



DIVISION: PROGRAMS

POLICY #: PROG-319

POLICY NAME

MEDIA RELATIONS

POLICY STATEMENT

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board recognizes the responsibility of the news media to provide accurate and timely information to the community concerning issues and events that occur in our schools. The Board makes every effort to accommodate media requests where practical, appropriate, and within Board/District protocols and/or applicable legislation. Media requests must be considered within the parameters of the impact it may have upon on a school and/or a student’s instructional day and academic activities, as well as the privacy of students and staff.

BACKGROUND

The District is committed to cooperating with the news media. The District is also obligated to protect the privacy of students in our care, along with the privacy of staff. With respect to all communications matters, the District abides by its obligations under the *Schools Act, 1997*, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, District policies, and any other relevant legislation.

To help facilitate media requests, all media inquiries must be directed through the Communications Division, which will act as the official liaison and primary contact for media. This includes requests for interviews with board trustees, senior staff, administrators, teachers, students and support staff, as well as for information on District or school policies and procedures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District and is expected to act as an engagement protocol for news media.

POLICY DIRECTIVES

1. The administration of a school will inform the District Communications Division when:
 - a) Media have made a request to the school;
 - b) Media arrive at the school without prior approval;
 - c) A school is scheduling an event and plans to invite the media; and
 - d) A member of the school community has engaged the media on a school-related matter.
 - 1.1 Administrators will also notify their Director of Schools of media inquiries/media attendance at their school.
 - 1.2 Teachers and school staff will inform their school administration, or in the case of support staff, their immediate supervisor, of requests made to them by the media and media engagements initiated by the staff member. The administration will then provide the relevant information to the Communications Division or direct the staff member to do so.
 - 1.3 While a call to the Communications Division is the preferred method for schools to inform of media engagements, email notification may suffice in some situations.
2. Principals may exercise their discretion to invite media to their school for school-sanctioned events. It is the responsibility of the school administration to inform the Communications Division of all such events, and to ensure appropriate media consent forms are in place.
3. In consultation with the Director of Communications, school administrators may grant media access and arrange interviews with staff and/or students for routine school events. Before any minor is photographed, videotaped or interviewed by the media, a media consent form must be signed by the student's legal guardian.
4. Interviews with students and staff will not be conducted during school hours, or on school property, without the approval and presence of the school administrator or designate. Any member of the news media present at a school is required to adhere to the authority of the school administration and school rules. All school visits must be supervised by the school administrator or designate.
5. In order to protect the privacy of students and staff, media representatives (journalists, photographers, videographers, etc.) are not permitted on school grounds to interview, photograph or videotape without prior approval. To facilitate media relations efforts, media representatives are asked to contact the Director of Communications in advance of any school visit.

6. Media Requests for Information

- a) The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District will not release any information that may reveal a student's identity without appropriate consent.
- b) The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District will not release any personal or personnel-related information without appropriate consent.
- c) The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District will not comment on any case that is before the courts.
- d) In cases where the police are involved, and/or there is an ongoing police investigation, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District will not provide comment which may impact either the ongoing investigation or future court matters. Questions related to police investigations shall be referred to the relevant police agency.
- e) The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District will not release the names of deceased students, teachers, or staff out of respect for their families.

7. Spokespersons

- a) Only those designated to speak on behalf of the District may address issues such as (but not limited to) policy, critical incidents, District/school activities and operations. Any media interview must be coordinated through the Communications Division.
- b) The Chair of the Board of Trustees is the official spokesperson for the Board of Trustees of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. The Chair will address governance matters and issues related to the Board of Trustees.
- c) The CEO/Director of Education is the official spokesperson for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. The Director will address matters related to the operations of the District, general inquiries, and/or critical incidents.
- d) The Director of Education may defer comments on specific matters to members of the District's professional staff such as the Associate or Assistant Director(s) of Education, a school administrator, the Director of Communications; etc.
- e) A District Communications Division representative may be present during interviews with the Chair, Director, or other designated member of the District's professional staff.

Approved: August 18, 2017

Amended: _____