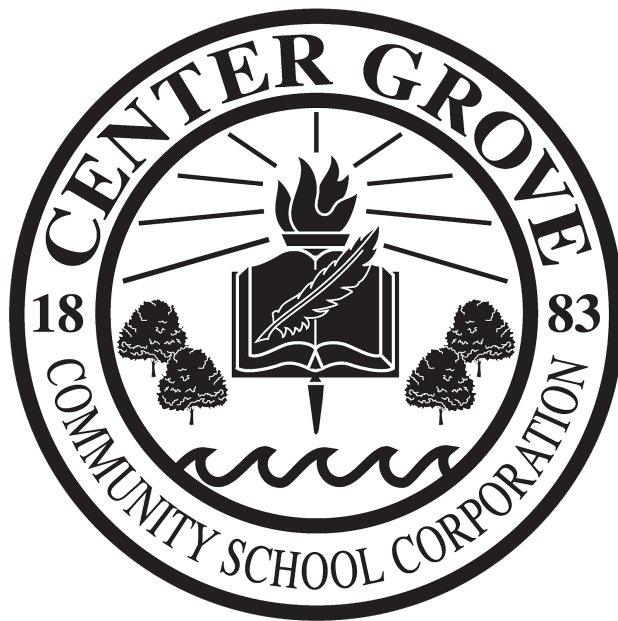


CENTER GROVE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION  
**MEDIA RELATIONS GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOL**



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# CGCSC MEDIA RELATIONS GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOL

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## INTRODUCTION

Center Grove Community School Corporation (CGCSC) students and staff are constantly making news. In these fast-paced, information-oriented times, local reporters are eager to cover what's happening in our schools, which not only serves to keep our community informed, but can also help to build community support.

The responsibility of the media is to make sure that coverage of the CGCSC is balanced, fair and accurate to the best of their knowledge. The responsibility of the CGCSC is to be prepared to cooperate with media representatives to the best of our ability to provide the resources and information necessary for balanced, fair and accurate reporting.

The Board of School Trustees supports the right of citizens to have access to information that affects school programs and services for children in the Center Grove Community School Corporation, and encourages Corporation administrators and other personnel to endeavor to create a positive, courteous relationship with members of the news media and maintain open communications on matters of a routine nature; however, the School Board expects the welfare of students to be the guiding principle in all contacts with the news media. Maintaining a safe, orderly educational environment on the campus and in the classroom must be the most important consideration when working with the news media at the school level.

To that end the following district-wide media guidelines are recommended by the Board of School Trustees.



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## **I. DESIGNATION OF SPOKESPERSONS FOR THE CGCSC**

- A. Dissemination of timely, accurate, and newsworthy information to the community through the news media is the primary responsibility of the Executive Director of Communications, working in cooperation with the Superintendent. Hence, the Executive Director of Communications shall coordinate news coverage of the School Corporation and will serve as the primary media spokesperson on matters of district-wide interest.
- B. The President of the Board of School Trustees will serve as the primary spokesperson for the Board.

## **II. THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. Media Relations**

The Executive Director of Communications shall:

1. Be readily available to media representatives
2. Provide media representatives, upon their request, with all facts that can be provided to give a true picture to the best of his/her knowledge
3. Keep media representatives fully informed with regard to the school corporation in all aspects, activities, and changes, so that any reporting will be done on the basis of a complete and valid overview
4. Submit, suggest, or request feature stories or articles to media representatives which are of interest or importance
5. Provide an agenda and other "background" material to media representatives who attend meetings of the Board

### **B. Training and Assistance**

1. School administrators are encouraged to seek the advice of the Executive Director of Communications on addressing media requests; however, the decision regarding media access to the campus rests with the principal. Maintaining a safe, orderly educational environment on the campus and in the classroom is the most important consideration when working with the news media at the school level, and the building administrator's judgment in this regard will be the primary factor in determining the extent to which the news media will be allowed access to CGCSC facilities.
  - a) The Executive Director of Communications will provide training to school administrators regarding effective media relations.
  - b) A school administrator or staff person may request on-site assistance from the Executive Director of Communications before allowing access to the media.



