



Media Relations and Spokesperson Protocol

Date of Issue: August 2026

Reviewed/Revised:

Memo To: All Staff

From: Director of Education

ACCESSIBILITY:

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PURPOSE:

Reporting to the Director of Education, the Senior Manager of Communications and their department serves as the primary point of contact between the Board and its stakeholders and is responsible for facilitating the communication of clear, accurate, and timely information regarding Board initiatives, programs, and activities.

The department supports effective communication among schools, employees, trustees, students, parents/guardians, school councils, volunteers, and community members, as well as between the Board and community partners, including the Diocese, municipalities, and local organizations. Through this work, the department promotes meaningful engagement across the Board, its schools, and the broader Catholic community, and is committed to fostering open, respectful, and faith-informed communication that reflects Catholic values and strengthens relationships.

REFERENCES:

- [Communication Guidelines – APC001](#)
- [Electronic Mail and Social Media Use Guidelines – APS035](#)
- [Responsible Use of Information Technology and Electronic Data – Student – APC052](#)
- [Code of Conduct – APC018](#)
- [Social Media Playbook](#) (Private)

FORMS:

- N/A

REPORTS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- N/A



COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

For the purposes of this memorandum, the term ‘staff’ means any employee of the Board. The protocols in this memorandum also apply to consultants, contractors, external partners, volunteers, and any other individuals engaged in work on behalf of the Board.

Roles and Responsibilities

Director of Education: As the Board's Chief Executive Officer and the authority to whom the Spokesperson reports, the Director holds final decision-making authority on all media and public communications matters. The Spokesperson exercises delegated authority on the Director's behalf and operates in close collaboration with the Director on sensitive, strategic, or high-profile files. The Director may speak to media directly at any time and will inform the Spokesperson to ensure alignment and continuity of messaging.

Board Chair: May speak on behalf of the Board of Trustees on governance matters, and/or in coordination with the Spokesperson and Director of Education.

Communications Department:

The Communications Department leads internal and external communications for the Board, ensuring consistent and accurate information reaches students, families, staff, and the broader community. The Department reports to the Director of Education through the Senior Manager of Communications (Spokesperson).

Core responsibilities:

- Board website and official social media accounts
- Media releases, requests, and responses
- Crisis communications and issues management
- Visual identity, brand standards, and communications tools
- Advertising, promotions, and event support
- Communications counsel to schools and departments

Media Relations: All media inquiries must be directed to the Senior Manager of Communications to ensure accurate, consistent information and appropriate spokesperson assignment.

Social Media: Official Board accounts are managed by the Communications Department during regular business hours.

Trustees: Trustees who are approached by media should refer the inquiry to the Board Chair.

Principals and Vice-Principals: Do not respond to media inquiries directly. All media contact at the school level must be referred to Communications immediately. Principals may speak to school-specific operational matters only when authorized and prepared by Communications.

Subject Matter Experts (including System Consultants): All topic-specific media communications will be informed by the relevant Subject Matter Experts (SME) to ensure accuracy. SMEs may contribute at varying levels — providing background to inform a Spokesperson statement, offering an attributed quote, or participating directly in interviews — as assigned by the Spokesperson. All media inquiries directed to SMEs must be referred to Communications; SMEs may not engage media independently. When assigned to speak, they will be briefed and supported by Communications throughout. In the event that the Spokesperson is not available, inquiries are to be directed to the Director of Education/Chief Executive Officer.

All other staff: Refer all media inquiries to Communications without exception. Do not respond directly, including with statements such as “no comment.”

Handling Inbound Media Inquiries

When any staff member receives a media inquiry, they:

- Will forward the inquiry to Communications immediately, including the reporter's name, outlet, contact information, the question or topic, and any stated deadline.
- Will not respond to the inquiry directly, including by acknowledging receipt, declining comment, or providing background information.
- Will not commit to interviews, photo or video access, or follow-up on behalf of the Board or any of its schools.

Communications will acknowledge media inquiries promptly and coordinate the Board's response. The Spokesperson approves all statements, talking points, and interview arrangements before they are issued or scheduled.

Proactive Media Engagement

Story pitches, op-eds, letters to the editor, podcast appearances, conference media availability, requests to highlight programs or events, and any other proactive outreach to media must be coordinated through Communications before any contact is made. This includes outreach by staff, consultants, and external partners working on behalf of the Board.

This applies regardless of how positive or low-risk the story may appear. Coordinating proactive engagement allows Communications to align messaging, leverage relationships with outlets, time stories effectively, and ensure consistency with broader Board priorities.

Media Monitoring and Response

Communications monitors media coverage related to the Board, its schools, the broader education sector, and emerging public issues. Communications will determine, in consultation with senior leadership where appropriate, whether and how the Board responds to inaccuracies, mischaracterizations, or emerging concerns in media coverage. Staff who observe coverage they believe warrants attention should bring it to Communications rather than respond directly.

Crisis and Sensitive Situations

In a crisis or emerging sensitive situation, all internal and external communication, including media response, school-community messaging, and public statements, must be coordinated through the appropriate Superintendent of Learning, who will communicate with Communications. The Spokesperson works closely with the Director of Education, senior leadership, and relevant departments to ensure messaging is timely, accurate, and consistent.

Filming and Photography on Board Property

Members of the media, freelance photographers, and film or documentary crews must obtain advance permission from Communications before filming or taking photographs on Board property, including school grounds, buildings, and interior spaces. Approved media on Board property will be coordinated and escorted by Communications or a designated representative.

Exterior images of Board buildings captured from public property (such as a public sidewalk or street) are generally permissible, provided no students are visible in the image. Where students may be visible, or where filming or photography is taking place on Board property, advance permission is required. Staff who observe unauthorized filming or photography on Board property should notify Communications immediately.

Social Media

Personal use of social media is governed by applicable Board procedures and the Code of Conduct. Staff, consultants, and external partners must not post on personal social media accounts in a manner that could reasonably be construed as speaking on behalf of the Board. Official Board and school social media accounts are managed under the direction of Communications.

Confidentiality and Privacy

These protocols do not override the Board's privacy obligations. Staff and partners must continue to comply with APC036 – Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and applicable legislation. Personal information about students, families, and staff must not be disclosed to media under any circumstances, even when consent has been obtained for related coverage. Communications will assess privacy considerations for each media engagement.

Training and Acknowledgement

This Administrative Procedure is available on the Board's staff portal and will be communicated to staff through standard Board channels at the time of issuance and as appropriate thereafter.

Contact

All media inquiries and proposed media engagement should be directed to the Senior Manager of Communications, Waterloo Catholic District School Board. The effective use of these protocols by all staff and partners ensures that the Board communicates clearly, consistently, and credibly with the communities it serves.