		<b>Commission scolaire English-Montréal</b> <hr/> <b>English Montreal School Board</b>
<b>POLICY:</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MEDIA</b>	<b>CODE: DG-22</b>
<b>Origin:</b>	General Directorate	
<b>Authority:</b>	Resolution #03-10-15-7.2	
<b>Amendment:</b>		
<b>Reference(s):</b>		

### Rationale

As a public institution, the English Montreal School Board is frequently approached by the print and broadcast media for information on educational issues of interest or concern to the public. The present policy provides a framework and orientations for members of staff who may be designated to respond to such requests.

### Policy Statement

The English Montreal School Board is committed to providing its stakeholders and the public at large with accurate and up-to-date information, while at the same time safeguarding their right to privacy and confidentiality. To this end, it promotes a collaborative working relationship and open communication in its dealings with the print and broadcast media.

### Field of Application

This policy applies to all members of staff - senior management, Board and school/centre administrators, professionals, and teachers - who may be designated to communicate with the media.


### Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure informed, consistent and proactive practices by members of staff in their communications with the media.

## Principles

Communications with the media shall be guided by the following elements:

1. **Transparency:** The Board shall be transparent in its communications with the public by providing clear and accurate information in response to inquiries regarding the operations of its schools and centres.
2. **Proactive Communication:** In the interests of good publicity, the Board shall be proactive in its communications with the media by providing information on its accomplishments, successes and special events.
3. **Support and Training:** The Board shall ensure that members of staff who may be designated to respond to media requests have the appropriate support and training to do so.

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<b>PROCEDURE:</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MEDIA</b>	<b>CODE: DG-22.P</b>
<b>Origin:</b>	General Directorate	
<b>Authority:</b>		
<b>Amendment:</b>		
<b>Reference(s):</b>		

## PURPOSE

The following guidelines identify the roles, responsibilities and procedures to follow for members of staff in their communications with the media.

## ROLES: SPOKESPERSONS

The Chairman, the Director General and the Communications and Marketing Specialist are the official spokespersons for the Board.

The Chairman, or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairman or Acting Chairman, and the Director General, or in his/her absence, the Office of the Deputy Director General, may delegate this responsibility by designating a specific spokesperson.

## PROCEDURES

### Inquiries to Head Office

1. Reporters must first contact the Communications and Marketing Division, which will screen their request and determine who the appropriate respondent should be.
2. After first consulting with the Communications and Marketing Division, Directors of Departments, Regional Directors/and or the Director of Adult Education and Vocational Services can be delegated by the Director General to give interviews on existing policies or issues that are related to their 'dossiers'. They can also assign and brief the appropriate staff person or the Communications and Marketing Specialist to do so.

### Inquiries to Schools and Centres

1. If the media inquiry concerns a potentially controversial subject, the Principal/Centre Director shall confer with the Communications and Marketing Division and the Regional Director and/or Director of Adult Education and Vocational Services in order to obtain guidance before responding.
2. The Principal/Centre Director may respond directly when the item in question is related to the school or centre and does not involve any matter which has yet to become Board policy.
3. The Principal/Centre Director shall ensure that he/she has all the relevant information when the subject concerns existing Board policy.

### **Crisis Management Procedures**

1. The Director General shall be informed immediately if a crisis develops in a department or at a particular school or centre. Should this be the case, the Director General will establish a Crisis Management Team (CMT). The main objective of the CMT is to resolve the crisis and ensure that the situation is under control.
2. The CMT shall consist of the Director General, the Office of the Deputy Director General and the Communications and Marketing Division. Depending upon the issue, a Department Head, a Regional Director/and or the Director of Adult Education and Vocational Services and a Principal/Centre Director may be included in the process. If the matter pertains to a school, every effort shall be made to consult with the Central Parents' Committee and the Commissioner of the ward. The Director General may also call upon any other individual deemed appropriate.
3. The CMT shall develop a communications plan, the purpose of which is to ensure transparency and to disseminate clear, accurate, consistent and timely information that is free from ambiguity and potential harm.
4. The CMT shall meet in advance of important public meetings to review any potential problems/controversies, which might arise.
5. A member of the team shall be designated by the Director General to handle all media inquiries.
6. In the event of an ongoing crisis, periodic news briefings will be necessary.

