Medicine Hat Public School Division
601-1st Avenue SW, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 4Y7 | Phone 403.528.6700 | Fax 403.529.5339 | www.mhpsd.ca

MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"

SECTION 500 – Personnel and Employee Relations

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: MEDIA RELATIONS

PROCEDURE CODE:	*530 AP 007*
Policy Reference: 530 – Communications and Technology	

OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE

Background:

The division believes in the proactive dissemination of information and supports the right of the media to make inquiries regarding MHPSD operations.

Media Relations:

Activities that are coordinated by the communications coordinator through the direction of the superintendent to assist with the accuracy and consistency of information.
The administration and staff members will work with media personnel in a positive, cooperative manner to ensure accurate and timely information is provided for their use.

PROCEDURE

1. All requests from media personnel to gather information from the MHPSD will be made through, and approved by, the communications coordinator as a representative of the superintendent's office.
2. The communications coordinator will:
   2.1. Advise on media relations and communications matters.
   2.2. Prepare materials such as statements, news releases and background materials required by the board chair, superintendent, or designate.
   2.3. Distribute materials after approval by the superintendent.
   2.4. Act as the information officer in emergency response situations.
   2.5. Develop a communication plan and release statements concerning the division, in consultation with the superintendent.
3. Either the board chair or the superintendent will speak as the official spokesperson for MHPSD, except for instances where the superintendent has delegated this role to another

individual or group. Information requested that has a division focus will be provided or approved by the Superintendent or designate.

4. School focused media requests will be organized through the communications coordinator as designated by the superintendent.
   4.1. The principal (or an individual or group designated by the principal) will:
      4.1.1. Act as the primary spokesperson on school focused matters. Where appropriate, the principal may delegate a staff member or student (where all POPA regulations are considered) to speak with the media.
      4.1.2. Consult with or include the communications coordinator on the release of all school focused information and releases to the media. If the principal chooses to delegate this task to a staff member, they are to consult with or inform the communications coordinator prior to making contact with the media.
         - Copies of all public service materials (print or audio/visual) released to the media shall be sent to the communications coordinator for information. Any such information is to comply with Canadian Press Style Guide and division standards.
         - Public Events: In accordance with the Protection of Privacy Act (POPA) , when a media notice is issued for an event, or a general invitation is posted online, it is considered public and any person in attendance may take photographs and publish publicly without first obtaining consent.
         - Non-public events: Parental consent must be obtained before allowing those outside the school, including parents, visitors, or media, to take photographs of students in classrooms and at non-public events. *Consent is only required when individual students are identifiable in the pictures.
         - An employee who receives an inquiry from the media is to contact their school principal (principal will contact the communications coordinator) prior to responding.
      4.1.3. Consult with the communications coordinator to provide guidance and direction to staff members who are required to speak with the media.
      4.1.4. Include the communications coordinator in all requests made to the media.
      4.1.5. Public Athletic Events:
         - Members of the media are welcome to attend athletic events and interview teachers, coaches and players prior to, during or after the game about game related activity.
         - Requests for interviews related to athletics that are not connected to a public event require approval from the communications coordinator.

- With administration, coaches are welcome to contact the media to arrange interviews; consultation with the communications coordinator is required.

5. The media is welcome to attend all public events including but not limited to school athletic events, concerts, performances, public presentations, etc.
6. Communications guidelines related to emergency response situations follow the Division Emergency Response Plan through Hour Zero.
7. Media representatives shall not be allowed to disrupt the normal operation of the division central office, a school, or a class for the sole purpose of information gathering. This includes interviewing division employees and/or students during the regular school day.
   7.1. Media representatives may be asked by the principal or division staff to leave the premises or grounds where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the students and staff to do so.

REFERENCES

Protection of Privacy Act

Approved: January 18, 2005
Revised: May 11, 2026