

Media Handling Policy

Approval Body:	Finance Committee
Approval Date:	February 2022
Implementation Date:	March 2022
Review Date:	Spring 2024
Policy Version:	2

Version Control

Version	Date Review	Changes since the last version
1	February 2019	New policy
2	February 2022	No changes – part of a 2 year review cycle

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 This policy has been adopted by the Mulberry Schools Trust and will be applied to all schools which belong to the Mulberry Schools Trust, as well as volunteers working on behalf of the Trust including those working in a governance capacity (i.e. Company Members, Trustees, Local Governing Body members and Company Secretary/Clerks). The policy sets out the procedures that should be followed when dealing with the media concerning the Mulberry Schools Trust (the "Trust") and its schools.
- 1.2 The policy covers both proactive and planned press activity and reactive media in response to an incident or emergency.
- 1.3 In the case of an incident or emergency this policy should be read alongside the relevant Trust or School Business Continuity Plan.

2.0 Aims

- 2.1 To ensure that clear lines of communication and accountability are observed between the Trust, its schools and the press/media when dealing with an incident or emergency.
- 2.2 To ensure that requests for information from the media are handled properly and professionally.
- 2.3 To ensure that the principles of data protection and confidentiality are observed.
- 2.4 To ensure families whose children are on the 'no publicity list' have their privacy protected.
- 2.5 To ensure that only those who have the Trust's permission to speak to the media do so.
- 2.6 To ensure all schools in the Mulberry Schools Trust are supported in handling the media and gaining publicity for positive news coverage
- 2.7 To ensure the Trust brand, reputation and ethos is consistently communicated and protected.

3.0 Principles

Reactive media handling in response to an incident, emergency or press enquiry

All media enquiries should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer

- 3.1 In the event of an incident or emergency all press enquiries should be managed through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will manage the media response in conjunction with the Director of Marketing, Communications & External Affairs, in consultation with the Chair of the Trust Board, Headteacher/Principal and Chair of the relevant Local Governing Body (where appropriate).
- 3.2 Anyone who receives an enquiry from the media should report it to the CEO and Director of Marketing, Communications & External Affairs. The person receiving the initial communication should take a note of the date, time and contact details of the media enquirer, a summary of the query and any information on timing for a response. A comment should not be made by the person taking the message in response to individual media enquiries.

- 3.3 The CEO will then agree whether a response to the media is appropriate. Responses may include a media statement, whether to be party to an interview or no response.
- 3.4 It will be at the CEO's discretion who should be involved in the response, but routinely the Chair of the Trust Board, or other Trustees will be informed as appropriate. In the case of a school level query all responses will, where practicable, be agreed and coordinated in consultation with the Headteacher/Principal and Chair of the Local Governing Body as appropriate.
- 3.5 The decision on whether to seek legal or professional advice will also be determined by the CEO and Chair of the Trust Board, and will be coordinated by the Director of Marketing, Communications & External Affairs.
- 3.6 All other staff, including volunteers, should not enter into discussion with the media and should refer the media to the CEO and Director of Marketing, Communications & External Affairs. Failure to comply appropriately with this guidance may be a disciplinary offence for staff. Governance colleagues should refer to their relevant Code of Code of Conduct and Role Responsibilities, which can be found in the Governance Handbook.
- 3.7 All statements/interviews regarding events or activities related to a school in the Trust should only proceed once the permission of the CEO is obtained. If permission is granted details of students/staff addresses and personal details should not be released to the media. The full name of the student and their age can be released, providing the child does not appear on the 'no publicity list' held at the school. All staff must ensure that no student on the 'no publicity list' is included in media photographs, videos or in any form of communication with the media.
- 3.8 All reactive media handling may be branded with either the school logo, Trust logo or both.
- 3.9 The Trust contact details for the referral of press and media enquiries can be found at the end of this document.
- 3.10 In the event of the closure of a school in the Trust e.g. in case of snow, lack of heating, the Headteacher/Principal should follow the local school procedure for informing parents (e.g. text messages etc). The school website will be a main first point of reference.

Proactive media handling

- 3.11 At times the Trust or one of its schools may wish to proactively seek media coverage to advertise or promote a school opportunity, success or event.
- 3.12 Positive press stories may be drafted by school staff or central Trust staff, however all press releases or adverts must be approved firstly by the school Headteacher/Principal, the Director of Marketing, Communications & External Affairs and finally the CEO (if necessary) prior to release to ensure accuracy and consistency. All press releases must be branded using the appropriate template available from the Director of Marketing, Communications & External Affairs.
- 3.13 If a school in the Trust is aware of a positive news opportunity and would like support drafting press releases or engaging with the media, please contact the Director of Marketing, Communications & External Affairs in the first instance.

Contact details for press and media enquiries:

All press and media enquiries should be forwarded immediately to the following contacts:

Dr Vanessa Ogden

Chief Executive Officer

☎ 020 7790 6327

✉ head@mulberryschoolstrust.org

Mrs Julie Cordice

Director of Marketing, Communications & External Affairs

☎ 020 7920 7933 / 07780 110249

✉ jcordice@mulberryschoolstrust.org

Ms Shanaz Jameson

Director of Governance & Development

☎ 020 7791 7205

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