## **Interview Preparation and Staff Training**

The Communications and Marketing Division shall support EMSB staff by:

1. Speaking to the journalist before the interview takes place in order to clarify the topic and issues to be covered.
2. Reviewing the interview scenario with the employee beforehand to ensure that all the correct information is available.
3. Organizing media training and sensitization sessions for individuals or groups.

## **Press Conferences**

1. The Chairman of the Board, the Director General, the Office of the Deputy Director General, the Regional Director or the Director of Adult Education and Vocational Services are the only people authorized to approve the scheduling of press conferences at the Administration Building or at a school/centre facility.
2. Press conferences are to be held only if a press release or direct media contact is deemed insufficient.
3. The Communications and Marketing Division shall assist in the preparation of a press conference.

## **Special Events at Schools/Centres**

1. Information on coming events or special activities in schools/centres should be sent by the Principal/Centre Director to the Communications and Marketing Division, with as much advance notice as possible.
2. Upon request of the Principal/Centre Director, the Communications and Marketing Division shall help to solicit media coverage for the event.
3. Schools/centres may contact the media on their own to publicize local events and programs.

## **Parental Consent**

Media often wish to photograph or interview students. Schools occasionally videotape, record and photograph students for school awards, special recognition, yearbooks, video projects, sporting events or media coverage.

1. For children under the age of 18, parental consent is necessary. The EMSB has a form for this purpose (see Appendix A). The form also includes a clause releasing the school and the Board from any liability or damages resulting from or connected with the publication of such work.
2. These forms shall be sent home by the principal at the beginning of each school year, to be returned to the school and kept on record throughout the year.
3. Students for whom consent is not provided should be kept away from situations involving the media.
4. If a special event attracting the media is to take place at the school, a notification from the principal to parents is recommended.

### **Letters to the Editor and Opinion Pieces**

1. A letter to the editor or an opinion piece to a newspaper on issues related to education written by a staff member of the EMSB shall first be sent to the Communications and Marketing Division and approved by the Director General, the Office of the Deputy Director General, the Regional Director/and or the Director of Adult Education and Vocational Services. This does not apply to writings of a personal nature.
2. The following recommendations will improve the likelihood of publication:
  - a. Letters should be typed, signed and contain the telephone number where the writer can be reached either during the day or the evening. They should be no longer than three (3) paragraphs.
  - b. Opinion pieces should be current, of interest to the readership in the paper's distribution area, and between 500 and 700 words each.



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**APPENDIX A**

**Consent to Photograph, Record, Video Students and Publish, Display, Distribute or Broadcast Students' Image or Work and Assign Student Email**

During the course of the school year, students at \_\_\_\_\_ School are occasionally videotaped, recorded and or photographed for a variety of reasons, including school awards, special recognition, yearbooks, video projects and news programming. The student's name, school and grade may accompany such photographs, videos and web pages.

Some of these photographs / video images are published, displayed, distributed or broadcast outside of the school network and via Social Media. In these cases the School Board is required to obtain your consent as provided below.

Also, during the school year, an EMSB email address may be assigned to a student.

Please fill in the requested information and check either 'Yes' or 'No' below to indicate whether you wish to give your consent or not.

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Room:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby release the school and the School Board from any liability or damages resulting from or connected with:**

**The photographing, recording or video of a student:** Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

**The publishing, displaying, distribution or broadcasting of image/work:** Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

**The assignment of an EMSB email address:** Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent / Guardian / Adult Student

Please return this signed form to the Principal by: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

If you have any questions, please call the Principal at: \_\_\_\_\_