COMMUNICATIONS POLICY (NEW)

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:7

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John W. Yan, Senior Coordinator Communications
Loretta Notten, Superintendent, Governance and Policy

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Vision:
At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:
The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.

G. Poole
Associate Director of Academic Affairs

A. Sangiorgio
Associate Director of Planning and Facilities

S. Pessione
Associate Director of Business Services, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

Angela Gauthier
Director of Education
A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Toronto Catholic District School Board acknowledges the critical importance of effective communications at all levels of the organization. TCDSB has a responsibility to engage in proactive, two-way communication with its staff, parents, students, partners and stakeholders in support of community engagement that will enhance student achievement and well-being, while also strengthening public confidence and build support for Catholic education.

This new communications policy for the TCDSB is intended to promote and maintain open, accessible, timely and transparent internal and external communications with the School Board’s stakeholders (students, parents, staff, trustees, parishes, the Archdiocese of Toronto, community and education partners, Catholic rate payers and members of the media). The policy has been designed to help strengthen relationships, support programs and activities of the Board, and to celebrate the values of Catholic education.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this new 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).

This new Communications Policy (A.37) would rescind existing policy: A.05, Lines of Communication; and T.11, Communication on Behalf of the Board (see Appendix B).

C. BACKGROUND

The Governance and Policy Committee at its meeting on January 21, 2014 approved a Policy Revision Plan Schedule requesting that a Communications Policy be prepared for review by June, 2014.

At the May 22, 2104 meeting of the Board, Trustees adopted a motion instructing that staff discuss a strategic approach to develop a strategic communications policy, which necessitated moving the delivery date from the initial timeframe to the Fall 2014 meeting of the Governance and Policy Committee to allow sufficient time to evaluate more closely the impact of a new Communication Policy on existing policies, procedures and practices.
D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

The Communications Policy was informed through a number of mechanisms, including issues identified by during Communications Round Table quarterly meetings held from November, 2012 to January 2014 involving trustees. Consistent with the terms of reference, these Communications Round Tables were open forums designed to facilitate honest, two-way discussion/dialogue, consultation and information sharing with Trustees and the Senior Coordinator on communications-related issues and best practices.

When drafting the new Communications Policy, consideration was also given to comments received specifically addressing TCDSB Communications during the Board’s CSAC Policy Consultation Session held on March 25, 2014. In addition, communications related feedback received as part of the comprehensive Board-wide MYSP survey was reviewed to ensure ongoing alignment with the goals outlined in our Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Communications staff also conducted a comprehensive review of existing communications policies currently in use across the province by Boards of Education (both public and Catholic) in order to capture best practices and generally accepted principles, regulations, protocols and procedures.

E. 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.

F. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Once approved, a comprehensive strategic communications and stakeholder engagement plan will be produced to ensure awareness of the new policy. This will be supported by use of all communications modalities (both online/web-based and print) to assist in compliance with the specific regulations contained in the policy.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This Communications Policy (A.37, Communications Policy) is submitted for consideration and Staff recommends the new policy and regulations contained therein be adopted, and that policies: A.05, Lines of Communication, and T.11, Communication on Behalf of the Board, be rescinded.
POLICY SECTION: Administration

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: Communication Policy

POLICY NO: A-37

Date Approved: TBA
Date of Next Review: 2018
Dates of Amendments:

Rescinds
A.05, Lines of Communication
T.11, Communication on Behalf of the Board

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
T.7, Community Engagement Policy
T.15, Provision Of Requested Information To An Individual Trustee
T.16, Logo Use
Employment Standards Act
Occupational Health & Safety Act
Workplace Safety and Insurance Act
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

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 staff, students and trustees 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
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. The Director of Education (or his/her designate) is the spokesperson for the Board on academic program, administrative, human resource, education (pedagogical) matters or during crisis situations.
   a) The Chair may address the media or public on matters pertaining to Board policy decisions.
   b) 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.
   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 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.

3) 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.

