

Yukon Education**Policy Subject: Media Inquires****Date Passed: December 4, 2003****Policy No. 1009****Cross Reference:**

General Administration Manual:

- Policy 1.3 Communications
- Policy 1.4 Public Speaking and Writing for Publication

The Department of Education is committed to communicating to its partners and the public in a clear, consistent and timely manner.

Procedures and Guidelines:***Role of the Communications Coordinator:***

- 2 The Communications Coordinator, Clea Ainsworth, is the main contact for media relations and communications activities. She can be reached at 393-7102, or at clea.ainsworth@gov.yk.ca.
- 2 The Communications Coordinator works closely with the senior management team and the minister's office to coordinate messages, communication activities and responses to media inquiries in order to ensure that stakeholders and the public are getting accurate, clear and consistent information about department activities and programs.

Requests from the Media:

1. If the media contacts you for information or interviews, ask the reporter what it is they want to know, take down their contact information, and advise the Communications Coordinator.

The Department will be pleased to help you with your request. Please give me your name and number, and Clea Ainsworth, our Communications Coordinator, will get back to you on this.

1. If the reporter is asking for information that you would normally provide to any member of the public, please provide them with that information and advise the Communications Coordinator.

2. When providing public information to the reporter, be clear and certain that you are giving factual information, and are not being asked for an opinion or to state a position of the department. Make this clear to the reporter:

I can give you the information that you are looking for. Please be aware that I am giving you public information, and that I do not wish to be quoted or attributed. If you are looking for a statement from the department, please contact our Communications Coordinator.

3. Refer the reporter to the Communications Coordinator if:
 - you know this information is related to a politically sensitive or controversial topic,
 - you are unsure about the nature of the reporter's request,
 - you are simply uncomfortable giving information to the reporter,

Communications activities

1. Contact the Communications Coordinator for assistance with all communications activities including communications plans, news releases, advertising, publications, speeches or presentations, etc.
2. Yukon Government Communications Policy (GAM section 1.3) requires that all communication with the public go through an approval process. This helps us ensure that the information we provide is accurate, clear, consistent, and reflects our objectives and priorities.

Additional considerations for schools

1. The above statements apply to all Department of Education employees, including teachers and principals. However, additional considerations apply at the school level.
2. Teachers and other school staff should refer media inquiries to their administrator, who should then apply the above guidelines and determine how to handle the request.
3. Yukon Government Policy 1.4 *Public Speaking and Writing for Publication* provides further guidance for employees who receive invitations to speak in public or write for publication. Policy 1.4 also states that a Minister or Deputy Minister may provide prior clearance for employees to respond to requests from the media.
4. In accordance with Policy 1.4 School Administrators have prior clearance to promote school-based "good news" activities to the media directly, and are encouraged to do so. Examples include field trips, classroom projects, cultural camps, fund-raisers, community activities, and other similar activities.

5. It is important to note that this prior clearance does not apply topics that are politically sensitive, state, imply, or reflect a department or government position and involve sensitive issues that relate to a number of schools.
6. If you are unsure, or if you would like assistance or advice on how to promote your activity, please contact the Communications Coordinator.

School Emergencies, Accidents, Fires or other Critical Events.

1. When an accident, fire or other critical event occurs and the school is involved, the parents and the public need to know immediately that the situation is being dealt with in a timely and professional manner. The Principal, being on site, is likely to be the person who can best assure the media and the public that the students are safe, and to advise of any changes to the regular routine during a school emergency until the Communications Coordinator is available.
2. Principals are advised to prepare for the occurrence of school emergencies by periodically reviewing the school's copy of the Justice Institute of B.C. Manual *Enhancing School Safety* and the School Administrators binder.