

MEDIA RELATIONS

Background

New Westminster Schools believes in open, transparent communication with the community it serves and supports the media's right to seek information about district operations.

The communications office, with direction from the superintendent and in collaboration with staff where needed, is responsible for responding – or formulating responses – to media enquiries on all matters relating to district business including, but not limited to:

1. Requests for comment or information about initiatives, projects, developments, events, etc. at the district and at schools.
2. Requests to interview or otherwise engage district staff for the purposes of eliciting responses for publication.

Procedures

1. All media requests for information or interviews must be directed through the communications office – as the superintendent's representative – for approval.
2. The communications office will:
 - a. Advise staff and the board on media relations and communications issues.
 - b. Prepare official statements and responses, media releases, and any such materials required by the board chair, superintendent, or designate.
 - c. Distribute materials after approval by the superintendent.
 - d. Act as the main conduit between the district and the media in crisis communications and/or emergency response situations.
3. Board information releases to media such as official statements, remarks, interviews, etc., which communicate board business to the public, must only be issued by persons authorized by the board in accordance with **Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair**.
4. Only the board chair or superintendent are authorized to speak as the district's official spokesperson, except in instances where the role is delegated to another individual or group.
5. The superintendent or communications office or designate may contact media to request coverage for special events.
6. School-based media requests must be organized through the communications office:

- a. The principal (or designated individual or group) will:
 - i. Act as the primary spokesperson on school-related matters but may delegate the role and responsibilities to another staff member where appropriate.
 - ii. Inform and include the communications office in all matters relating to media requests for information, interviews, etc. prior to responding to or contacting media representatives.
 - iii. Collaborate with the communications office on the release of school-focused information and releases to media.
 - b. Consult with the communications office to provide guidance and direction to staff who are designated to speak with media.
 - c. Include the communications office in all requests made to media.
7. The media is welcome to attend all public events including, but not limited to school athletic events, concerts, performances, public presentations, etc.
- a. Media requests to attend school-based, non-public events and requests for interviews must be approved by the communications office.
8. Media representatives shall not be allowed to disrupt the normal operation of district office, a school, or a class for the sole purpose of information gathering. This includes interviewing district employees and/or students during the regular school day.
- a. 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.

Reference: Section 8, 20, 22, 65, 85, 177 School Act

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

SD No. 40 (New Westminster)

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