4) The Communications Department shall handle all inquiries from the media.
POLICY SECTION: Administration

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: Communication Policy

POLICY NO: A-37

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.

5) 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.

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 C).

b) Regular communications shall be delivered through all available modalities (web, social media, E-newsletters) 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.

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; safe school concerns (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).

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
APPENDIX B

NEW COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
OCTOBER 2014 DRAFT

RESCINDS THE FOLLOWING POLICIES

Lines of Communication A.05

Policy

1. Official communications of the Board and trustees with TCDSB personnel, such as requests for reports, direction to administration, etc., shall be through the Director of Education.

2. Lines of communication within the TCDSB shall be through the established levels of authority.

Communication On Behalf Of The Board T.11

Policy

1. The Chair of the Board is empowered to issue statements to the public media or communicate with outside agencies on behalf of the Board.

Regulations:

1. When there is doubt as to the interpretation of policy, or no established 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.

AR Sep 98; BM p 230, 12 Apr 89.
Communications, Public & Media Relations

Handbook
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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Dear colleagues in Catholic Education,

I congratulate all the Principals, Vice-Principal and school staff who continue to support the Toronto Catholic District School Board’s efforts to publicize the many wonderful things that happen every day across our school system.

By keeping the media informed about the many positive things that are happening in our schools, the many accomplishments of our students and staff, and the impact that our schools have on the wider community, it is our hope that more parents will be encouraged to choose Catholic education for their children.

The Communications, Media and Public Relations Department is always prepared to support your promotional efforts around the many exciting events that happen in your schools, and to feature student, parent and staff achievements.

Principals are encouraged to consider providing the “Student Information Release Form”, which is included in this “Communications, Media and Public Relations Handbook”, to all parents/guardians at the start of the school year. This will allow you to host media in your schools for your special events throughout the year. I would also encourage you to continue to keep the Communications Department informed about upcoming events and recent achievements.

Communications, Media and Public Relations Department staff are happy to assist you with the development of media advisories and news releases, as well as publicizing your school’s news through the monthly distribution of “It Starts in the Schools”. You can contact the department by e-mail at commdept@tdsdb.org, by telephone at 416-222-8282, extension 5314 or by fax at 416-229-5342.

You are also reminded to contact the Department at 416-222-8282, extension 5314 if any issues or incidents arise that may be of a sensitive nature and have the potential to generate media interest. Department staff can guide and support you and your staff through difficult circumstances. In emergency situations, you are asked to use the emergency telephone line at 416-222-8282 ext. 2197.

This “Communications, Media and Public Relations Handbook” has been designed as a resource for administrators in planning individual communication strategies for their schools/Departments, and in responding to issues that arise unexpectedly.

We have also provided information about the common communications vehicles that are available to schools and their communities within the Board.

I trust that you will find this guide helpful. Please contact the department with any further suggestions that you feel may be helpful in future editions.

Sincerely,

Bruce Rodrigues
Director of Education
The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community rooted in the love of Christ, that educates students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.
MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR COORDINATOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Principal and Vice-Principal:

I am pleased to provide you with an updated Communications, Public and Media Relations Handbook. If you wish for us to provide an in-service to your school community or to a group of administrators, we would be happy to do so.

Our department is here to support all of our schools as we collectively promote Catholic education in the City of Toronto. We give priority to supporting you during the good times and with any challenging times that school communities may encounter throughout the year.

We are all involved with a variety of activities that focus on the Toronto Catholic District School Board as a positive, safe and welcoming educational environment in which people can work and learn. We make every effort to ensure that the public perception of the Toronto Catholic District remains a positive one. This is accomplished through the creation and the dissemination of consistent and accurate messaging using a variety of communication tools, various mediums, events, and promotional materials.

I encourage you to contact us should you require any support to enhance communications and promote local activities within your community. We remind you to notify our department when media call you or are present at your school, or if you are in need of immediate assistance.

