



POLICY SECTION: Administration
SUB-SECTION:
POLICY NAME: Communication Policy
POLICY NO: A-37

Date Approved: October 23 rd , 2014	Date of Next Review: 2018	Dates of Amendments:
<p>Rescinds A.05, Lines of Communication T.11, Communication on Behalf of the Board</p> <p>Cross References A.03, Advertising Policy A.29, Electronic Communication System- Acceptable Use Policy A.33, Guidelines For Trustees, Parents And Staff In Addressing School Related Concerns S.02, School Events Communications and Invitee Protocols S. 10 Catholic School Advisory Council Policy and Education Act Reg. 612 T.7, Community Engagement Policy T.15, Provision Of Requested Information To An Individual Trustee T.16, Logo Use <i>Employment Standards Act</i> <i>Occupational Health & Safety Act</i> <i>Workplace Safety and Insurance Act</i> <i>Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> <i>Ontario Accessibility & Disability Act</i></p>		

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that communication across the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is well co-ordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of stakeholders and supports the Board’s mission, vision and values as outlined in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP).

Scope and Responsibility:

This policy extends to stakeholders of the TCDSB. The Director of Education, supported by the Senior Coordinator of Communications and Public Relations is responsible for this policy.

Alignment with MYSP:

- Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being
- Inspiring and Motivating Employees
- Strengthening Public Confidence
- Living Our Values



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Financial Impact:

Funds for communications initiatives are allocated annually as part of the Board's yearly budgeting process.

Legal Impact:

In general, there is no legal impact to the board, but a failure to follow the correct lines of communication, as outlined in the policy, could lead to liability against the board, should any negative consequences or harm arise as a result of that communication breach.

Policy:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB) will promote and maintain open, accessible, timely and transparent internal and external communications with its stakeholders and members of the media designed to strengthen relationships, support programs and activities of the Board, and to celebrate the values of Catholic education.

Regulations:

A. External Communications

- 1) The Chair of the Board is the official spokesperson for the Board of Trustees on matters of policy, and may make statements to the media or communicate with outside agencies on behalf of the Board of Trustees as outlined below. This authority may be delegated at his/her discretion.
 - a) The Chair may address the media or public on matters pertaining to Board policy decisions.
 - b) When a matter is deemed to be politically sensitive, the Chair will be the official spokesperson.
 - c) When there is doubt as to the interpretation of Board policy, or where there is no established Board policy, the Chair of the Board shall seek direction from the Board regarding the substance and manner in which the matter is to be expressed in public.
 - d) Trustees may address the media on local issues specific to their Ward, or as an individual trustee representing their own independent viewpoints on matters of public concern.
- 2) The Director of Education (or his/her designate) will be the official spokesperson of the board during crisis situations, and on matters of academic program, administrative, human resource, and educational (pedagogical) matters, and in the application of a Catholic lens to all educational issues.
- 3) The Senior Coordinator, Communications and Public Relations will be the official spokesperson on daily school or board related issues, or as assigned by the Director of Education, and has overall responsibility for all internal and external communications of the Board.



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- 4) The Communications Department shall develop and implement communication plans and strategies on a proactive basis to promote awareness in support of TCDSB programs and priorities and oversees all communication activities as determined by the Director of Education.
- 5) The Communications Department shall handle all inquiries from the media.
 - a) Requests whether general or specific in nature will be directed to the appropriate TCDSB staff or Trustee with the necessary knowledge, expertise or professional training to respond appropriately in a timely manner.
 - b) TCDSB staff will inform the Communications Department of all media requests received, so that Communications personnel may provide direction and/or a timely response as appropriate.
- 6) Staff designated to speak on behalf of the board will confine their remarks to fact and shall refrain from expressing any personal opinions.
- 7) The Communications Department has the responsibility to issue news releases to the media on behalf of the Board.
 - a) All news releases must be approved by the Director of Education or his/her designate.
 - b) The Chair of the Board shall be consulted on all news releases related to Board policies or initiatives.
 - c) Individual Trustees shall be consulted on news releases involving schools, programs or local issue in his/her Ward.
- 8) The Communications Department is responsible for managing the board's website, as well as supporting the maintenance and updating of individual school websites.

B. Internal Communications

- 1) The Communications Department shall be responsible for the maintenance of effective internal communications practices and protocols designed to ensure mutual awareness among trustees, senior administrators, and school administrators on important issues impacting staff, schools and the community.
 - a) A Communications Handbook shall be maintained and provided to all School Administrators in printed and electronic formats (see Appendix B).
 - b) Regular communications shall be delivered through all available modalities, as appropriate, with a commitment for translated materials to parents/guardians for whom English is a second language or English proficiency is limited.
 - c) Communications will adhere to confidentiality and privacy with respect to staff matters in accordance with legislative requirements contained within the *Employment Standards Act*, *Occupational Health & Safety Act*, *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.



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- 2) The Director of Education or designate shall establish administrative processes to communicate and advise the Chair/Vice-Chair of the Board on matters requiring the attention, understanding and deliberation of the Board of Trustees.
- 3) Superintendents of Education shall maintain ongoing communication with trustees and notify him/her of school issues including, but not limited to: significant parental concerns; Catholic School Advisory Council (CSAC) concerns; school related incidents including injuries requiring medical services; bereavements of staff, students or parents; significant safe school concerns (lockdown, hold and secures, shelter in place, bullying, extreme acts of violence and police investigations); community concerns, (i.e. busing, boundaries).
- 4) School Administrators shall maintain ongoing and timely communication with their Superintendent and School Trustee on matters that impact the school and the community.
 - a) The Superintendent and School Trustee shall be provided with copies (preferably electronically) of school newsletters, CSAC minutes, community letters etc. on an ongoing and timely basis.
 - b) Parental concerns shall be referred back to the School Superintendent (Cross reference: A.33, Guidelines For Trustees, Parents And Staff In Addressing School Related Concerns)
 - c) The School Trustee shall be informed and invited to attend all school events which are open to parents/community (Cross reference: S.02, School Events Communications and Invitee Protocols).
- 5) In accordance with Policy T. 15 *Provision of Requested Information To An Individual Trustee*, all requests for information shall be submitted and provided through the Office of the Director of Education.
 - a) School Trustees shall communicate with Superintendents on regular basis to discuss school related issues of mutual concern
 - b) School Trustees will respond to invitations from a school to special events in a timely manner.
- 6) Staff and Trustees shall be governed by A.29, Electronic Communication System- Acceptable Use Policy, when publicizing or responding to, or promoting any school or Board event.
- 7) Parental involvement and engagement initiatives shall be guided by the Board's Community Engagement Policy (Cross reference: T.7, Community Engagement Policy, and S. 10 Catholic School Advisory Council Policy and Education Act Reg. 612).



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Metrics and Accountability

This effectiveness of this policy in supporting comprehensive best practice communications across the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) will be evaluated annually. The highlights, analysis and findings will be documented and published in a formal annual report and presented to the Board of Trustees in September of each year for review.

Definitions:

Stakeholder: A person, group of people or an organization that holds a vested interest in the TCDSB community, including, but not limited to students, parents, staff, trustees, parishes, the Archdiocese of Toronto, community and education partners, Catholic ratepayers.

School Administrator: Principal or his/her designate