



Media Relations Addendum

East Anglian Schools' Trust

Approved by: EAST Trust Board

Date: 8 February 2021

Next review: February 2022

Next review due by: Under regular review subject to statutory changes.
Formal review will be undertaken annually



MEDIA RELATIONS ADDENDUM

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Separate Addendum

Advice on dealing with media enquiries and writing press releases.

1. Advice for schools on dealing with media enquiries.

The media have an important role to play in our democratic society. We need to work with them as much as we can. They can be great allies (your good news stories can be ‘bread and butter to local media outlets) but occasionally challenging and demanding. Cultivate relationships with local media in the good times and it will be easier to work with them in the bad times.

2. Be clear what is being asked for – use of email.

In the case of a challenging or potentially difficult enquiry, ask the reporter to send their request in an email. This will provide a clear understanding of the information being asked for and avoid anything getting lost in translation should you need to relate the details to a colleague.

This approach will also lessen the likelihood of being drawn into a potentially difficult conversation and saying something unguarded while under pressure.

Having been sent an email enquiry respond by email. Follow-up questions can also be dealt with via email. Don't feel obliged to answer every single question in detail, especially if you sense the reporter has an agenda. If you have provided a statement, you are at liberty to say 'we have nothing more to say' - unless the new question really is one that deserves to be answered.



3. Advice on giving interviews.

If you decide to speak directly to a reporter (whether print or broadcast media) or agree to a request for a formal interview:

- Ask the reporter in advance what type of questions they want to ask and the topics the interview is likely to cover.
- Ask whether other people will be taking part. If so, who, and what format will the interview take?
- Anticipate potential problems, pitfalls and supplementary questions and have answers prepared.
- Make your main point straight away and don't be afraid to repeat your key messages a number of times throughout the interview.

4. Radio / TV interviews.

- Think of two or three key messages you want to get across and do so regardless of questions asked!
- Make your main point straight away. A three-minute interview may sound like a long time. It isn't.
- Avoid jargon and bureaucratic language. Use an anecdote or metaphor if it helps convey a point.
- If you don't know say so, but politely - perhaps offer to find out?
- Try to end each interview on an upbeat, forward looking note.

5. General advice.

- With any media inquiry, don't be bullied into responding immediately. Reporters will often plead urgency but you must take as long as you need to make sure that an appropriate response is given.
- Sometimes negative stories are exaggerated or simply wrong. Be firm in putting them right.
- If mistakes have been made, always try to explain how the problem occurred clearly, methodically and in a jargon-free way and explain what steps are being taken to stop a problem from re-occurring.
- See if you can turn a negative into a positive. This should not be used as a way of ducking an issue, but there may be occasions when good news can justifiably be used to ameliorate bad news.



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- Keep calm and keep control. Reporters need your co-operation.
 - If possible, check the final broadcast/publication for accuracy (but note that you will not be able to check before publication or transmission!)
 - Submitting letters for publication, particularly short ones, can be very effective to address criticism or unbalanced reports in a newspaper. However, be careful to avoid being drawn into a war of words with the public or editor of the paper; 'tit for tat' exchanges can do more harm than good.

