



## 1200 DISTRICT PRACTICE COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

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### **DISTRICT PRACTICE:**

#### **1. GENERAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

All employees and members of the Board of Education “Board” are responsible for respectful, efficient, accurate and appropriate communications. In promoting respectful and effective communication, the school district is guided by the following principles:

- people have the right to be heard in a dignified, safe, and respectful manner;
- Hurtful, hateful, racist, bullying, harassing, sexist, or otherwise defamatory communication is not tolerated.
- Problem solving should follow the processes outlined in Policy 9200  
~~—when concerns about performance arise, affected persons have a right to be informed so that corrective action can be taken;~~
- Email communications should be clear and concise, signed by the author of the message, and flagged with an appropriate subject line to easily notify the recipient(s) of the theme of the message. Every effort should be made to reduce the overall volume of electronic messages while maintaining effective communication.
- ~~Email, phone, and written communication should, where possible, be delivered within the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday – Friday.~~
- Employees are not expected to respond to communication on holidays or weekends.
- Barring emergencies, there should be no school district communication delivered on weekends or holidays. Employees are not expected to respond to communications outside of the following hours on business days, except in matters of emergency.
  - 8am-6pm Monday – Friday
  - Senders of school district communications should refrain from sending emails during these periods of time and realize that doing so can create an unnecessary pressure to respond and think about work during times prioritized for other commitments.
- Employees are expected to respond to email, phone, and written communication within a reasonable period of time. The objective of this practice is to communicate a reliable expectation of when a sender may receive a response. During periods of heavy volumes of communication, employees should use auto-reply to communicate an extension to when a sender can expect a response.
  - Written communication – 10 days
  - Phone and email communication - 48 hours within the business week
- Where possible, phone messages should be returned promptly as they generally indicate a more urgent need.

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- the senior leadership team has a responsibility to keep the Board informed on important School District issues; and

### 2. DISTRICT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **Chairperson of the Board**

The Board Chairperson is the official spokesperson for the Board of Education with respect to all external communications on matters under consideration by the Board, as well as explaining Board positions and decisions including budget and policy decisions.

#### **Trustees**

In learning about concerns or fielding public information trustees will report information to the Board Chair or the Superintendent.

**Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent of Schools is the official spokesperson for the Board of Education of School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) with respect to administrative and day-to-day operational matters. In the absence of the Superintendent of Schools, the next most senior administrative staff member may be delegated this responsibility.

**Executive Assistant/Communications Officer**

Under the supervision of the Superintendent of Schools, the Executive Assistant/Communications Officer is responsible for the review, coordination, and issuance of all releases of information, including social media, with respect to the Board and its operations and the School District administration.

**Principals**

The school principal, or designate, is the official spokesperson for the school and is responsible for providing information on school specific activities, maintaining positive communications between the school and its community, and creating communication links with their local media personnel.

**3. COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

- 3.1 The School District website ([www.SD6.bc.ca](http://www.SD6.bc.ca)) will be the Board's primary means of communicating with families, partner groups and communities.
- 3.2 Other means of communication shall include but are not limited to email, other electronic/digital media, newsletters, and bulletin boards.
- 3.3 Email/staff intranet will be Board's and Senior Leadership Team's primary means to communicate with employees.



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### 4. MEDIA RELEASES AND REQUESTS

#### Media Releases

- 5.1 The Board of Education Chairperson or Superintendent are responsible for all media inquiries.
  
- 5.2 The Executive Assistant/Communications Officer is responsible for issuing School District-initiated releases of information as part of an ongoing communications plan. These information releases will highlight Board initiatives and provide up to date information for students, parents, community, partners, and all stakeholders within the School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) jurisdiction.



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- 5.3 Media releases issued on behalf of the Board of Trustees or Superintendent of Schools (or designate) are generated and administered by the Executive Assistant/Communications Officer. Request to issue media releases by a Trustee is to be done through the Board Chairperson. Prior to issuance, the media release shall be approved by either the Board Chairperson or Superintendent of Schools.
- 5.4 All requests for and/or proposed media releases by District administration staff of School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) are submitted to the Executive Assistant/Communications Officer for review prior to issuance. When applicable, the Executive Assistant/Communications Officer may suggest alternative language or format to ensure that documentation is consistent with Board messaging and standards.
- 5.5 Media releases concerning school-specific news or events are prepared at the school level by the principal or designate. Prior to issuance, the media release shall be submitted to the Executive Assistant/Communications Officer. The Executive Assistant/Communications Officer, in consultation with the Superintendent, may suggest alternative language or format to ensure that documentation is consistent with Board messaging and standards.
- 5.6 The Superintendent may at any time delegate approval authority to Superintendent designate or the Executive Assistant/Communications Officer with respect to the approval of media releases.
- 5.7 Once the appropriate approval has been provided, the Executive Assistant/Communications Officer shall be responsible for issuance of the media release.

