



Riverside School Board

Policy Name:	Communication Policy
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1. INTRODUCTION

Riverside School Board recognizes the key role played by communications in support of its mission, its obligation of accountability to the public and in the implementation of the actions described in its Strategic Plan. Riverside School Board will continue to foster, promote and encourage open communication with its stakeholders in all areas related to education and highlight our schools and centres to increase visibility and enrollment on all platforms.

1.1 Definitions:

Board - Riverside School Board

Commissioner – A person that is elected or co-opted to the Council of Commissioners for Riverside School Board

Council – Council of Commissioners of Riverside School Board

Communication Officer – Person hired to assist in managing Riverside School Board communication

Parent – The parent or legal guardian identified as such on the student's registration form

Student – Children or adults attending school or centres of Riverside School Board

Stakeholders – Anyone who has an interest in the success of a school or school system

Platforms – All types of communication including website, media, social media, and community relations



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2. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To establish and maintain effective communication within Riverside School Board and the communities it serves;
- To increase awareness of Riverside School Board programs and services, activities, successes and accomplishments;
- To promote Riverside School Board schools and centres and to support their programs and services with an effective communications program focused on system-wide application;
- To facilitate Commissioner involvement within the Riverside School Board as well as the community at large;
- To ensure appropriate use and positive promotion of Riverside School Board's name, image, logo and reputation;
- To inform our stakeholders in a timely manner, and promote:
 - the strategic orientations of the school board;
 - policies and strategic decisions;
 - the educational projects of and the activities taking place in our schools and centres;
 - the orientations and objectives of our adult education and vocational centres;
 - the success plans of our schools;
 - the variety of programs and services offered by Riverside School Board;
 - student achievement and school life.
- To determine a clear division of responsibility;
 - To develop and maintain favorable media relations.

3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The Communications Policy involves two parts: internal communications, and external communications.

3.1 Objectives of Internal Communications:

- To ensure the management and distribution of information to commissioners, staff, parents and students;
- To provide an opportunity for feedback;
- To respond promptly to requests for information;
- To ensure that all staff members receive information in a timely manner regarding decisions made at Board level.



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3.2 Objectives of External Communications:

- To ensure the transmission of official or important information to parents and to the public (e.g.: public notices, requests for access to information, the annual report, press releases, communiqués, letters to parents, etc.);
- To inform the public of the services offered by Riverside School Board and its schools and centres and to make known the accomplishments of its students and staff members provided it is not for a commercial purpose.

3.2.1 Media Relations:

- To ensure coherent and consistent dissemination of information;
- To establish positive relationships with the media that enhance favorable and timely coverage.

3.2.2 Public Relations:

- To build rapport with stakeholders on our platforms;
- To manage the flow of information on our platforms;
- To create a positive exposure of Riverside School Board to the community on our platforms.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Council of Commissioners:

- Commissioners shall fulfill the obligations of their office with integrity, good faith and in the best interests of the population served by the school board and they shall abide by the rules of procedure and policies adopted by Council as per the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Commissioners;
- The Chair of the Council of Commissioners is the official spokesperson of Riverside School Board; however, the Director General may be authorized by the Chair to represent the Board;
- The role of Commissioners in the area of communications is to convey information regarding the overall direction, policies and decisions of the Council while respecting the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of Commissioners;
- At the request of the Chair, a Commissioner may also represent the School Board at a public event.

4.2 Office of the Director General:

- The Director General may represent Riverside School Board on matters related to the administrative and pedagogical operations of the Board Office, schools and centres. The Director General may delegate this authority to another administrator as required.



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4.3 Directors:

- Directors are responsible for the daily communications related to the work of their departments and shall collaborate with the Office of the Director General to ensure the application of this Policy.

4.4 School Administrators and Staff of Riverside School Board shall:

- Familiarize themselves with the Media Authorization Form;
- Advise the office of the Director General of all public relations efforts;
- Provide immediate notification to the Office of the Director General of any issue or occurrence with the potential to generate media coverage;
- Ensure that access to a Riverside facility by the media has been approved by the school or centre's administration and that the office of the Director General is advised;
- Provide advance notice, when possible, of special events to ensure adequate public relations support (i.e.: press releases, staff notification, pre-publicity, follow up with media, assignment of photographers, commissioner invitations etc.);
- Collaborate with the Governing Board to provide and gather information in accordance with this policy and the Quebec Education Act;
- Ensure that the Communication Officer is provided with the calendar of events, newsletters and photos and a short paragraph of special events or activities in order to highlight their schools on all Riverside School Board platforms;
- Inform the impacted persons (student, administrators, staff, parents/guardians and all relevant community partners) of any situations having a direct impact on their well-being, while maintaining confidentiality when required.