Please feel free to call one of us at 416-222-8282:

- Emmy Szekeres Milne  ext. 2356
- Mary Walker  ext. 2302
- Sonia Gallo  ext. 2327
- General Line  ext. 5314
- Emergency Line  ext. 2197

The emergency phone is also available for any urgent issues that may arise at your school. The Communications emergency phone line is: 416-222-8282 ext. 2197. We encourage you to call this number for emergency purposes during regular business hours. A staff member is available in our office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. In the event of an emergency after regular hours, you are welcome to call the Security Office at 416-512-3049 or my cell phone at XXXXXXXX.

We thank you for your continued cooperation and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

John Yan
Senior Coordinator of Communications, Public & Media Relations
416-229-5331
John.yan@tcdsb.org
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TCDSB COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC AND MEDIA RELATIONS GUIDELINES

- The Communications, Media and Public Relations Department, senior staff, Principals and department heads should co-operate where possible with the media in presenting information about school initiatives, programs or special events to the public.
- The Communications Department needs to be informed of all media contacts before statements or visits are arranged.
- The Communications Department shall assist, when necessary, in the information-sharing process.
- The Director of Education and the Chair of the Board are recognized as the official spokespersons for TCDSB.
- The Senior Coordinator of Communications serves as a first point of contact for media. The Senior Coordinator may seek out school and Board staff to assist in the delivery of a communications activity, and request their involvement in media contact.
- In times of crisis or stress, contact must be made with the appropriate superintendency.
- The Communications Department should also be informed of the incident or media contact.

Why is it important to have designated spokespeople?
- It ensures that media receive consistent key messaging.
- Media know who they need to contact for assistance with their stories.
- It ensures that the coverage is the most positive that it can be.

What issues should not be discussed with media?
- Items dealt with in private session at Board and Committee meetings.
- Any matter that is currently before the courts.
- Confidential personnel matters.
- Personal information about students, parents or staff (without consent).

PROCEDURES FOR GOOD NEWS STORIES

- The focus should always be on students, programs, services, staff and/or parents.
- Communication and co-operation within the school community (including volunteers, Catholic School Advisory Councils, parish priests, Trustees and TCDSB employees) should be emphasized.
- Of particular interest to the media are programs/activities that reflect a concern for the wider community such as charitable fund-raising activities and humanitarian causes, projects that reflect global concerns such as environmental issues, and new and innovative programs in the classroom.
- Outstanding achievements in academics, athletics, the arts and technology provide good material for photographs and feature articles.
- If the media can’t attend your event, they may still print a photograph or an article that is provided to them.
- Good news stories should be reported in advance (where possible) to the communications office. These can be communicated via email to commdept@tcdsb.org.
- Before a student can be filmed or photographed, and before personal information can be given to a member of the media, written parental permission must be granted. A sample release form is included in this booklet.
- Pertinent Board personnel (Director of Education, the Chair of the Board, local Superintendent of Education and local Trustee) should be notified of any special event at the school.
Crisis/stress stories are beyond the control of the Principal or the Board, and may involve the police, the fire department, boards of health or social service agencies. On these occasions, the following activities should occur, though they are not listed in any specific sequence:

- The appropriate school Superintendent must be informed immediately.
- The respective Superintendent or school Principal will inform the Communications Department.
- The Superintendent will report the crisis/stress incident/situation to the local Trustee and to the Director of Education.
- The Director of Education will report the incident to the Chair of the Board.
- Parents of TCDSB students involved in any crisis/stress situation must be advised. (However exceptions may be made in cases of suspected child abuse).
- School or department staff should be informed about the situation except where private, discrete or personal circumstances are involved.
- The Principal, the department head and/or Superintendent will work closely with the Communications Department to determine communications strategies (ie. correspondence, news release, media conference) including selection of Board media contact person. When matters of a highly confidential, political or sensitive nature are involved, the Director of Education or the Chair of the Board will automatically assume the role of Board spokesperson.
- The media contact person will describe the situation factually and candidly, keeping in mind the welfare and reputation of the Board, the school, staff and students.
- Personal information about students, parents or TCDSB staff members must never be disclosed without consent. The Young Offenders Act, Child Welfare Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), Education Act and other legal responsibilities restrict information sharing. If in doubt, check with the respective field Superintendent or the Coordinator of Communications, who will liaise with other Board personnel as required.
TCDSB INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
EMERGENCY Reporting Numbers
Please place in an accessible/visible area in the main office.

