



**COMMUNICATIONS POLICY FOR RELATIONS WITH THE MEDIA  
& STAFF & GOVERNOR COMMUNICATIONS**

**1 GENERAL**

- 1.1 This policy has been adopted by the Governing Body of Redland Green School and is designed to ensure that the school benefits as far as possible from a positive relationship with the media: the press; national and local radio and television.
- 1.2 Redland Green School believes that a positive image in the media builds confidence in the school among parents, carers and other stakeholders and reinforces the benefits of teaching and learning in the school.
- 1.3 The school believes that, in general, good relations with the media are of mutual benefit and believes that members of the school community should act to promote this.
- 1.4 This policy gives guidance to members of the school community on contact with the media.
- 1.5 The school will always offer parents and carers the opportunity to withdraw their permission for their child to feature in a news story.

**2 PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 The school will communicate with the media only through authorised spokespersons. Governors are expected to act in accordance with the principle of corporate responsibility. When communicating with the media they should not identify themselves as school Governors. Only the Chair, or a Governor authorised by the Chair or by the Governing Body as a whole, may speak for the Governing Body.
- 2.2 Staff are bound by their contractual duty of loyalty to the school. The Headteacher will be the contact with the media; in her absence she will authorise a member of staff to take this role.
- 2.3 Where a story features the work of a particular teacher, that teacher will discuss the story with the Headteacher before any interview or statement.

**NB None of these rules will operate unlawfully in contradiction of the rights of public disclosure of illegality.**

- 2.4 Subject to the above, the policy of Redland Green School is to make stories about the school as freely available as possible.
- 2.5 The school will seek to generate and feed stories to the media. Staff are responsible for identifying possible positive news stories and bringing them to the attention of the Headteacher for approval. No member of staff may contact the press or media directly.
- 2.6 Any contact from the press or media must be directed to the Headteacher. The school will always take press and media enquiries seriously. 'No comment' is not an acceptable response to an enquiry. A holding statement of 'I'll get back to you' or 'someone from the school will be in contact with you' establishes the school's control over communications. The Headteacher must ensure a response is actioned.
- 2.7 Once a story is approved, the Headteacher will consult with staff to produce a Press Release, organise photographs and obtain parent permission. The Local Authority's Schools' Media Support Officer (SMSO) will be consulted and will receive the same Press Release as the media.

- 2.8 Local news stories may be sent to agencies and national media may be interested in following a story up. The Headteacher will consult with the SMSO in deciding whether to send a story to the national media.
- 2.9 The Headteacher is responsible for delegating responsibility for: greeting interviewers and photographers; organising and preparing the students; and supporting staff in interviews. The Local Authority's SMSO and Press Officer will be consulted by the Headteacher and their support may be utilised.

### **3 NEGATIVE NEWS STORIES**

- 3.1 There will be occasions where negative news stories reach the media and these will be followed up by the school. The general position of the school is that we will assist the media as long as this does not damage the school. The Headteacher will consult with the SMSO and the LA Press Officer for advice and support.
- 3.2 The school has no obligation to co-operate by allowing photographers on site or allowing interviews. The police will be contacted to help control any excessive intrusion by the media. The Press Council will be contacted to clarify their code of conduct if necessary.
- 3.3 A key crisis team will be identified by the Headteacher. The team of staff will be given lesson cover if needed and will meet as soon as possible to ensure that a coherent and consistent story line is worked out both in detail and in headline terms.
- 3.4 The Headteacher will consult with the LA Press Officer and will decide on who speaks to the media. In the case of a major incident the Headteacher and staff members have key responsibilities towards students, staff and parents. In this type of extreme situation, a spokesperson will be nominated to keep the press up to date. The most appropriate spokesperson is likely to be the Chair of Governors or an LA Officer.
- 3.5 All statements and interview content will aim to provide facts and not to speculate. If it is genuinely impossible to say anything at the beginning of media enquiries, then a deadline will be given for a prepared and agreed written statement to be released. Deadlines will always be met and 'no comment' will not be considered an acceptable statement.

### **4 INFORMATION ON INCIDENTS**

- 4.1 The Chair of Governors will receive notification from the Headteacher regarding all school incidents. The Chair of Governors, with advice from the Headteacher, will decide on the disclosure of information to the school Governors and the level of that disclosure.

### **5 APPEALS**

- 5.1 The full details of an incident may be withheld from identified Governors to ensure uncompromised and fair appeals can be held with panel representatives of the Governing Body.

### **6 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNORS**

- 6.1 Information from each governing Committee should normally remain between members of each Committee until action is agreed and policy eventually made.

Agreed by Staff	Agreed by Pupils	Agreed by Governors	Review Schedule	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed
N/A	N/A	06 MAR 2007	3 YEARS	30 MAR 2010	21 FEB 2013	16 JUN 2016	
Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed