



| <b>PROCEDURE 170</b> |                   |
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| <b>Adopted</b>       | November 28, 2000 |
| <b>Last Revised</b>  | June 2019         |
| <b>Review Date</b>   | June 2024         |

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## COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

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**1) PURPOSE**

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB) values positive relationships and transparent communications throughout the organization, with the media and with the community. All communications will support the strategic plan mission, vision, priorities and goals.

**2) PRIMARY SPOKESPERSONS**

- a) The director of education, or designate, is the primary spokesperson in all situations where a comment or response from the administrative/operational perspective is required. The chair of the board is the spokesperson on behalf of the Board of Trustees where a comment or response from the government perspective is required, as per Policy 3D: Board Communications and Media Relations.
- b) The school administrator is the primary spokesperson at a school, unless the situation warrants senior administration representation. The school administrator shall communicate with the communications manager about media inquiries or events.

**3) CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**

- a) Communications Services will identify opportunities to communicate with stakeholders and oversee or provide guidance for the development of publications, and messaging produced for internal and external audiences, using a multi-media approach.
- b) Communications Services will ensure that printed and electronic communications and promotional items share a common look, signifying unity and reinforcing the HPEDSB image using the HPEDSB visual identity (official logo and other wordmarks).

**4) CRISIS AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

- a) Communications Services, in collaboration with other Education Centre departments, will assist schools in communicating with students, families, the media and the public during and following any emergency or crisis situations.
- b) The communications manager is responsible for all media relations regarding school and HPEDSB related crises and emergencies, and will work in collaboration with school administrators and emergency representatives (police, fire, etc.) for media responses or statements.
- c) All crisis and emergency related media releases must be approved by the director of education or designate prior to being released by Communications Services.

**5) PUBLIC RELATIONS**

- a) Public relations builds public confidence in the school board with all stakeholders, including students, employees, families, community members, agencies and governments.
- b) Communication with stakeholders requires professional, regular, clear and concise messaging. This includes communications through email, internal documents, business and parent/guardian letters, school newsletters, social media, etc. Effort will be made to ensure accessible communications for all.
- c) All communications between HPEDSB and the community shall comply with current legislation, and endeavour to be accurate, clear, concise and timely to ensure that all stakeholders have access to relevant information as promptly as possible.

**6) MEDIA RELATIONS**

- a) The media/reporters provide a service to keep the public informed about student achievement and well-being, school board business, school initiatives, programs and services.

- b) Communications Services will foster transparent, positive relationships with media representatives. Responses to media requests will be as timely as possible and provide access to accurate, factual information.
- c) Communications Services will issue news releases and/or update social media, as appropriate depending on the situation, when newsworthy events, decisions or issues arise.
- d) News releases from the Education Centre shall be created and distributed by the communications manager.
- e) News releases from schools, student councils and school councils shall be submitted to the communications manager prior to final distribution to ensure compliance with organizational messaging.
- f) When a sensitive situation has the potential to become public, school administrators shall notify their superintendent or designate, who will notify and consult with the communications manager.

#### 7) SOCIAL MEDIA USE

- a) The use of social media to promote or convey timely information and raise awareness of student, school and Board initiatives is recognized.
- b) Social media and social networking refer to online communication through applications such as but not limited to\* Facebook, various Google applications, Instagram, LinkedIn, MySpace, Picasa, Snapchat, Twitter, Wikipedia, collaborative forums, discussion boards and websites. *\*These represent a sampling of the popular social media applications/tools at the time this procedure was released.*
- c) The use of social media applications/tools is guided by the ethical use of and principles outlined in HPEDSB policies, procedures and guidelines.
- d) Communications Services will maintain official board-level social media communications.
- e) The official HPEDSB social media account will use the HPEDSB logo as the avatar or profile picture.
- f) All Education Centre department or school social media accounts dealing with school board business may be set up after first notifying and receiving permission from the school group superintendent and in consultation with the communications manager or designate.
- g) Education Centre departments should consult with the communications manager to determine a suitable avatar. School accounts should use the official school logo. School account names/identifiers should use a version of the school name followed by \_HPE to identify it as an official HPEDSB account.
- h) Teachers/classes/programs, student councils and school councils wishing to set up social media accounts must first seek permission from the school administrator who will in turn notify the school group superintendent and communications manager for awareness and monitoring. Student council and school council social media accounts must be co-managed by the school administrator and the student council or school council chair.
- i) Social media accounts used for school board business are not for personal use and may not include personal issues with the HPEDSB, a school, employees, students or parents/guardians.

#### Legal references

- *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Education Act*, section 283 Chief Executive Officer
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guideline, subsection 3.2 Report Card

#### District references

- Board Policy 1: Board Vision, Mission and Priorities
- Board Policy 3-D: Board Communications and Media Relations
- Multi-Year Strategic Plan
- Administrative Procedure 171: Use of Board Logo
- Administrative Procedure 175: School Councils
- Administrative Procedure 194: Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy
- Administrative Procedure 312: Ontario Student Record
- Administrative Procedure 498: Volunteers in Schools

#### External references

- Ontario College of Teachers: Professional Advisory, Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media