SCHOOL DIALS: 416-222-8282 followed by:
Communications: Ext. 2197
Superintendents Area: Ext. 2145 or 2190
Directors’ Offices: Ext. 2196

Note: Not able to leave a voice mail on emergency line extensions. Should the phone not be answered, continue to dial the other extensions available.

Emergencies Outside of Regular School/Office Hours:
- CEC Security (24/7): 416-512-3049
- Senior Coordinator of Communication Cell Number (24/7): 416-XXXXXX

Safety procedures to be reviewed regularly with staff and students as required.
- Fire Drills
- Emergency Exits
- Alternate/Evacuation Site
- Bomb Threat Code with Staff
- Lockdown (Hold and Secure, Shelter in Place) Procedures and Practices
- Appropriate Use and Correct Operation of Emergency Red Phone in School

Reportable incidents include but not limited to:
- Incident that is of safety concern to any student or staff (e.g. missing student)
- All urgent police activity in and outside the school
- Any and all emergency services called to the school or at the school.
- Media present at the school
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- All noteworthy incidents that require the support of resources from the Board and outside agencies.

*When in doubt, call us. We are here to support and assist you.*

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**WHAT TO DO WHEN A CRISIS ARISES**

**Principal's responsibilities**

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**Inform all relevant groups:**

- Inform your Superintendent and he/she will inform the Director of Education and local Trustee and Chair of the Board.
- Inform Coordinator of Communications.
- Contact key concerned groups such as employees, parents, crisis response team, fire, police, hospital, social service agencies and parish.

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**Outline the crisis:**

- Put together a fact sheet for internal use outlining details of crisis
- Provide fact sheet to spokesperson and Coordinator of Communications—including school name, address, Principal’s home telephone number or cellular telephone number, number of students and number of staff at the school.

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**Notifying staff and parents:**

- Remind employees that only the spokesperson is authorized to talk to the media.
- Consider sending a notice to parents that contains the same information that was released to the media.

↓

**Assigning tasks:**

- Set up a task force to deal with the crisis as quickly as possible.
- Relieve people from normal duties if required.

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**Managing the media:**

- Provide designated area for media to conduct interviews, close to, but not in, the office.
- Assign member of administrative team to assist in making arrangements for space and guiding
APPENDIX C

videographers and reporters to predetermined areas.
- Do not allow the media to film students, or to speak with students without parental permission.

WHAT TO DO WHEN MEDIA CALL

You receive a media call
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Clarify reporter's name, and name of the media outlet, ask for phone number and/or email address
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Find out what information they are looking for, and let them know that someone will call them back in a timely manner.
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Contact Communications (or Superintendent) for direction
↓

If it is a local story, you might be asked to respond
↓

The Director, Chair, Communications Department may respond or designate someone else to speak to the issue.
↓

Communications and/or other pertinent staff will assist you with key messages
↓

If reporter contacts you again, remind them that someone else from the Board will be in touch with them
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INTERVIEWS WITH THE MEDIA

Helpful tips:
- Always notify your Superintendent and the Coordinator of Communications before consenting to a media interview.
- Be sensitive to reporters’ deadlines and return calls promptly.
- Answer all reasonable requests for interviews, but allow yourself sufficient time to prepare.

Prior to the interview:
- Use the interview to discuss points/issues that you want to share/explain.
- Identify four or five key messages that you want to get across to the audience. During the interview, you want to keep coming back to these points.
- Consult with your immediate supervisor and the Coordinator of Communications to discuss strategies and areas of concern.
- Practise anticipated questions and answers.