4.5 Governing Boards

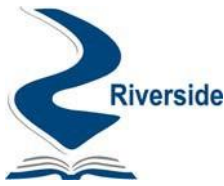
- Governing Boards shall fulfill their obligations as stipulated by the Education Act and this with integrity, good faith and in the best interest of their community and to use Riverside's platforms in a respectful manner.

4.6 Parents and Riverside Community

- Parents and community members are expected to use Riverside's platforms in a respectful manner;
- Parents having any concerns or complaints regarding one of the Board's services, schools or centres and its representatives, should follow the steps in conformity with Riverside's by-law on Procedure Examination of Complaints.

4.7 Communication Officer

- Highlights Riverside School Board schools and centres to increase visibility on all platforms;
- Produces promotional material;
- Strengthens or establishes relationships with media, schools and community;
- Monitors Riverside School Board platforms and intervenes when required to promote a safe, caring and respectful interaction amongst Riverside community members and towards the School Board.



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5. MEDIA RELEASES

- The Chair of the Council of Commissioners or the Director General may issue media releases on behalf of Riverside School Board;
- Media releases issued on behalf of the Board must be in keeping with the Board's mission statement and may not contravene Board resolutions, policies, or procedures;
- Media releases issued by the Board will be forwarded to all commissioners, school administrators and Communication Committee via email or voice mail prior to their release to the media;
- Commissioners and, depending on the topic, the Communication Committee and School Administrators will be advised, prior to the release to the media, of media interventions by the Chair of the Council of Commissioners or the Director General;
- Staff members contacted by the media shall inform their superior immediately, who shall in turn notify the Office of the Director General;
- The Office of the Director General in consultation with the Chair will determine who shall respond to a media request for information. In the event that it is an administrator, support/guidance shall be provided.

6. Use of Platforms

- Flyers for school events and activities, pictures (or videos) and description of activities should be posted on school social media platforms or sent to the Communication Officer on a regular basis in order to promote our schools;
- School events and activities provided by the schools (from principals, teachers or specialists, etc.) should have Media Authorizations from parents prior to sending to the Communication Officer;
- Partners' events and activities may also be promoted on Riverside platforms (LEARN Québec, Quebec English School Board Association, etc.). Community Learning Centres' partners and their activities may also be promoted and/or shared on Riverside social media platforms;
- Requests from parents, teachers or other Riverside community members will not be promoted on any platforms unless it is related to Riverside activity, events or achievement;
- Riverside School Board and Governing Boards may communicate information, forum addresses and social media pages of interest to its community through its networks. To this effect, Riverside School Board may facilitate school access (ex.: classroom, library, gym, etc.) to its community for meetings to address school-related concerns. However, Riverside School Board's platforms may not be used as an open forum for debate. Riverside School Board encourages its schools to collaborate with their governing boards to facilitate communication of information to its community. If the principal of the school and the Governing Board Chair do not agree on a communication's component, the parties could appeal the decision to the Director General. In the event that the issue remains unresolved, it should be brought to the Council of Commissioners for a decision;
- Riverside School Board may share postings via social media platforms from schools or partners in order to promote and inform its community.



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7. VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

- The logo of Riverside School Board shall be used in accordance with the Graphic Standards Guide (see Annex A);
- The logo must appear on all official documents of the Board including public tenders, job postings, etc. as well as on all publicity designed by Board departments, schools and centres;
- The visual branding (images, banners, taglines, colors, etc.) should be respected on all platforms and official documents;
- Any use of the Riverside School Board name/logo must be approved by Riverside School Board;
- Board Email Signature Block shall be used by all Board staff.

8. CRISIS OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Any crisis or emergency, defined as an extraordinary event that has serious consequences on the safety and security of students and/or staff, must be reported to the Office of the Director General immediately.

9. GOVERNANCE

Application of the Communications Policy shall be guided by the following rules, regulations, and laws:

- Quebec Education Act;
- Act on Access to Information and Protection of Personal Information;
- Riverside School Board Code of Conduct;
- Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Commissioners.

10. COMING INTO FORCE

This Policy shall come into force on the date of its adoption.