

Hawthorn Academy
Policy: Media Policy
Adopted: June 15, 2017



Purpose

Hawthorn Academy (the "School") is an established and highly respected public charter school. We have a reputation for providing excellence in education, good community relations, and a safe learning environment for our students.

While providing this service, the news media is periodically interested in the School. We feel a responsibility to be open and responsive to information requests as a means to best serve our student community and the community at large.

This policy exists to ensure that information disclosed by the School is appropriate, accurate, timely and relevant to the inquiry at hand. Adherence to this policy is intended to provide an effective and efficient framework to facilitate the timely dissemination of information.

Policy

This media policy applies to all employees and Board Members of the School. This policy covers all external news media including broadcast, electronic and print.

Designation of Spokesperson

The Lead Director/Superintendent and Board President (or his/her designee on the Board) are designated as the School's principal media contacts and spokespersons. These individuals are charged with the responsibility of media relations and will weigh each media inquiry to determine the best way to provide information in relationship with other information that is not yet public. These individuals will convey the school's official position on issues of significance or situations that are particularly controversial or sensitive in nature. Their school communications responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Increase public awareness and understanding of the School and the educational services that we provide.
- Promote a positive public image of the School and the work we do, especially for audiences that are important to the school, which includes existing and prospective students, employees, peers and government officials.

Depending on the situation, an individual other than the Lead Director or Board President may be asked to be a spokesperson on a particular issue due to their knowledge, experience and expertise. The Board President will work with that designated spokesperson to prepare them for the media interview as needed. Preparation may include developing talking points as well as counseling, training and practicing for the interview.

Guidelines for Talking with the Media

A reporter, producer or other member of the news media may contact the School for a number of reasons, for example:

- To get information about the School;
- To get information about a recent unexpected event such as natural disasters, thefts or arrests, accidents or injuries, student/parent/employee complaints, federal or state or local investigations or regulatory actions, etc.;
- To get information or comment about an action or event that could impact OPA, changes in government or policies, or educational comparisons to other schools.

When contacted by the news media:

1. Obtain the following information:
 - a. Reporter name, contact information, and their media outlet.
 - b. Where will the interview take place and if it be live, taped, or recorded.
 - c. The topic of the story they are researching.
 - d. The story deadline.
2. Never respond before having all the facts.
 - a. Let the reporter know you will call them back (this buys you preparation time and a chance to review these guidelines). Do not speak on behalf of the School unless acting as the authorized spokesperson.
3. Coordinate with the Board Chair, Lead Director, and Academics West to determine authorized spokesperson.
4. Get back to the reporter in a timely manner and well before the story deadline.

Before the interview:

1. Prepare for the interview by thinking of key points and probable questions.
 - a. Set a goal for the interview.
 - b. Develop a written statement and stick to it.
2. Practice responding to questions and answering hard questions.
3. If unfamiliar with the reporter or media outlet, do some research.
4. Clear the interview area and eliminate distractions.

During the interview:

1. Telephone interviews:
 - a. Stand up and imagine you are addressing a diverse group of individuals.
 - b. Keep your message points and reference materials on hand.
2. Television interviews:
 - a. If wearing a microphone be aware that you may be recorded at any moment.
 - b. Talk to the reporter, not the camera, unless directed to do otherwise.
3. Speak clearly, slowly, positively, and concisely so statements can be recorded accurately.
4. Wait for the reporter to finish asking the question before starting your answer.
5. Do not repeat false charges, but do correct incorrect facts.

6. Do not release personal employee information or confidential student information.
7. If you don't know the answer, say so and offer to get it.
8. Always maintain your composure. Do not get provoked. Nothing is off the record.
9. Never lie. Stick to the facts. Do not shift blame. Focus on solutions, not the crisis.
10. Reassure parents of students' safety and the School's focus.

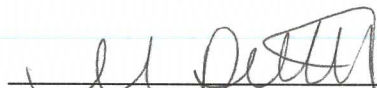
Guidelines for Photographs and Film

A similar process as described above will be used when someone from the media is requesting permission to take photographs or to film inside our facilities. Refer the caller to the school Principal. No one will be given access to the facility for a photo or filming without approval from the Principal.

Training

The Principal will inform all school employees of this policy and provide periodic training in appropriate staff meetings.

Signature:

 6/15/17
Meggen Pettit, Board President Date