



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE No. 421

IMPLEMENTATION MAY 2009

MEDIA RELATIONS

The Director has been given the responsibility to ensure positive internal and external communications are developed and maintained. Communication with internal and external audiences supports the vision and work of the Board of Education and Administration. In this effort, Prairie Spirit recognizes the valuable contribution of the media in informing the public about our schools, programs and initiatives. However, the Division has an obligation to protect the privacy of its students and staff and prevent unwelcome disruptions in the operation of its schools by members of the media.

PROCEDURES

1. The Director shall approve all information released to the Media from Division Office. Media releases, which accurately communicate the Board's messages to the public, may only be issued by the Communications Consultant, as authorized by the Board. The Principal, in consultation with the Director/Designate, must approve any information released by the school to the media. The Communications Consultant should be made aware of communication between a school and the media.
2. The Director of Education and the Board Chair, or their Designate, are the media spokespeople for the Division. Appropriate media responses are outlined below, and if in doubt, inquiries are to be directed to the Communications Consultant, who will coordinate an appropriate response with the spokespeople and arrange interviews as required (the exception would be sports scores and sports announcements and School Community Council activities which shall be handled at the school level, as approved by the Principal).
 - a. If a school receives a phone call from a media contact, the principal should determine the nature of the inquiry and respond as follows:
 - i. If non-controversial information of a factual nature is requested (i.e., school enrolment, number of staff, age of the school building, etc.), the Principal may respond. The Principal should inform the Director/Designate and Communications Consultant of any media inquiry.
 - ii. If the media contact appears to be asking for an opinion on a controversial topic, the Principal should contact the Director/Designate. Once there is clarity

regarding the information requested by the media, the Director/Designate will return the call.

3. Representatives of the media may be allowed into a school building for legitimate reporting and promotional purposes, with approval from the Director/Designate. Media contacts must make an appointment with the Principal before arriving at the school to take pictures, film students or conduct interviews. The Principal or Designate will escort the media during the time within the building to prevent disruptions to the teaching/learning environment.
 - a. Media representatives shall not be allowed to disrupt the normal operation of a school or a class for the sole purpose of information gathering. Media representatives may be asked by the Principal or Division staff to leave the premises or grounds of a school when it is deemed to be in the best interest of the students and staff to do so.
4. Particular care must be exercised in protecting the rights of students when media are present. The Principal shall obtain parental permission for media to interview or photograph individual students. Parents should complete the Parental Release Form provided at the beginning of the school year. Without this explicit permission, a child may not be included in media coverage.
5. In the event of emergency or crisis situations, the Director/Designate shall determine what information will be given to the media, and by whom.