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## MEDIA RELATIONS

### Background

The district recognizes the key role played by the media in keeping the public informed about school and school district activities and issues. The district will have in place procedures to develop and maintain strong relations with the media based on openness, fairness, accuracy of information, and consistency.

The manager of communications has been given the responsibility to ensure positive external and internal communications are developed and maintained, while encouraging principals to share stories about newsworthy events in their schools.

### Procedures

1. The manager of communications coordinates media relations for the district as an institution.

#### 2. News Releases

In order that district and school news be given appropriate coverage, with a minimum of inaccuracies reported, the release of official news from the district and schools is to be coordinated as follows:

2.1 News releases pertaining to the Board of Education, district matters, or district-wide programs will be prepared by, or in partnership with, the manager of communications, and approved by the superintendent of schools prior to distribution.

2.2 News releases which are of concern to only one school are the responsibility of the principal of that particular school. The principal is expected to consult with the manager of communications prior to issuing news releases.

2.3 Prior to the release of news on important developments in the district, individual trustees will be informed by either the board chairperson, the superintendent of schools, or designate.

#### 3. Media Inquiries

3.1 Media representatives should place requests for information or interviews through the manager of communications to expedite a prompt and coordinated response. The district will respond to media inquiries as quickly as possible.

3.2 Media calls pertaining to the Board of Education, district matters or district-wide programs are to be directed to the manager of communications.

3.3 The manager of communications should be notified about any media contacts so they are aware of and can monitor media coverage that may feature the school district and/or its schools.

#### 4. **Spokesperson(s)**

- 4.1 The board chairperson shall be the official spokesperson for discussions or actions of the Board of Education, except as this duty is delegated to other trustees in keeping with the Campbell River Board of Education Governance Policy 2.3 (Code of Conduct) and 2.4 (Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair).
- 4.2 The spokespersons designated to speak on behalf of district operations include the superintendent of schools, secretary-treasurer and manager of communications. Other staff may be asked by the superintendent of schools or manager of communications to speak on a case-by-case basis, depending on their expertise on an issue.
- 4.3 In cases requiring a public statement by the district, the manager of communications will work with district senior management and/or school administrators to establish the known facts of a situation and summarize the district's position and will issue official statements. In some situations, another appropriate spokesperson may be identified, and interviews or statements arranged as required.

#### 5. **Crisis/Emergency Communication**

During a crisis, the priority of school administration is to ensure the safety of students and staff. However, the district recognizes the need to provide timely, accurate information to parents/guardians and that the media plays an important role in relaying this information. Therefore:

- 5.1 The manager of communications will assist the principal by coordinating communication efforts and either the manager of communications or superintendent will serve as spokesperson; allowing the principal to concentrate their efforts on the needs of their school community students, parents and staff.

#### 6. **News Media Services at Board Meetings**

- 6.1 Public board meeting agendas and supporting reports will be made available to the public on the Friday preceding the board meeting through the district's website and social media channels. Representatives of the news media are encouraged to contact the manager of communications for briefings and explanations concerning agenda items.

#### 7. **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

- 7.1 The district is committed to open and honest communication in all aspects of district operations and will willingly provide information unless it falls within the restrictions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation.
- 7.2 In keeping with Operational Procedure 143 (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy), positive student FIPPA/personal information consents are required before any personal information about a student can be released to the media by the school district and/or school.
- 7.3 All medical, sexual orientation, and gender status information is kept strictly confidential for employees and students alike.
- 7.4 Any violation of confidentiality contravenes this operational procedure and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

Reference: Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Related Forms: [SD72 Form 143-1 Student FIPPA/Personal Information Consent Form](#)

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