# Carmel Clay Schools

# Communication Handbook
# 2016

# Contents

## Introduction

Carmel Clay Schools (CCS) is committed to maintaining open, transparent and ongoing communication with all stakeholders. In order to build strong relationships within our community and city, the district will strive to maintain two-way conversations with all stakeholders. CCS is also committed to being a news source for relevant and timely information.

This communication handbook was developed for the purpose of creating a cohesive communication process for members of the CCS school community that aligns with the **District Communication Goal**:

> Carmel Clay Schools will maintain transparent communication with all district stakeholder groups, as well as promote highly positive stakeholder perceptions of Carmel Clay Schools' teachers and students through active public relations initiatives.

The items outlined in the handbook are designed to:

1. Provide guidelines and "best practices" that support the District Communication Goal.
2. Cultivate strong and successful two-way communication with all stakeholders.
3. Promote accurate representation of the district to all stakeholders.

# District Community and Public Relations Contacts

| Contact | Role | Contact Information |
|---|---|---|
| Courtney Taylor | Community Relations Liaison<br>*Primary Contact for Community Relations/Public Relations/Marketing Inquiries* | Email: ctaylor@ccs.k12.in.us<br>Phone: 317-844-9961 |
| Colleen Nobis | Interim Administrative Assistant to Superintendent<br>*Secondary Contact for Community Relations/Public Relations/Marketing Inquiries* | Email: cnobis@ccs.k12.in.us<br>Phone: 317-844-9961 |

# Building Public Relations Representative

Each building principal selects a staff member (or they may fulfill the role) to represent the school as the Building Public Relations Representative. The Building Public Relations Representative is familiar with both their building and district communication handbooks and is a resource for others if community or public relations questions arise.

## District Communication Channels

The communication channels used by the district are described below:

**CCSpotlight**
The Spotlight is an electronic newsletter that highlights the accomplishments of our students and staff.

**CCS Website**
District and school web pages contain information on a variety of topics. Additional pages are created when needed and appropriate.

**Opportunities for Families**
Internal and external members of the CCS community may submit information on upcoming events they wish to publicize or highlight. Publication of materials is contingent on approval.

**Press Release**
Releases can be submitted for consideration or worked on in collaboration with the Community Relations Liaison. They are issued by the Community Relations Liaison to outside media and the CCS community for newsworthy items/events.

**School Board Recap Email**
Communicates information from School Board Meetings. Sent via email the Wednesday following a meeting.

**School Messenger Email**
Used to inform parents and staff of upcoming opportunities, reminders, updates or general school-related information.

**School Messenger Phone Call**
Used for communication items deemed "highly important" such as: weather-related notices, time-sensitive material or notification of emergency/crisis situations.

**Social Media Post**
Social media posts are for informative purposes and not intended to be used for dialogue.

**Text (SMS) Message**
Issued for weather-related notifications and emergency/crisis situations. Only parents and staff who "opt-in" receive text (SMS) messages. Follow the instructions here to begin receiving messages.

**Website or myCCS Ribbon**
Shares live information, such as school closings/delays and connectivity issues.

**YouTube**
Videos, such as School Board Meetings, are posted on Carmel Clay Schools' channel for viewing.

# Publication of CCS Student Directory Information

**Do Not Photograph List**
Parents may elect to have their student(s) on the "Do Not Photograph" (DNP) list. This is an ***all-inclusive list*** and students on the "Do Not Photograph" list should NEVER appear in any public photo or be identified by name. Parents/guardians may not request special circumstances for student publicity.

**Best Practices**
- Maintain knowledge of students on the building's DNP list.
- Prior to submitting photos or information for publication, verify the student(s) in the story is not on the DNP list.

**District Policy on Directory Information**
**Policy 8330 Operations** - Directory Information
*Each year the Corporation will provide public notice to students and their parents of its intent to make available, upon request, certain information known as "directory information." The Board designates as student "directory information:" a student's name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; photograph; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; awards received; or any other information which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy, if disclosed. Directory information shall not be provided to any organization for profit-making purposes.*

*Parents and eligible students may refuse to allow the Corporation to disclose any or all of such "directory information" upon written notification to the Corporation within twenty (20) business days after receipt of the Corporation's public notice.*

## Emergency Notifications

In the event of a crisis, the Superintendent's Office will work with school administrators to prepare communication for both internal and external distribution as events occur.

**Emergency Notification Channels**

In the event of an emergency, the district may use one or more of the following channels to communicate immediately with CCS staff and families (see pg. 5 for channel descriptions):

- School Messenger Phone Call
- Text Message[1]
- School Messenger Email
- Social Media Post
- Website or myCCS Ribbon

**Weather-Related Notifications**

In the event of a district-wide weather situation resulting in a delay, closing or early dismissal, please note:

- Communication on weather-related delays, closings or early dismissals will come directly from the Superintendent's Office.
- Information will be posted on social media, the district website and local news stations.
- Information will be sent to all staff and parents via email, phone call and text message[1].

