

RELATIONS WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

The news media represents public interest in reporting information concerning the Dickinson School District. It is therefore in the interests of both the education community and the citizen-taxpayers of Dickinson schools that there is open communications with the news media.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations to ensure that media access to District schools is not unduly disruptive of the educational environment and complies with board policies and District goals.

All representatives of the media shall be given equal access to information about the schools. There shall be no exclusive releases.

Media Liaisons

The District Community Relations Coordinator will be the District liaison with the public news media, often with the Superintendent serving as the spokesperson. All contacts and releases concerning District policies and regulations, matters of district-wide interest, or potentially controversial topics will be handled or cleared by the District Community Relations Coordinator. The goal of the District is to always provide the media with the best content expert available to speak on the matter at hand.

Privacy

When the news media are invited into a school facility by a District staff member, every effort will be made to protect students' personal information. While the District may have regulations governing and limiting media access to schools, information and images obtained by the media about/of regular education students are outside the District's ability to control and do not require parental permission to broadcast or print. Parents who do not want their student interviewed or photographed by the media shall direct their student accordingly. This portion of policy does not apply to special education students. The District shall obtain parental consent before granting the media access to special education students.

The District shall establish rules regarding interviews of minors by the news media.

Staff Media Relations

When requested by the District Community Relations Coordinator and authorized by the Superintendent or building principal, staff members may respond in their official capacity to questions from the news media.

Speech made in a District employee's official capacity is governed by the District's policy on employee speech.

Access

Any request to interview, film, videotape, photograph, or otherwise record students or District personnel on District property or at a school-sponsored event shall be submitted to the District Community Relations Coordinator for approval. Requests may be made by telephone or in writing, must include specific details regarding the purpose and scope of

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the request, and should be submitted a reasonable time in advance, giving the District ample time to assess the request and, in the event that the request is approved, notify relevant staff, students, and parents as deemed necessary.

The District reserves the right to grant or deny any request for access to school(s) from the news media. Access will not be denied in an attempt to suppress a viewpoint but may be denied when access would:

1. Compromise the safety of students or staff;
2. Disrupt the educational environment, disrupt District operations, and/or impede the ability of staff to perform their duties;
3. Breach confidentiality;
4. Be overly demanding on District resources.

When an access request from the news media is denied, a District spokesperson may be made available for comment on the topic that news media had requested to cover.

In the event that an access request is approved, the requesting news agency shall receive notice of any restrictions from the District Community Relations Coordinator, principal or program director related to access to students or staff and/or videotaping/recording/photographing. Such restrictions shall be developed on a case-by-case basis but shall not be made in an attempt to suppress a viewpoint. The news agency shall agree to these restrictions as a condition of access. Further:

1. News media representatives must register in the school's main office before proceeding to other areas of the school building. Upon check-in, the building principal shall assign an escort to the news media representative(s), who shall remain with the media in the duration of their stay on school property.
2. The news media shall receive notice of and will be required to abide by all policies and regulations related to visitors in schools with the exception of rules prohibiting visitors from videotaping, recording, or photographing students/staff. The media will be bound by a separate set of rules related to videotaping, recording, and photographing as delineated above.
3. When an interview by the media of a minor on school property or at a school-sponsored event is approved, the reporter shall identify him/herself to the minor, relay the purpose of the interview, and make the minor fully aware of what they are consenting to before beginning the interview.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, media requests to access students and/or staff on school property and at school-sponsored events shall be denied. The Superintendent shall serve as the District spokesperson and shall make themselves available for comment as soon as practicable.

Violations

Violations of school policies/regulations or behavior that is disruptive may result in a request for such individuals to leave school property. Refusal to leave school property when asked will be deemed to be a willful disturbance of school operations, and the

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District will contact law enforcement to assist with removing the violator from school property or the school-sponsored event.

Complementary Documents

- DEBF, Employee Speech
- FGA, Student Education Records and Privacy
- KBA-BR1, Relations with the News Media Regulations
- KBA-AR, Sports and Special Events Media Coverage

End of Dickinson Public School District #1 Policy KBA..... Amended: 01/11/21