an important vehicle through which the District keeps the electorate accurately informed and increases public awareness of education. The District believes that the school system will benefit and receive support from a well-informed public, who understand the educational opportunities available to the residents of the District. The District often experiences extensive coverage by media and others media. Notwithstanding this, the District has an obligation to protect its students and staff from unwelcome or disruptive intrusions into the operation of its schools.

Procedures

1. Information releases, which accurately communicate the Board's business to the public, may only be issued by persons authorized by the Board as per Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair.
2. The Superintendent, or designate, will approve all information released to the media from District office.
3. The Principal shall approve all information released to the media from schools.
4. All staff are to encourage the news media, i.e. publishers of newspapers, magazines and journals, radio and television broadcasting stations, internet-based media, and others to carry articles and/or programs which:
 - 4.1 give positive support to the role of trustees and the programs and services offered in the District, and
 - 4.2 promote an understanding of the opportunities for the public to participate in the affairs of the District.

Staff are encouraged to make themselves available to attend meetings, seminars and other functions where personal contact can further the intent of this procedure.

5. Representatives of the media may be permitted into the schools for legitimate reporting and promotional purposes. This is at the discretion of the Principal. Particular care should be exercised in protecting the rights of students when media are present. Principals shall ensure that photographed/filmed students have signed appropriate consent forms.
6. Media representatives shall not be allowed to disrupt the normal operation of a school or a class for the sole purpose of information gathering. This includes the interviewing of staff members and/or students during regular class times.

7. Media representatives may be asked by the Principal or District 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.
8. In the event of emergency or crisis interactions, the Superintendent or designate shall determine what information shall be given to the media, and by whom.

Reference: Section 65, 85, 177, School Act
Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair

Last revised: October 2015