During the interview:
- Speak in easily understandable terms.
- Be in control with short, direct answers. For radio and television, keep responses to 30 seconds or less.
- Correct misinformation immediately.
- Use illustrations or anecdotes to explain your topic.
- Use facts and figures if possible.
- Ask for clarification if the question is unclear.
- If you don’t have the answer, it is better to say, “I don’t have that information at this time” than to be evasive or give incorrect information. You can get back to the interviewer with the correct information later.
- Avoid the “what if” question. Don’t speculate and avoid being led by hypothetical questions.
- Provide reporters with as much information as possible about an incident so they in turn won’t be tempted to speculate.
- Avoid saying “no comment”. This can be interpreted that you are either uninformed or that you have something to hide.
- Avoid speaking “off the record” or “in confidence”. Say only what you are prepared to see in print.
- Be aware of your body language. Don’t nod your head while reporter is talking. This can be interpreted as agreement.
After the interview:

- Share with staff what you have told the media.
- Thank all those who assisted in handling the crisis.

**PROTOCOL FOR SPECIAL EVENTS**

The area Superintendent and local Trustee should always be invited to special events held at the school.

Depending on the nature of the event, schools may also wish to invite the Director of Education and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. Members of City Council, Provincial and Federal Parliament could also be included on the guest list.

**Policy S.02** ([http://www.tcdsb.org/policyregister/S02.html](http://www.tcdsb.org/policyregister/S02.html)) School Events Communications and Invitee Protocols and **Policy S.08** ([http://www.tcdsb.on.ca/policyregister/S08.html](http://www.tcdsb.on.ca/policyregister/S08.html)) Official Openings and Solemn Blessings may provide some guidance with respect to planning special events.

**School Events Communications and Invitee Protocols S.02**

**Policy:** As a Catholic Community, we seek to share our good news and school celebrations with our local community.

**Regulations:**

The following procedure shall be adopted with respect to school events and celebrations of significance:

1. Where appropriate, the Principal/designate should notify the Communications Department of the Board of the date, time and details of such event. The Communications Department will report this in its listing of school events taking place.

2. In agreement with the principal, a media release will be prepared and sent out to appropriate local print, television and radio outlets, city councillors, trustees and senior board officials by the Communications Department.

3. The area Superintendent and local Trustee should always be invited to special events held at the school. Where a politician has been invited into a school the Superintendent and Trustee must be invited. The Catholic School Advisory Chair and/or Vice Chair and local Parish priests should also be notified and invited to special school events.

4. Depending on the nature of the event, schools may also wish to invite the Director of Education, Deputy Director(s), the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. Local City Councillor, Provincial
MPP and Federal MP, local community representatives and all applicable current and ex-board senior staff could also be included on the guest list.

**PROMOTING YOUR SCHOOL**

**School Newsletters**
The majority of TCDSB schools are already producing monthly newsletters to promote staff, student and school achievements and activities, as well as to remind readers of upcoming events. These are valuable tools for communicating with the parent community, and for sharing news among your students and staff.

With the growing popularity of sharing newsletters via the board or school website, it is important to ensure that permission forms are obtained from parents prior to posting the full name of students, their pictures or their personal work in the school’s newsletters.

Schools are encouraged to contact their local parish(es) for additional distribution of school newsletters through the church. By sharing school news with your parish community, Catholics who do not have children in your school will be kept informed about your programs and services, as well as the many achievements of staff and students.

The Communications Department appreciates receiving copies of these newsletters. Please remember to keep the department on your distribution list.

Your school’s newsletter should include the trustee template, the TCDSB logo, as well as key information about the school: name and phone number of local trustee, name and phone number of principal, superintendent and possibly the CSAC Chair, as well as the name of the parish and the parish phone number. You may also wish to include contact information for after-school programs or daycares operating in your school.

"It Starts in the Schools"
Each month, items received by the Communications Department are compiled into a listing ("It Starts in the Schools"), which is sent to schools, Trustees, department heads, the media, city councillors and members of provincial parliament, and posted on the Board’s website as well as distributed to E-News subscribers via email. The focus is on school activities, staff and student achievements.

