

Hazelwood School District

Media Guidelines

Media Guidelines

The Hazelwood School District recognizes the important role the media plays in reporting news and information about its policies, programs, services, events, students and employees. The HSD communications and media relations department is committed to providing District information to the media and making every effort to work within media deadlines.

District and school news must be submitted to the communications and media relations department for approval and proper dissemination to the media. Such protocol ensures accuracy and consistently proper and professional relationships with the media.

All media requests to interview, videotape or photograph District employees, students or board members must be made through the communications and media relations department. When requests for student interviews are granted, the interview will be conducted at a District-designated site to minimize the loss of instructional time and disruption to the learning environment.

Visiting the District

The Hazelwood School District understands that members of the media will need to visit our schools in order to follow through on District stories. Members of the media are expected to notify the communications and media relations department prior to gaining access to District property. As a safety and security precaution, the media will be asked to sign-in and obtain a media pass in the main office.

When videotaping, taking a still photograph or conducting interviews while in the school district, a member of the communications and media relations staff, or designee, will accompany the media at all times to minimize disruption at the school and to assist with any additional requests.

If the issue is sensitive or controversial, the assistant superintendent for communications and media relations will consult with the superintendent or designee. Sensitive or controversial issues include, but are not limited to, the following topics: drugs, alcohol, sex, gangs, weapons, violence and race.

If the topic of interview or photography is sensitive or controversial in nature, parental consent is required.

At all times, the assistant superintendent for communications and media relations/designee and/or an adult representative of the school should be present when students are interviewed or photographed in conjunction with a school or District function. The presiding adult may intercede in the interview or

photography any time he/she judges the questions or images to conflict with the best interests of the student or District.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Hazelwood School District abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which allows students and parents to opt out of the release of certain information about students, including photographs. The communications and media relations department will work with each school to determine who cannot be photographed and interviewed according to FERPA guidelines.

Board of Education Meetings

Members of the media are invited to attend all open meetings of the Hazelwood School District Board of Education. Media may videotape and/or record these meetings. To avoid disruption of the meeting, members of the media are asked to not approach board members, guest speakers or members of the audience inside the board room during the meeting. Interviews must be conducted outside the board room in the foyer or pre-arranged conference room. Copies of the board agenda, informational items and other meeting materials are available online at www.hazelwoodschoools.org

Emergencies

It is the District's practice to work as cooperatively as possible to provide timely information to the media on the emergency and its impact on students and staff members, provided the release of information does not jeopardize the emergency response activities, or conflict with FERPA, the well-being of our students and employees, or the concerns of their families. Members of the media may be assigned to a designated site to ensure full access to the emergency by emergency response teams.

The communications and media relations department will work as quickly as possible to provide accurate information to the media through a spokesperson, written release or statement, or news briefings.