YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

BOARD POLICY	
Policy Section **Governance/Board**	*Policy Number* **103**
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June 17, 2014	**June 17, 2014**

POLICY TITLE: COMMUNICATION: PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. PURPOSE

The York Catholic District School Board recognizes the key role of effective communication in supporting the Board's mission to educate and inspire all students to reach their full potential in a safe and caring environment. The Board has a responsibility to engage in proactive, timely and open communication with all of its stakeholders to strengthen relationships, promote programs and activities of the Board and to celebrate the values of Catholic education. Moreover, the York Catholic District School Board is responsible for providing information and communications that are barrier-free and accessible in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the regulations supporting this Act.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board to encourage, promote and maintain open, accessible, timely and transparent communication with both its internal and external stakeholders (students, parents, staff, trustees, parishes, community and education partners and members of the media); that is clear, accurate and supportive of the Board's mission to provide quality Catholic education in unique, faith-based, learning environments.

3. PARAMETERS

3.1 Communication between the Board and its stakeholders shall celebrate the value of Catholic education.

3.2 Communication, including communication disseminated through Social Media (Twitter) shall strengthen relationships, support, promote and increase awareness of the York Catholic District School Board's programs, services, successes and accomplishments including, but not limited to, school openings and blessings, messages to the community, synervoice messages, special events and media relations.

3.3 On an annual basis, the Superintendent of Education: School Leadership will meet with the Trustee(s) to discuss individual Trustee(s) needs, establish preferred communication methods and ensure compliance of such methods.

3.4 Communication between the Board and its stakeholders shall contain accurate information that is accessible, timely, clear and transparent.

3.5 The Board shall establish and maintain positive relationships with media, respond to media requests in a timely manner and proactively promote programs, services, activities and initiatives of the Board and its schools.

3.6 Upon request, and in accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IAS) of Ontario,* the Board shall ensure the website is maintained with accurate and up-to-date information, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports or arrange for the provision of a comparable resource for persons with disabilities.

3.7 The Multilingual Services Department shall assist Board/School Staff in communicating with parents/guardians through the provision of or arrangement for translated materials where English is a second language or English proficiency is limited.

3.8 The Board shall maintain confidentiality and privacy with respect to staff matters in accordance with legislative requirements contained within *Employment Standards Act, Occupational Health & Safety Act, Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Chair of the Board

4.1.1 To be the official spokesperson for the Board when addressing the media on all matters pertaining to Board budget, labour relations and policy decisions.

4.2 Director of Education

4.2.1 To be the official spokesperson for the Board on administrative or pedagogical operations.

4.2.2 To oversee compliance of the Communications Policy.

4.2.3 To ensure the Board of Trustees are informed on matters requiring attention or sensitivity.

4.2.4 To ensure Trustees are kept informed of key messaging.

4.3 Communications Department

4.3.1 To develop and implement communication plans and strategies in support of the York Catholic District School Board's priorities and objectives, while adhering to the Board's *Visual Identity and Branding Manual.*

4.3.2 To support the communication needs of the Board of Trustees.

4.3.3 To oversee all communication activities as determined by the Director of Education.

4.4 Senior Administration

4.4.1 To notify the Director of Education, the Communications Department and/or local Trustee of any situation/incident that they believe is of concern.

4.4.2 To be the official spokesperson on Board programs or school issues as directed by the Director of Education or Communications Manager.

4.5 Principals

4.5.1 To notify the Communications Department of all media requests received directly at the school prior to providing response.

4.5.2 To contact the appropriate Superintendent and Communications Department regarding sensitive and/or controversial matters.

4.5.3 To share school information and positive news stories with media, if appropriate, upon consultation with and assistance from the Communications Department.

4.5.4 To extend an invitation to the Director of Education and local Trustee(s) when there is an opportunity for the inclusion of a message and/or letter of congratulations in a school program/publication.

4.5.5 To be the official spokesperson for the school.

4.6 Employees

4.6.1 To refer sensitive matters to their immediate supervisor for further action and/or response.

4.6.2 The supervisor shall inform the appropriate Superintendent and the Communications Department of any situation/incident that is of concern.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 Barriers to Accessibility

Accessibility Standards address issues that pose major barriers for people with disabilities. A barrier could be a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

5.2 Employee

Any individual hired by the York Catholic District School Board to perform services in exchange for a salary or an hourly wage on a casual, temporary or permanent basis.

5.3 External Stakeholders

A person, group of people or an organization that holds a vested interest in the school community, including, but not limited to:

5.3.1 All levels of Government
5.3.2 Community Members
5.3.3 Education partners/organizations
5.3.4 Ministry of Education
5.3.5 Media

5.4 Internal Stakeholders

A person, group of people or an organization that holds a vested interest in the school community, including, but not limited to:

5.4.1 Parents
5.4.2 Parishes
5.4.3 School Administrators
5.4.4 Senior Administrators
5.4.5 Staff (School, Centrally assigned and/or Contract)
5.4.6 Students
5.4.7 Trustees

5.5 Media

The means of communication to the public through various mediums: radio, television, newspapers, magazines or blogs that reach or influence people widely.

5.6 Social Media

Encompasses software, applications, e-mail, and web sites, which enable users to interact, create and exchange information online.

6. CROSS REFERENCES

YCDSB Policy 110 Communications: Trustee/Administration
YCDSB Policy 317 Electronic Communications and Social Media
YCDSB Policy 601 Accessibility Standards for Customer Services
YCDSB Policy 609 Accessibility Standards for Information and Communication
YCDSB Policy 702 Solemn Blessing and Official Opening of New Schools & Additions
YCDSB *Visual Identity and Branding Manual*, 2012
Employment Standards Act, 2000
Integrated Accessibility Standard, Ontario Regulation 191/11
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter M.56
Occupational Health & Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.0.1
Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, S.O. 1997

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