The publication will be distributed during the first week of each month from October through June. Since the publication is widely distributed, it is conceivable that media or local dignitaries may wish to attend some of these events. It is advisable to ensure that the necessary media release forms have been signed by staff, students and parents participating in any special event that is reported for inclusion in “It Starts in the Schools”.

**The Director's Bulletin**
The Director’s Bulletin is another vehicle for informing fellow staff members of upcoming educational opportunities, projects and special events. There is a section dedicated to “Sharing our good news” which highlights recent articles and photographs that have been published by newspapers/magazines or online about our schools and students. Items to be included in the Bulletin should be vetted through the appropriate department head or Superintendent. The deadline for submissions is each Wednesday at 12 noon.
The website
School news is also highlighted on our board’s website at www.tcdsb.org. Photographs and information can be posted on a regular basis to your school’s webpage. Please send your submissions to webmaster@tcdsb.org.

E_News
Subscribers to this free news service receive regular updates about news and information around the Board. To subscribe, click on the E-News icon on the homepage of the board’s website.

Twitter
Several times daily, TCDSB’s twitter followers receive updates about board meetings, urgent bulletins and good news and events from around the board.

INFORMATION RELEASE FORM

I give my consent to the Toronto Catholic District School Board to use the following information for promotion of TCDSB students, staff, programs, schools or the Board as a whole, through TCDSB publications (including brochures and advertising), Board and school newsletters, the Board’s website and the outside (print or electronic) media.

(Please check the appropriate boxes):

For those 18 years of age or older:  
☐ My photograph/video footage of me  
☐ My name  
☐ My age  
☐ The name of my school  
☐ My grade level

To be completed by parent or guardian for those under 18 years of age:

☐ My child’s photograph/image/video footage of my child  
☐ My child’s name  
☐ My child’s age  
☐ The name of my child’s school  
☐ My child’s grade level

____________________________________  
Student's name

____________________________________  
Name of parent/guardian

____________________________________  
Student's signature

____________________________________  
Signature of parent/guardian

____________________________________  
Date

____________________________________  
Date

This personal information is collected under the authority of the Education Act. Any questions concerning this form should be directed to the school Principal.
APPENDIX C

Because some parents may not feel comfortable signing a standard release form at the start of the year, the following release letter and accompanying form are also provided. These could be used in preparation for special events at the school where media might be expected to attend.

SAMPLE RELEASE LETTER

Replace underlined portions with applicable information

St. Saint Catholic School
1 First Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M1M 1M1
(416) 555-5555

December 10, 2010

Dear Parent:

The CBC Television Network would like to visit the grade 4 classroom at our school on December 15, 2010. A camera crew will be filming in the classroom during a presentation on recycling beginning at 10:00 a.m. This footage is expected to be used as part of a CBC special on environmental education which is scheduled to air in late January.

The CBC would like to have all the children in the class participate in the filming. Please indicate whether or not you wish your child to appear on camera by completing the attached form and returning the form to the school office by no later than 3:30 p.m. on December 14th. Alternate activities will be arranged for students who do not participate in the filming.

If you are unable to return the form by December 14th, it will be assumed that you do not wish your child to participate in this media event.

If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 555-5555.

Sincerely,

Joan Johnson
Principal

cc. Superintendent
Trustee
APPENDIX C

att.
School Principals and department heads are reminded that the names of all Toronto Catholic District School Board Trustees should be published in all printed material that is distributed by TCDSB schools and would extend to newsletters, advertisements and brochures.

For a digital copy of the template, please email commdept@tcdsb.org.
The *Communications Handbook* is produced by the Communications, Media and Public Relations Department of the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

Spring 2012

For additional copies, call 416-222-8282, extension 5314.

For assistance with planning a media activity, or responding to a media crisis situation, please contact 416-222-8282, extension 5314.