



WEST HESLERTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

“Children are at the centre of all we do”

We encourage everyone in our school community to live life well reflecting Christian attitudes and values and working in partnership with families as part of a wider, caring community.

The hallmarks of a Christian life lived well are –

- Love
- Joy
- Self-control
- Peace
- Kindness
- Patience
- Generosity
- Gentleness
- Faithfulness

Galatians 5:22 – 23

Schools will often work with the media to publicise the many positive areas of school life. On rare occasions, schools meet with press attention in more adverse conditions. At West Heselton Primary School, we aim to work with the press to maximise opportunities for publicity. We aim to enter into dialogue to encourage the publication of a balance of news during times of negative press attention in this way. We hope to encourage a fair portrayal of our school.

How we Attract Positive Media Attention.

a) Press Releases

Press releases will be used when required.

Press releases will:

- Be 1 sheet of A4 (maximum)
- Be clear and concise with short sentences
- Have one key message
- Say it all in the short introduction
- Give advance notice (1 week if possible)
- Include quotes
- Show all names spelt clearly and correctly
- At times be accompanied by a photograph (see photographic guidance)
- Explain what? when? why? who? and where?
- Be read by a minimum of 2 people who check for accuracy of facts and spellings
- Comply with Photographic and Personal Information Guidance (see below)

We will phone or email these to

- Newspapers
- Local radio

- Local television

as appropriate, using named recipients if possible. A copy of all correspondence will be kept for reference.

b) Additional Information.

Following contact from press releases, the press often require further information. We will aim to provide this as soon as is possible with regard to their tight deadlines. A minimum of 2 people will check this to ensure accuracy (as above).

c) Routine News

Following assemblies and events in school, a regular news shot may be provided to local papers. Updates will be sent, if possible, after each assembly or event to encourage school events to be publicised locally and regularly.

All staff, parents and Governors are warmly encouraged to draft press releases and further information. These should be previewed by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors before submission to external bodies.

How we deal with Sensitive Press Issues/Negative Press Attention

From time to time, some stories may occur concerning our school that we may not be so keen to publicise: the stories about controversial issues. We will therefore follow the guidance below to ensure our school receives fair reporting during any such time.

- The Headteacher and /or Chair of Governors should discuss the issues before any statement to the press is made, making use of the Press Office at County Hall for guidance.
- No other persons should make any statement other than “the investigation into this event is continuing, a detailed comment will be issued when that investigation is complete” or “to issue additional information now may jeopardise the investigation that is currently underway” or “I am on my way to a briefing, information will be provided to you shortly”.
- The Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors will make themselves available to the press and undertake any reasonable request. We will endeavour to ensure that the school’s version of events is publicised or a statement of damage limitation is provided: “This was a very isolated incident.”
- Every opportunity will be given to the press to film/photograph our happy school – images are very powerful tools in publicity. During school holidays, school photographs and/or displays of work may be offered. Due regard will be paid to our photographic guidance (see below).

How we Monitor our Publicity

A copy of all press cuttings will be kept in school. This will be maintained and kept up to date by office staff. Cuttings may be donated by supporters of the school. Alternatively, copies of papers will be purchased from general capitation. We will endeavour to involve all pupils with permission to be involved in press photographs, choosing different individuals each time, whenever possible.

What to do if we feel our Press Publicity is Unjust

The Headteacher/Chair of Governors will contact the press body responsible for any offending article, quoting the relevant Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice points. Full redress will be expected. Copies of the offending articles and all

correspondence will be forwarded to the Press Officer at County Hall for guidance during this time.

Photographic Guidance

Upon admission to the school, all parents will be asked to sign a form granting consent for their child to be photographed at the school. A register will be kept of these pupils. School will endeavour to ensure that in the case of any children whose parents do not give consent, we will do our utmost to ensure they are not photographed by:-

- Helping to choose pupils who do have permission for press photographs to be used to be chosen for press photographs
- Identifying these pupils to photographers and/or removing these pupils from groups when filming/photographing is taking place.

Personal Information Guidance

When submitting information to the press, staff may supply the known name, family name and age of each pupil. A brief summary of their achievements will also be included. A quotation from this pupil may also be supplied, yet care should be taken to ensure that no further personal details are disclosed.

Reviewed: Summer 2022
Date of next review: Autumn 2022