

E-ACT POLICY

PARKWOOD ACADEMY

MEDIA PROTOCOL

Date agreed by Governors	
Date of review	
Responsible officer	Principal / Business Director

Media Protocol

When is a media enquiry an 'emergency'?

Sometimes, Academies receive a media enquiry which is impossible to answer without disclosing information that is sensitive and which must not be made public. This may be information regarding a student's attendance or behaviour record, their health, outstanding court proceedings, criminal record, child protection concerns, family circumstances or special educational needs.

If there is a way to respond sensibly and clearly to the media enquiry without disclosing this information, the Academy should try to do so. However, if the reporting of the story is likely to impede the safety or wellbeing of a student or member of staff without disclosing such information, this protocol should be used.

How should a Academy respond?

If the Sheffield Star contacts a Academy regarding a case and the Principal (or their deputy) considers that confidential information may need to be disclosed, the Principal should:

- Make sure they are aware of all factors relating to the case or incident, as far as they can be known at this stage
- Discuss with Sheffield City Council Media Team whether this case merits disclosure of information
- Wait for confirmation from the Media Team before proceeding. This is because the Media Team will take legal advice before coming to a view on action to be taken.
- Agree with Media Team colleagues nature and amount of information to disclose
- Contact the Editor of the Sheffield Star to talk through concerns relating to the story
- Make clear which elements of the story are not to be made public and explain why

Should the Editor require written evidence to confirm the Principal's concerns, this should not be produced without the agreement of the Media Team and the Executive Director of Children & Young People's Services.

The Principal should make sure that their Link Adviser, Chair of Governors and the Media Team are briefed on the outcome of the conversation.

The Media Team will take responsibility for notifying the Executive Director of Children & Young People's Services, who may also need to talk to the Principal or may choose also to contact the Editor of the Star.

What happens next?

Use of this protocol does not guarantee that the story will not run. However, the Star will consider the concerns of the Principal and will seek their own legal advice as required.

Sheffield Star commitment here

Should the story run, it is possible that other media outlets will become interested, and the Academy will need additional support. In cases of this nature, the Media Team will be fully supportive of the Principal's support needs. A Communications Officer will be available to support the Academy in producing press statements and carrying out media interviews and can attend the Academy to manage on-site media visitors as required.

In non-emergencies

This protocol does not change existing procedures for media relations. Academies are free to contact the press direct on a day-to-day basis and to take routine media enquiries. The Sheffield City Council Media Team are available to support Academies in answering all media enquiries, as the Academy requires.

It is always preferable to resolve media enquiries at a low-level stage, and with the reporter making the enquiry. The Emergency Media Protocol should only be used when a Principal has serious concerns about a student or staff member's potential safety or wellbeing due to media coverage.

Please note that if a child involved in the media enquiry is looked after by the local authority, the child's social worker and the Media Team should be contacted immediately. As corporate parent, the local authority's responsibilities to looked after children are specific and far-reaching and the City Council must always be notified straight away.

Points to remember

This protocol will only be effective if it is used sparingly and in genuine emergencies.

This protocol applies only to Sheffield Star newspaper, and other media outlets have not given this commitment to Sheffield Academies.

Contacts:

Sheffield City Council Media Team

Katie Harrison, Communications Officer: 0114 2736927; 07710 737905

Simon Hope, Corporate Media Manager: 0114 2039078; 07710 737824

Media Team office: 0114 2039082

Sheffield Star

Alan Powell, Editor: 0114 2767676

Link Advisers

Team office: 0114 2506855

Executive Director's office

Jonathan Crossley-Holland, Executive Director: 0114 2735726