

**NEWS & SOCIAL MEDIA RELATIONS**

The Board of Education invites and welcomes the active participation of all forms of mass media, print and electronic, in educating the public and improving education within the District and the wider community. The Board and Superintendent will make every reasonable effort to cooperate with the media by providing accurate information about District operations, to the extent permissible by statute and regulation. The Board encourages media representatives to attend Board meetings excluding Executive Sessions.

The Board President is designated as the spokesperson for the Board when the Board is making a statement on an issue.

No other member of the Board will speak individually for, or in the name of, the Board unless by explicit direction of the Board. Board members should emphasize to the media when asked to speak as a Board member that they can only speak as private citizens unless they have been empowered by the Board to speak for it.

The Superintendent of Schools is designated as the spokesperson for the District.

The Superintendent of Schools shall establish all necessary procedures to govern utilization of news, online and social media. All staff intending to release information to the media or post information to external online environments should first notify the Superintendent or his/her designee. The District retains ownership of the content of individual web pages and online sites hosted by the District or created and maintained by District personnel as a part of their professional responsibilities.

The Board believes strongly in the importance of including the community in dialogue surrounding important school issues, and supports the responsible use of online and social media to achieve that goal. All District postings to such online environments will be treated with the same care and consideration and will follow the same procedures as any other communication which the Superintendent or his/her designee generates on behalf of the District and will adhere to the standards set in the Board's Technology Use policy. Organizations wishing to have a link on official District web pages and online sites will adhere to the provisions of this and other related policies. The District takes no responsibility for a lack of timeliness of posting information due to technical difficulties or other circumstances beyond the District's control.

The District reserves the right, but is not obligated, to remove from District social media sites, social media user comments that contain commercial solicitations, are factually erroneous or libelous, are off topic or that otherwise violate policy or the District Code of Conduct.

If a Board or staff member chooses to maintain his/her own media, online, or social networking presence, the Board or staff member must ensure that it is clear that the postings do not represent the Board or the District. Community contributed comments on official District online or social media sites are understood to be solely the opinion of the author, and do not represent the South Colonie Central School District.

Cross Reference: Policy 4526.5, Technology Use Policy  
Policy 5300, Code of Conduct

Reference: Arts and Cultural Affairs Law §61.09  
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g;  
34 CFR Part 99

Revised: December 19, 2017; May 22, 2001

**NEWS & SOCIAL MEDIA RELATIONS REGULATION**

The Board of Education may permit, subject to terms and conditions satisfactory to the Board, the admission of persons and equipment of any news medium to school grounds, buildings, and other locations for the dissemination of information by print, broadcast, recording, or other means, of athletic events, concerts, lectures, and similar activities of interest to the general public. However, identification of the District with the promotion of any commercial or political enterprise shall be scrupulously avoided.

The District has established the following guidelines for interaction with the news media:

1. All representatives of the news media should be given equal access to information about the District. As much as possible, general releases of interest to the entire District shall be made available to all media simultaneously. Exclusive releases will be avoided, except upon the initiation of requests by individual media representatives for information about particular programs, plans, or problems.
2. The Superintendent of Schools shall:
  - a. act as a clearinghouse for District information, coordinating various media services and providing information to news media representatives;
  - b. prescribe procedures for the delivery of notice of Board of Education meetings and agenda for such meetings to the news media;
  - c. handle all requests for releases of information and requests to contact District employees;
  - d. authorize school principals to grant permission for news media activities within their respective schools; and
  - e. authorize District employees to contact and/or be contacted by news media representatives. If authorized, staff members are expected to cooperate fully with and respond within the realm and scope of their personal responsibility and knowledge.
3. News media representatives shall be:
  - a. required to obtain appropriate authorization similar to any other visitors to the school;
  - b. permitted to photograph students and general school activities provided their presence shall not disrupt school operations or instruction; and
  - c. required to obtain parental permission if photographs and/or articles would identify students.

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