



**POLICY SECTION:** ADMINISTRATION  
**SUB-SECTION:**  
**POLICY NAME:** COMMUNICATIONS POLICY  
**POLICY NO:** A.37

<b>Date Approved:</b> October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2014	<b>Date of Next Review:</b> April, 2024	<b>Dates of Amendments:</b> April, 2019
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**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 Parent Councils 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
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Education Act*
- *Personal Health Information Protection Act*
- *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*

**Appendix**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that communication across the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB or the Board) 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), promotes Catholic education and maintains high quality communications standards.



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**Scope and Responsibility:**

This policy extends to stakeholders of the TCDSB. The Director of Education, supported by the Chief of Communications & Government 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

**Policy:**

The TCDSB's Communications Policy 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 (Chair) 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 the Chair's discretion.



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- a) The Chair may address the media or public on matters pertaining to Board policy decisions or when a matter is deemed to be politically sensitive.
  - b) When there is doubt as to the interpretation of Board policy, or where there is no established Board policy, the Chair shall seek direction from the Board of Trustees regarding the substance and manner in which the matter is to be communicated to the public.
  - c) 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 Chief of Communications & Government Relations will be the official spokesperson on daily school or Board related issues, or as assigned by the Director of Education, and has the overall responsibility for all internal and external communications of the Board.
  - 4) The Communications Department shall develop and implement plans, briefing notes and strategies on a proactive basis to promote awareness in support of TCDSB programs and priorities, address potential issues and oversees all other communication activities as determined by the Director of Education.
  - 5) The Communications Department shall handle all inquiries from the media.



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- a) Requests that come through the Communications Department, whether general or specific in nature will be handled by the Communications Department in a timely manner. Communications staff will seek direction or expertise from the appropriate TCDSB staff when required. Requests that come through the Board of Trustees, shall be handled directly by the Trustee that has received the request with support from the Communications Department.
  - b) TCDSB staff and Trustees will inform the Communications Department of all media requests received, so that Communications personnel may provide direction and/or a timely response as appropriate, and monitor any resulting media coverage.
- 6) Staff designated to speak on behalf of the Board will confine their remarks to facts and shall refrain from expressing any personal opinions.
  - 7) The Communications Department has the responsibility to issue news releases and official statements to the media on behalf of the Board.
    - a) The Director of Education and the Chair shall be consulted on all news releases and official statements related to Board policies or initiatives.
    - b) Individual Trustees shall be consulted with the Communications Department on news releases involving schools, programs or local issues in their-ward.
  - 8) The Communications Department is responsible for managing the Board's social media (ie. Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) and website, as well as supporting the maintenance and updating of individual school websites to enhance TCDSB profile, reputation and reach.



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## **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 webpage shall be maintained on the staff intranet including template letters for school use and provided to all school administrators in electronic format on an annual basis.
  - 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) Parents/ guardians seeking translated materials for whom English is a second language or English proficiency is limited may do so by reaching out to the Community Relations Office, Interpreter Services or by visiting the TCDSB website, select Translate.
  - d) Communications will adhere to confidentiality and privacy with respect to staff matters in accordance with all relevant legislative requirements.
- 2) The Director of Education or designate shall establish administrative processes to communicate and advise the Chair/Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees on matters requiring the attention, understanding and deliberation of the Board of Trustees.



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- 3) Superintendents of Education shall maintain ongoing communication with Trustees and notify the Trustees of school issues including, but not limited to: significant parental concerns; Catholic School Parent (CSPC) concerns; school related incidents including injuries requiring medical services; bereavements of staff, students or parents; significant safe school concerns (lockdown, hold and secures, trespass notices, shelter in place, bullying, extreme acts of violence, police being called to schools, 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; and with the Communications Department on matters that may become issues or may garner media interest.
  - a) The Superintendent and School Trustee shall be provided with copies (preferably electronically) of school newsletters, CSPC 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).



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- 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 Parent Councils Policy and Education Act Reg. 612).

**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



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**Evaluation and Metrics:**

The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated on an as needed basis. The highlights, analysis and findings will be presented to the Board of Trustees in September of each year for review.