

COMMUNITY RELATIONS: Communication with the Public

MEDIA RELATIONS AND Publications, [Radio,] EVENTS, Television, and Web Site

[A. System Level

1. Information originating from system level divisions, departments, and offices shall be approved by the Office of Communications. All school personnel are urged to suggest information to be released to the public, but such releases must be channeled through the Office of Communications to avoid duplication of information to the public and to maintain a file of communications with the public. Failure to comply with this rule will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
2. The Office of Communications will employ the rules and regulations set forth below in Section B, numbers 4-14.

B. Individual Schools

1. It is the responsibility of the principal to supervise all press, radio, television, and web site communications and publications originating within the individual schools. While the principal must retain the ultimate responsibility in this area, a designee may be assigned this responsibility.
2. Employees and students who act as representatives of the school shall obtain prior permission of the principal or designee when communicating information to the public about the school.
3. Principals shall designate an employee (webmaster) to coordinate and monitor electronic publications, such as a school web site. No student may be assigned this responsibility. The webmaster shall comply with the terms and conditions of the *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Employees* (Rule 4006, Form A).

The webmaster shall comply with the *Webmaster Roles and Responsibilities* (Rule 4006, Form B) and indicate their understanding of the terms and conditions by signing the *Webmaster Agreement* (Rule 4006, Form B).

4. All communications and publications shall comply with the terms and conditions of the *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Employees* and the *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Students* (Rule 6166, Form A). Communications and publications shall not include abusive, harassing, libelous, obscene, offensive, profane, pornographic, threatening, sexually explicit, or illegal material.
5. Employees and students shall comply with Superintendent's Rule 1110.1, Copyright and Intellectual Property, when communicating with the public.
6. Permission shall be obtained from the parent/guardian prior to the student appearing in a production for distribution/telecast over the Baltimore County Public Schools' cable Education Channel to relinquish all parent/guardian or student monetary claims or royalties upon Baltimore County Public Schools. Use the *Parent/Guardian/Student Consent and Release Agreement for [the] AN Education Channel Production* form (Rule 6166, Form C) for this purpose. Programs for which royalties cannot be collected are not covered under this rule.
7. The Baltimore County Public Schools shall not permit a student's full name, home address, or home telephone number to be electronically published on a school or system level web site as specified in the terms and conditions of *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Students* (Rule 6166, Form A) and the *Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Employees form* (Rule 4006, Form A).
8. Employees shall identify the students' intellectual property in the following manner:
 - Individual students - first name and surname initial
 - Group of students - group name.
9. Responding to requests for additional information about a student is the responsibility of the principal or designee who shall comply in accordance with the *Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.02*.
10. The Baltimore County Public Schools shall not permit photographs, videos, or films of an individual student to appear on a school or system level web site. A group (4 or more individuals) photograph, video, or film may appear as the group name, provided that:

- The parents/guardians of each student appearing in the group photograph, video or film have granted permission to publish such material on the WWW. Use the *Permission To Publish Student Group Photograph Or Video On The Internet Or BCPS Intranet* form (Rule 6166, Form D).
11. Student or employee resumes shall not be linked to or included as part of any school or system level web site.
 12. Electronic publications, such as employee or student personal web pages, shall not be linked to or included as part of any school or system level web site.
 13. All school or system level web pages shall contain the following disclaimer:

We have made every reasonable attempt to ensure that our school system's web pages are educationally sound and do not contain links to any questionable material or anything that can be deemed in violation of the BCPS telecommunications policy.
 14. School or system level web sites shall not include nor imply endorsement of advertisements, any business, or product.
 15. All communications and publications, which are representative of the Baltimore County Public Schools shall employ the conventions of standard English or other languages.
 16. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.]

A. GENERAL

1. ALL EMPLOYEES SHALL COMPLY WITH BOARD POLICY AND SUPERINTENDENT'S RULE 6202 INCLUDING FORM A AND FORM E WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC. COMMUNICATIONS SHALL NOT INCLUDE ABUSIVE, HARASSING, LIBELOUS, OBSCENE, OFFENSIVE, PROFANE, PORNOGRAPHIC, THREATENING, SEXUALLY EXPLICIT, OR ILLEGAL MATERIAL.

2. EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS SHALL COMPLY WITH SUPERINTENDENT'S RULE 1111, COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC.
3. ALL COMMUNICATIONS SHALL EMPLOY THE CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH OR OTHER APPLICABLE LANGUAGES.

B. PRESS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

1. THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM TO THE PRESS AND OTHER MEDIA SHALL BE COORDINATED BY THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS.
2. THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA THAT RELATES EXCLUSIVELY TO AN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRINCIPAL. PRINCIPALS SHALL INFORM THEIR AREA ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS AND THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS WHEN CONVEYING INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA.

C. PUBLICATIONS, EVENTS, TELEVISION, AND WEB SITE

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND DESIGNATED STAFF SHALL COMMUNICATE WITH THE PUBLIC DIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLICATIONS, EVENTS, TELEVISION, AND THE BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' (BCPS) WEB SITE.

1. THE PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SYSTEMWIDE INFORMATION FOR PRESENTATION/DISTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC SHALL BE COORDINATED BY THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS.
2. THE PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION PERTAINING EXCLUSIVELY TO AN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL/OFFICE FOR PRESENTATION/DISTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRINCIPAL/OFFICE HEAD. PRINCIPALS/OFFICE HEADS SHALL INFORM THEIR AREA ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT/DIVISION HEAD AS WELL AS THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS WHEN SHARING PRODUCTIONS/PUBLICATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC.

- A. STAFF AND STUDENTS WHO ACT AS REPRESENTATIVES OF A SCHOOL/OFFICE SHALL OBTAIN PRIOR PERMISSION OF THE PRINCIPAL/OFFICE HEAD PRIOR TO COMMUNICATING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC.
- B. PRINCIPALS SHALL DESIGNATE AN EMPLOYEE (WEBMASTER) TO COORDINATE AND MONITOR ELECTRONIC PUBLICATIONS, SUCH AS A SCHOOL WEB SITE. THE WEBMASTER SHALL COMPLY WITH POLICY AND RULE 6202, INCLUDING FORM A AND FORM E, AS WELL AS RULE 4006, FORM B.

Legal References:

Federal Laws

[Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. §552]
Copyright Act of 1976, 17 U.S.C. §101 [*et seq.*]
Family Educational Right and Privacy Act of 1974,
20 U.S.C. §1232G

State Law

[Maryland Public Information Act, MD State Gov't. Code Ann.,] *ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND, STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE*, §10-611-628 [*et seq.*]
[Code of Maryland Regulations (JCOMAR())] 13A.08.02

Related Policies:

Board of Education Policy 4006[, Telecommunications Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks]

Board of Education Policy 6202[, Telecommunications Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks]

Rule

Superintendent of Schools

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