



Communication Policy

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Revision: On an as need basis

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Annex: Section 2.02 and 2.04 of the Emergency preparedness Policy & Procedures



1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this Communication Policy is to identify and define the directions of the School Board with respect to communication, public relations, media relations and crisis communication. To increase its visibility, the School Board wishes to keep the general public and its clientele well informed of its directions and activities.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 Adapt communication practices to the needs of the School Board and its target clientele.
- 2.2 Ensure regular and objective communication on the decisions and activities of the School Board.
- 2.3 Ensure that information transmitted to the target clientele is coherent and appropriate.
- 2.4 Establish and define the specific roles and responsibilities of each individual involved in the communication process.
- 2.5 Identify activities and means of communication to be used by the School Board.

3.0 Principles

- 3.1 Promote a positive perception of the direction and activities of the School Board.
- 3.2 Respect the policies and regulations in effect at the School Board, namely those in relation with the delegation of powers.
- 3.3 Ensure the visibility of the School Board by the networking of a positive corporate image.

4.0 Target Clientele

Internal:

Students
Parents
Commissioners
Governing Boards
Committees
Unions
Personnel
Parent Committee
Professional Associations

External:

Taxpayers
Population of the territory
Local associations and organizations
Government
Municipalities
Other school boards
Commercial enterprises
Media

5.0 Scope of Application

- Internal communication
- Promotion and public relations
- Relations with media
- Crisis Communication

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Chairperson of the Council of Commissioners

The Chairperson of the Council of Commissioner or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairperson and with his/her knowledge, is the official representative of the School Board, and must make the population and organizations aware of the decisions and main directions of the Council of Commissioners. He/She must provide public information on representations, statements and political decisions made by the Council of Commissioners. At his/her request, commissioners may also act as spokespersons on behalf of the school board.

6.2 Chairperson of the Executive Committee

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairperson and with his/her knowledge is responsible for any communication arising from decisions made by the Executive Committee. Furthermore the Executive Committee will oversee and coordinate the mandate of the Communications and Public Relations Committee of the Board. Membership on the Communications and Public Relations Committee will be in conformity with the annual committee selection procedures established by the board.

6.3 Directorate

The Directorate establishes monitors and manages formal communications with principals and administrators, as well as with the personnel of the School Board and organizations representing employees. The Director General, or in his/her absence and with his/her knowledge, the Deputy Director General, is the official spokesperson of the School Board for disseminating any administrative information.

6.4 Principals and Centre Directors

Principals and Centre Directors will support the Directorate in all communication related to the operation of services and activities in schools and Centres. Principals must ensure the dissemination of information pertaining to the school or centre under their authority.

6.5 Chairperson of Governing Boards

The Chairperson of a Governing Board is responsible for communicating the decisions of the Governing Board to the school population. (Section 65 of the Education Act)

6.6 Corporate Affairs and Information and Communication Services

Corporate Affairs and the Information and Communication Services of the school board is responsible for the application, support, implementation and evaluation of this policy, including this communication plan adapted to the needs of the School Board.

6.7 Designated spokesperson

Please refer to sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4

7.0 Crisis Communication

7.1 Crisis Management Team

A Crisis Management Team will be created. It includes the Chairman of the Board, the Director General, the Deputy Director General, the Director of Material Resources and the Information Officer. Other personnel may be called upon to be part of the CMT depending on the nature of the crisis.

The Communications Department is responsible for informing all school board departments, schools and centres of the names, titles and coordinates of the CMT members by September 15 of each year.

Refer to Section 2.02 the Emergency Preparedness Policy and Procedures for the Schools and Centres Response Teams role and composition. (see Annex A)

7.2 Crisis Communication Plan

Refer to the Section 2.04 of the Emergency Preparedness Policy and Procedures for the details of the crisis and emergency communication plan. (see Annex B)

8.0 Communication Plan

The annual Communication Plan developed by the Information and Communication Services will implement this Communication Policy.

9.0 Implementation

This policy will come into effect following ratification by the Council of Commissioners.

