



MEDIA PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOLS

RELEASE OF STUDENT/EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Media on Campus

All media representatives are to report directly to the school office and must obtain the principal's permission before shooting film or conducting interviews. If you determine that the presence of media is disruptive on your campus, ask them to leave and escort them out. Media representatives should be accompanied by the principal or his designee the entire time they are present on campus. When finished, they then should be escorted out and their departure visually confirmed. This prevents "spontaneous contact" and inappropriate release of information. The media are free to interview anyone at any time when not physically on your school property, unless you are on a school-sponsored field trip or event. Once students leave your school grounds/jurisdiction, you cannot be held responsible for media contact.

The Public Relations Office is available to coordinate/assist you with media coverage or to address media issues. The Superintendent/PR Office should be contacted and informed of media coverage and/or interviews that may be controversial or "high profile."

Guidelines for Student Interviews

Student interviews must be **approved by the principal**, and the **student must be willing** to be interviewed. The principal should use discretion regarding the selection of students, the topic of the interview, and the student's schedule. The principal or his/her designee should remain with the media during all interviews with students on campus or at any school-sponsored activity. (Please note that the media can interview students when they are not on school property or under school jurisdiction without school approval.)

"Special" students, if identifiable as such, cannot be interviewed or photographed without written parental permission. The *Individual/Specific Media Release Consent Form* may be used as needed for these students.

Interview questions cannot invade the privacy of the family, and students cannot answer questions about religion, rules in the household, divorce, sex, or other "sensitive" issues unless the parent is present or the parent/guardian has given specific written permission to discuss those topics with the media.

Media coverage cannot interfere with classroom instruction, as outlined by the EIA. Assembly programs and other activities not involving direct student instruction may be exempt from these guidelines.

Student spokespersons may be identified at the beginning of the school year, with parental permission obtained using the *Individual/Specific Media Release Consent Form*, for the students to be interviewed by the media when "general" interviews about student life, activities, etc. are requested. Selected students usually hold office in a student organization such as Student Council, or they are leaders in the school.

Guidelines for Staff Interviews

The principal is considered the “official” spokesperson for the school. You may designate a staff person to provide information to the media; however, you cannot require any employee to be interviewed.

Employees have the right to freedom of speech, and a request from the media to interview an employee should be communicated to that employee. The employee then has the option of returning the call. If the person is representing the school/office, the interview can be scheduled at the discretion of the supervisor at the school/office site. If the interview is not “official,” it should be conducted on the employee’s own time at a site away from the school/office. “Unofficial” phone or videotaped interviews should not be conducted during the employee’s work time.

Release of Employee Information

You may release the following information about employees:

1. Name
2. Assignment (school or office and position)
3. Date of hire
4. Employment end date

Release of Student Information

Both state and federal laws protect the release of personal information about students who are minors. No information about a student should be released without parental consent.

Directory-type student information—information about a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed—may be used judiciously for positive purposes, as stated in the *Directory Information Notice*, if the parents have not notified you to the contrary. Refer to *Board Policy JR-R—Student Records* for details.

Notification of Rights under FERPA

The *Directory Information* notice gives parents the opportunity to exclude their children from publicity and protects the school/district in the appropriate use of general student information, including photographs. *Directory Information* and *Education Records* (concerning access to student records) notices are required annually by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Individual/Specific Media Release Consent Form

This form may be used in the following cases:

1. To obtain permission to release Special Education/other special program student information/photographs
2. For one-on-one interviews with students
3. For student spokespersons
4. To include in a particular promotional piece students whose parents otherwise have objected to release of directory information
5. As an extra measure of precaution