



MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

Version 2

Status	Statutory
Name of Responsible Committee/Individual	Trust Board
Name and Title of Author	CEO
Target Audience	All Stakeholders
Date Policy Agreed	November 2024 - Version 1 September 2025 – Version 2
Review Date	September 2026

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1. Overview

Overarching Trust Rationale on Media Relations:

It is in the best interest of Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust for schools' media relations to be nurtured and managed directly by each of the Trust's schools to develop awareness of their activities and enhance each school's reputation. The scope of Trust involvement in the management of media relations and activity is set out below.

- 1.1 This policy sets out the principles all Trust staff and volunteers, including central trust staff, directors, school staff and governors should follow when dealing with the media.
- 1.2 The policy covers both proactive and planned press activity and reactive media in response to an incident and / or emergency.
- 1.3 In the case of an incident or emergency this policy should be read alongside the relevant school continuity plans

2. Aims

- 2.1 To ensure that clear lines of communication and accountability are observed between schools/UTC and the media when dealing with an incident.
- 2.2 Ensure the proper handling of media information requests.
- 2.3 To ensure that the principles of data protection and confidentiality are observed.
- 2.4 To ensure families whose students are on the 'no publicity list' have their privacy.
- 2.5 To ensure that only those that are permitted, make formal statements representing the views of a particular school/UTC.
- 2.6 To ensure all schools/UTC are supported in handling the media and gain maximum publicity for positive news coverage.
- 2.7 To ensure Bright Futures Learning Partnership Trust's reputation and ethos are consistently communicated
- 2.8 To ensure that Headteachers/Principal, Senior leaders are aware of their duty of confidentiality and trust when dealing with the press.

3. Principles

- 3.1 Proactive Media Handling
 - 3.1.1 At times the Trust or school/UTC may wish to proactively seek media coverage to advertise or promote a school opportunity, success or event. This is very much encouraged and should be managed by the school if it involves students. Advice should be taken from the Trust if any press statement involves reporting on events specific to a member of staff. The Trust reserves the right to not run any news story about staff.
 - 3.1.2 If a school is aware of a positive news opportunity and would like support drafting a press statement or engaging with the media, please contact the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

- 3.2 The Scope of Trust (rather than school) Involvement in Media Activity is Defined as:
 - 3.2.1 Issues relating to trust activity (e.g. acquisition of new schools, negative publicity about a Trust employee or volunteer).
 - 3.2.2 Any official position on broader educational issues (e.g. govt policy, local educational need).
 - 3.2.3 Response to major incident / emergency in a specific school. The CEO will be informed by the Headteacher to determine and agree how best to manage the response – this may ultimately be dealt with by the Headteacher, but advice should be sought from the CEO.
 - 3.2.4 Any news story which involves staff due to its potential reputational risk to the school or Trust.
- 3.3 Media Handling in Response to an Incident or Emergency
 - 3.3.1 The Headteacher/Principal will liaise with the CEO at the earliest possible opportunity to seek support for communication and to agree how best to manage the response in the event of a serious incident. If early contact compromises dealing with the incident, the Headteacher/Principal may nominate a member of the senior leadership team to initially communicate with the CEO.
 - 3.3.2 In the event of a Trust-wide incident or emergency all press enquiries should be managed through the CEO who will manage and coordinate the media response and inform the appropriate Headteacher/Principal, in consultation with the chair of the LGB and Chair of the Trust when possible.
 - 3.3.3 For school-based serious incidents or emergencies, Headteachers/Principal will discuss and agree planned press responses with the CEO.
 - 3.3.4 It will be at the CEO's discretion who should be involved in the response, but routinely the Chair of the Trust Board, or other trustees who will be informed as appropriate. In the case of a school level query all responses will be agreed and coordinated by the CEO in consultation with the Headteacher/Principal and Chair of the Local Board as appropriate.
 - 3.3.5 The decision on whether to seek legal or professional advice will also be determined by the CEO and will be coordinated by the Trust central team.
- 3.4 Media Handling in Response to a Press Enquiry
 - 3.4.1 Any staff member or volunteer who receives an enquiry from the media should report this to their school Headteacher/Principal who will determine the appropriate course of action and inform the CEO.
 - 3.4.2 For school/UTC related enquiries (e.g. positive attention, for information etc.) the Headteacher/Principal will inform the CEO of the school's/UTC's response. Staff or volunteers receiving the initial communication should take a note of: The date, time and contact details of the media enquirer, a summary of the query and any information on timing for a response.
 - 3.4.3 Staff and volunteers should not: Comment on individual media enquiries or promise a response.
 - 3.4.4 If the enquiry relates to a serious incident or emergency the Headteacher/Principal should notify the CEO immediately as per point 3.3.

4. Communications

- 4.1.1 All other school staff, volunteers and governors should not enter into discussion with the media and should refer the media to the Headteacher/Principal in the first instance. Failure to comply appropriately with this guidance may be a disciplinary offence for staff and volunteers.

5. Data Protection

- 5.1.1 Details of students' / staff's addresses, and personal details should not be released to the media.
- 5.1.2 All staff and volunteers must ensure that no student on the school/UTC 'no publicity' list is included in a media photograph, video or in any form of communication with the media.

6. Reactive Media Handling in Response to a School Closure

- 6.1.1 Permission should be sought from CEO if they feel the school/UTC should close for any reason. ***The Headteacher/Principal should have undertaken a clear risk assessment and must demonstrate there is no alternative option to closure.***
- 6.1.2 In the event of the closure of the school e.g. in case of snow, lack of heating, the Headteacher/Principal should follow the school processes for informing parents (text and phone communication trees etc). Both the Trust and Local Board must be informed.
- 6.1.3 The school website will be the first main point of reference.
- 6.1.4 It is expected that in unexpected circumstances, the situation is discussed with the CEO prior to a decision being made if time allows and it does not compromise safety or communication.

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