

MEDIA RELATIONS

Background

The Superintendent has been given the responsibility to ensure positive internal and external 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. Notwithstanding this, the District has an obligation to protect its students and staff from unwelcome intrusions into the operation of its schools.

Procedures

1. Information releases, which accurately communicate the Board's business to the public and which may have potential political implications, may only be issued by persons authorized by the Board as per Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair.
2. The Superintendent shall approve all District administrative information released to the media.
3. All media requests received at a school shall be directed to the Manager of Communications and Community Engagement.
 - 3.1 This measure ensures the District is fairly represented given local, regional, provincial and national events and issues. It further builds awareness among media outlets that their first point of contact is the Manager of Communications when covering stories of a contentious or sensitive nature.
4. The Manager of Communications may contact local media to request coverage of special events.
 - 4.1 Principals and District staff wishing to gain coverage for special school events are to contact the Manager of Communications.
5. 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 the interviewing of District employees and/or students during the regular school day.
6. Normally, when a member of the media is on district property, the Manager of Communications will escort the media at all times to minimize disruption at the school and to assist with additional requests.
7. Interviewing, filming or photographing students on campus can only be done with the permission and supervision of the Manager of Communications and school administrator.
8. When on school property or at the district office, media are asked to present/display any press identification they may have from news agency they represent.

9. Comox Valley Schools allows students and parents to opt out of the release of certain information about students including photographs. The Manager of Communications or designated representative (school escort) will work with each school to determine who cannot be photographed and interviewed according to our Outside Media Consent guidelines. Therefore, no interviews, photographs or videotape is allowed without the prior approval from the Manager of Communications, the District Superintendent or other authorized designees such as a school administrator.
10. Media is invited to attend all open meetings of the Comox Valley Schools Board of Education. Media may film and/or record these meetings.
11. To avoid disruption of the meeting, reporters and photographers must only approach board members, guest speakers, or members of the audience outside of the board meeting room. Further, interviews must be conducted outside the board meeting room in the hall or in a pre-arranged location in the building. Board members may request that interviews are scheduled for a later time through the Manager of Communications rather than conducting interviews before or after a board meeting. Reporters can then contact the Manager of Communications to schedule a time.
12. 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

Adopted: October 18, 1982
Revised: September 1994; January 1999; June 25, 2019