### **Media Requests**

- 5.8 All media requests for administrative or political response on Board matters and/or interviews shall be directed to the Executive Assistant/Communications Officer. The Executive Assistant/Communications Officer does not act as a spokesperson for the Board, unless directed to do so by the Superintendent of Schools. The Executive Assistant/Communications Officer shall obtain further information with respect to the information and/or response being sought and direct the matter to the appropriate individual for response.



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- 5.9 Media requests received directly by individual trustees or District staff are responded to following consultation with the Superintendent, Superintendent to ensure that the response is reflective of the position of the school board. Any personal opinions must be clearly identified as such and further, that such opinions are not necessarily those of the school board.

### 5. SOCIAL MEDIA

- 6.1 The Board recognizes that social media is an essential tool to communicate to our school communities and families in a timely and relevant way.
- 6.2 Currently, the District uses ~~Twitter~~ X, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Executive Assistant/Communications Officer in collaboration with Technology Services will work together to create social media content calendar. The Executive Assistant/Communications Officer will create original content and/or collect content from schools and students. Ideally content will be created in advance of publication; however, at times, social media will be used as a tool to communicate relevant information quickly.
- 6.3 Any other account or page on social networking sites bearing the Board or District's name or likeness is not an official account managed by the District.
- 6.4 Some of the District's schools, programs and classes also have social media sites. Those sites are managed at the school level.
- 6.5 The use of all social media sites managed by the Board and/or the employees is guided by existing policies and district practice. These include:
- Policy and district practice 2700, acceptable use of digital technology.
  - Policy and district practice 2750, use of social media.
- 6.6 Availability  
The District monitors and periodically updates our accounts most often during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday).  
On occasion, we may update content outside of our regular business hours to report on events that occur during evenings or weekends, or to report important information. Any messages or questions we receive outside of our regular business hours will be reviewed at the beginning of the next business/school day. The Board will read and follow as many replies and direct messages as possible; however, we may not be able to reply individually to all messages received. If a topic or issue is urgent, followers should contact the Board through other communication channels listed on the Board website.

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6.7 Following

The Board will follow official accounts of various stakeholder organizations that we believe are relevant to the work we do. The Board does not follow students, or parents of students (unless their work is relevant to ours). Following an account does not imply endorsement of any kind. Comments and posts expressed by followers on Board social media pages do not necessarily reflect the opinions and/or positions of the Board, its employees or Board of Trustees. The Board is not liable for content posted by any user or subscriber in any forum, message board or social media area. The Board will report any posts deemed to be offensive, defamatory or inappropriate and will remove any followers that violate these terms.

6.8 Sharing

We will like and share information from other users or accounts that may be of value to our community. Likes and shares should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the originator or of any organization.

6.9 Comments/Feedback

The Board welcomes comments, suggestions and questions about the content we post on social media channels. We ask, however, that you follow the general rules of respectful civil discourse. You are fully responsible for everything that you post, and we would like to remind you that all posted comments are in the public domain. To protect your own privacy and the privacy of others, please do not include personal information such as your phone number, home address, or email address in the body of your comment.

The Board will report any posts deemed to be offensive, defamatory or inappropriate, and will remove any followers that violate these terms. We will not tolerate comments that are offensive to an individual or an organization, rude in tone, or abusive. We do not discriminate against any views, but we reserve the right to refuse, edit or remove any of the following:

- comments contrary to the principles of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- comments that violate any School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) policy;
- racist, hateful, slanderous, abusive, and/or obscene messages;
- solicitations, advertisements, or spam;
- comments that encourage or suggest illegal activity or cyber bullying; and
- messages where the sender is not the author (nor the copyright holder, if applicable), and/or posted anonymously or by robot accounts.

Please be respectful and make sure your comments are relevant. If you have any questions about our commenting and service standards, or how we apply them, please contact us.