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- c) The Executive Director of Communications will assist various school-related groups in their relations with the news media.
- d) The Executive Director of Communications protects school personnel from any unreasonable demands on their time by news media representatives.
- e) All news coverage requests must be coordinated by or through the Executive Director of Communications for any events of a Corporation-wide nature. Corporation personnel should submit story ideas to the Executive Director of Communications as early as possible prior to the desired coverage date.

## III. PROCEDURES GOVERNING MEDIA ACCESS TO CGCSC FACILITIES

- A. News reporters and other communications representatives must initiate their requests to interview, film, videotape, and/or photograph students and/or CGCSC personnel on CGCSC property through the Executive Director of Communications.
- B. No media representatives will be allowed in the school without approval of the principal and notification of the Executive Director of Communications and/or Superintendent. The Executive Director of Communications will contact the school administrator or departmental administrator prior to a media visit. If media appear on campus without notifying the Executive Director of Communications the administrator should notify the Executive Director of Communications and/or the Central Office. Principals and other administrators are encouraged to assist with any reasonable request for media access and cooperate to the fullest extent possible.
- C. News representatives are considered visitors to the campus and are required to sign in at the school office, wear a visitor's pass and comply with CGCSC policies and procedures. Media representatives will be escorted by the principal or his/her designee while they are in the building. Although schools are public buildings, schools may:
  - a) Refuse access to news media representatives, cameras, and other equipment on school property if their presence or behavior would be disruptive to the school environment; and/or
  - b) Limit access until the Executive Director of Communications is contacted.

NOTE: Media contact is not within the Corporation's jurisdiction for approval or interruption if it occurs off district property and at non-district-related events.

## IV. PROCEDURES FOR WORKING WITH MEDIA PERSONNEL IN EMERGENCIES

- A. During crisis/emergency situations, media access to schools and facilities may be limited to ensure student and staff safety or to maintain order.
- B. The Executive Director of Communications, Superintendent, or Center Grove Police Department, Johnson County Sheriff's Department or White River Township Fire Department Public Information Officers may designate an area on school property to conduct news briefings on the crisis or emergency situation. In these instances, normal access procedures



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for media and other visitors may be suspended in the interest of student and staff safety and an orderly emergency response.

## V. PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS AND RECORDING VISUAL IMAGES AT CGCSC FACILITIES

- A. Interviewing, photographing, filming, or videotaping on Corporation property may not occur without prior approval from the building administrator or department head and the Executive Director of Communications.
- B. Requests for interviews are generally granted if the individual from whom the interview is being sought agrees to participate. If the individual does not wish to be interviewed or photographed, he or she may decline; however, the individual or the building administrator should notify the Executive Director of Communications.
- C. Filming, videotaping, and photographing children in classrooms, on campus, or in school-sponsored events are allowed for non-instructional purposes; unless a parent/guardian has requested that the child's image not be used.
- D. General images of children in which no one is identifiable do not require parental permission. In addition, the filming, videotaping, and photographing of children for classroom instructional purposes or for a purpose related to a co-curricular or extracurricular activity do not require parental permission forms.
- E. Identifying students by name in photo captions requires parent permission for elementary students. These provisions are in accordance with FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act).

## VI. PRIVACY AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

### A. Guidelines For Working With The News Media

Corporation personnel must adhere to the following general guidelines when working with the news media:

- 1. The privacy of a student or employee is the foremost concern when working with the news media and must be considered prior to the release of any information.
- 2. Names of students should never be released under any circumstances without prior parental consent or the consent of the student if he/she is 18 years of age or older, unless there is prior clearance from the Executive Director of Communications or the Superintendent.
- 3. Names of victims are not to be released; news media should be referred to the receiving hospital or police department for such information.
- 4. Home addresses and telephone numbers of students, private citizens, and CGCSC employees are not to be released to the media without their express consent.



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## **B. Media Requests For Corporation Records**

1. Media requests for corporation records shall be submitted in writing and referred to the Superintendent's Office.
2. Costs of providing copies of records shall be in accordance with CGCSC Board Policy and Administrative Procedures.

## **VII. YOUR RIGHTS IN AN INTERVIEW**

### **You have the right to:**

- A. Know what the story is about.
- B. Ask what the reporter is looking for.
- C. Ask how long the interview will last.
- D. Ask the reporter if anyone else has been interviewed for the story.
- E. Stick to your communication objectives.
- F. Take your time to answer the questions