10.0 Revision

This policy will be reviewed every four years or at the request of the Council of Commissioners.

ANNEX A

(Section 2.02 of the Emergency Preparedness Policy and Procedures)

Note: This policy is available on the school board's web site at www.swlauriersb.qc.ca

2.02 RESPONSE TEAM

- An emergency response team is to be created in each Sir Wilfrid Laurier school or office. Each member of this team will report to the operation center, or other specified area, immediately at the announcement of the emergency.
- The membership of this team is to include, among others, the following personnel:
 - responsible authority (or delegate),
 - guidance counsellor representative,
 - support staff representative,
 - custodial staff,
 - School Council chairperson,
 - staff member(s) with current first-aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training,

ANNEX B: (Section 2.4 of the Emergency Preparedness Policy and Procedures)

2.4 COMMUNICATIONS

- When an emergency occurs, the responsible authority must react in a positive and effective manner to gain a measure of control over the situation. The ability to control is directly related to the ability to communicate. For this reason, all avenues of communication must be identified and be ready for use under emergency conditions.
- An Emergency Alert System will be activated by the Director General under the following conditions:
 - when an emergency occurs at a Sir Wilfrid Laurier school or office,
 - when a community emergency, declared or undeclared, occurs that could threaten the health and security of students, staff and the facility,
 - the threat of either of the above.
 - the responsible authority will alert the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board's switchboard operator. The caller will first indicate that an emergency exists and will provide as much of the following information as is available:
 - the identity of the caller
 - name of the facility,
 - location of the emergency,
 - nature and severity of the emergency,
 - details of injuries or fatalities,
 - initial action taken or contemplated,
 - type of assistance required.
 - The switchboard operator then will immediately relay the information to the Director General, who will determine whether the emergency plan will be broadened to include other Sir Wilfrid Laurier personnel.
 - Should the emergency occur after normal working hours, the Director General will be contacted at his/her residence. Designated individuals responsible for the emergency alert within their school, department, or region will maintain a current list at their residence of names and telephone numbers of people to be contacted.
 - Specifically, with the announcement of an emergency, the communication process will include the following essential elements:

2.4.1 Internal

- At the first indication of an emergency the Response Team will be directed (P.A. code, runners, etc) to the emergency site or to the operation center.
- The appropriate municipal emergency response agencies will be contacted.
- The Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board's switchboard operator will be informed.
- At the appropriate time, the staff are to be offered an explanation (staff meeting, written memo).
- If the emergency occurs after normal working hours, the staff is to be informed of the incident by using a prepared text conveyed via a telephone chain.

2.4.2 Board

- The emergency message received by the receptionist is to be transcribed on an Emergency Alert Action check list (see Appendix B).
- The Director General will activate the Emergency Alert System.
- The neighbouring school(s) will be informed of the emergency as the personnel and building might be required for assistance and use.
- The transportation department will be required to prepare for mobilization.

2.4.3 Civic Agencies

- Some or all of the following civic agencies are to be contacted by the Control Team:
 - Fire
 - Police
 - Ambulance
 - City Hall
 - Community Shelter
 - Clergy

2.4.4 Parents

- Parents are to be informed, in writing, that a School Emergency Preparedness Plan has been designed and is ready for implementation (see Appendix C).
- When students have been evacuated from the school and have been sent home or to a community shelter, the parents are to be informed via a telephone chain (see Appendix A).
- For specific and detailed information on the emergency and its consequences, parents are to be informed by a written letter and/or by media announcements.

2.4.5 Media

- The initial and short-term response to the media will be the responsibility of the responsible authority.
- If the situation warrants no information and/or if the responsible authority does not have sufficient and complete information, the media should be so informed and told to report back at a specific time and place for a future announcement.
- The media must not be permitted to interview students or staff without the permission of the responsible authority.
- If it is decided to permit interviews with students, such should take place in the presence of the responsible authority.
- The secondary and long-term response to the media will be the responsibility of the Director General.
- The media will be requested to assist in the dissemination of public announcements.