--- Working with Press ---

Protocols for Columbia Heights Public Schools Staff

Columbia Heights Public Schools (CHPS), as a public institution, is accountable to District taxpayers and strives to be as transparent, open and pro-active in two-way communication with the public as possible.

By working proactively and positively with the press, the District increases its presence in educating the public about its mission, Core Values, Vision and Strategic Directions. In all cases – proactively or reactively – working with the press must be coordinated, structured and planned through and with the Communications Department. This guide provides primary protocols for CHPS staff. In instances where a situation occurs that is not addressed in this document, contact Community Education Director Kristen Stuenkel at 763.528.4515 or Communications Coordinator Emma Bute at 763.528.4530.

Point of Contact | In all instances, the Communications Department is the point of contact for any press. Any media calls received by staff should be directed to the Communications Department for coordination and/or response. Coordination and approval is still required outside of normal business hours.

District Spokesperson | The Superintendent is the official spokesperson for the District, however they may delegate this responsibility to a specific District E-12 Management Team leader.

Staff Speaking to Press | In no instance is a CHPS employee, while performing his/her duties, to speak on a District or school issue to the news media without first coordinating and receiving pre-approval from the Superintendent and/or Director of Communications as applicable.

Press Visits and Interviews | Press visit requests will be coordinated between the Director and/or Principal and the Communications Department. Approved visits will be for a specific purpose, have agreed upon ground rules and a defined timeline. While in a school, the Principal or his/her designee (to include, if requested, a representative from the Communications Department) will escort the press. Requested media visits will not be approved if the Superintendent or Principal determine the visit will disrupt the educational environment.

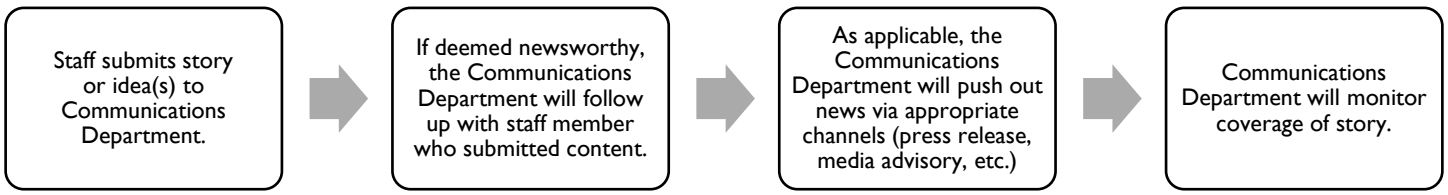
Legal Issues | In any instance where the media request may involve legal issues, responses will be provided to the news media only after coordinated and approved by the District Attorney and Superintendent. As applicable, the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and applicable statutes will always be reviewed and followed.

Student and Staff Consent | No student or staff member will be made available or their picture, likeness, voice, etc., allowed, to any facet of the press unless a current signed consent form is on file. To accommodate certain news stories, photography or video of unidentifiable students will be considered (i.e., leg, feet or back angles). In no case will a student or a staff member be required to speak to the press.

Ethical Responses | At all times when District employees are authorized to speak to the press, responses will be factual. In cases where a response cannot be provided for legal reasons, the reporter will be told such. At no time will distortion, misleading or untruthful responses be given by a District employee. "No comment" is never allowed as a response. Any comment shared or conversations had with the press must be construed as "on the record."

Press Conferences | In rare instances – usually involving a significant District announcement or a crisis communications issue – press conferences may be held. In these instances, logistics will be managed through the Communications Department. Specifics relating to the actual conference will be planned, coordinated and approved by the applicable delegated team.

Pitches | To help ensure District or school stories are appropriately provided to the press, all pitches must go through the Communications Department. This will ensure all pitches are of a newsworthy nature and all procedures, requirements and laws are followed.



Employees First | As much as reasonably possible and as applicable, District information provided to the press will first be shared with CHPS employees. All media coverage is monitored by the Communications Department and is shared on the HeightsNET as applicable.