Note: Individual schools will continue to make non-emergent, weather-related calls for building-specific activities and events.

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[1] Individuals must "opt-in" to receive text messages. See pg. 5 for more information.

## News Items
The district would like to promote the good work of its students and staff. Examples of noteworthy news items include, but are not limited to:
- Student, faculty/staff and alumni accomplishments
- Partnerships with community members or organizations
- Special guest visits
- Special events
- Awards
- Interesting or ground-breaking research/innovative projects
- Involvement in an outreach project that helps people in the community
- Innovative teaching techniques

## Media Relations Guidelines
The following guidelines are not intended to limit or hinder transparent communication between Carmel Clay Schools and the media, but will provide a unified process when media personnel contact a member of the district or are present at our schools.

The district will work with media when appropriate and as long as it does not disrupt educational operations. No media personnel are to be on school property without the accompaniment of school personnel and no students are to be photographed or interviewed by the media without consent from a legal guardian.
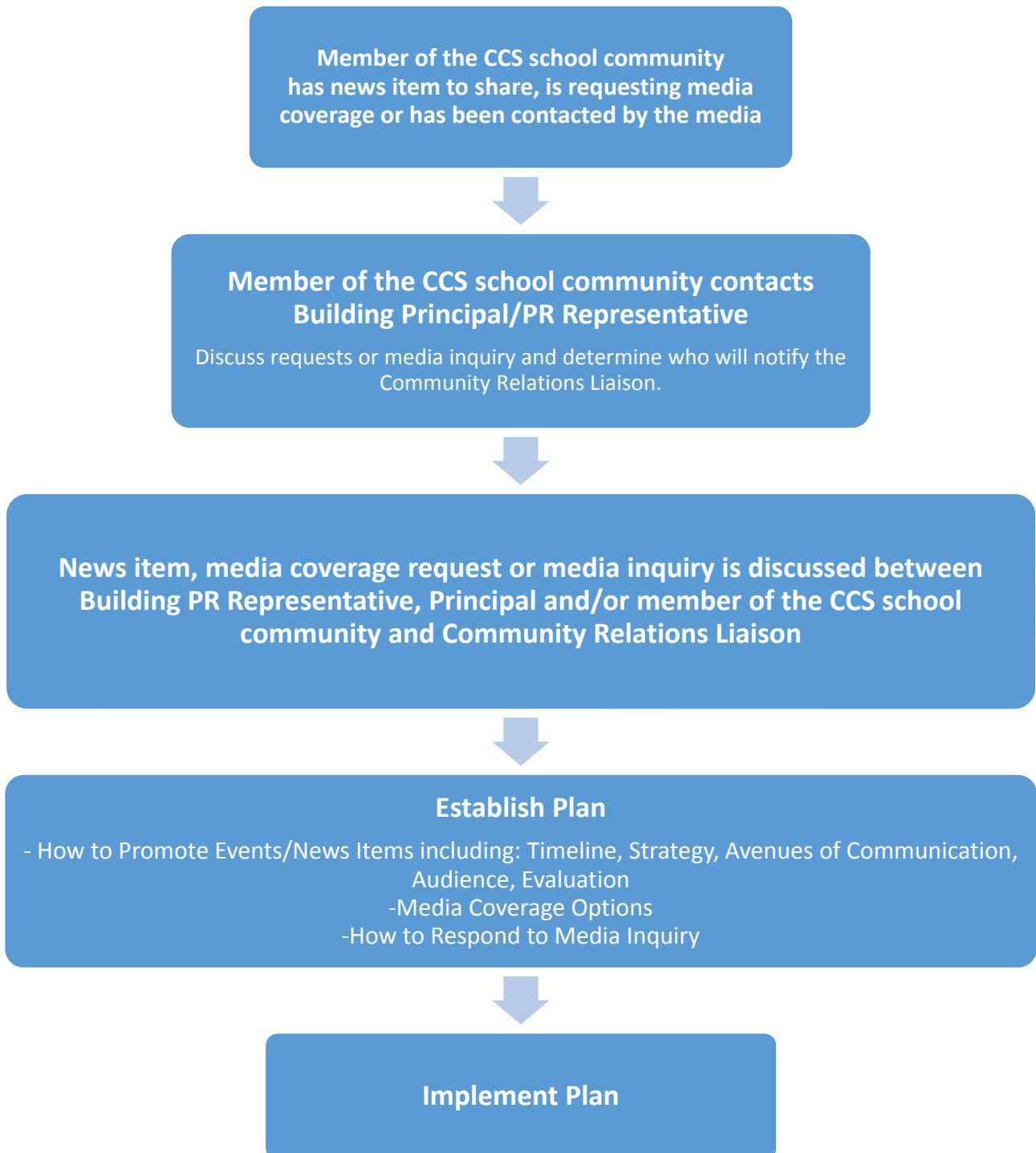
### When Contacted by the Media:
- Thank the member of the media for their interest.
- Explain that all media inquiries are handled through the **Community Relations Liaison**.
- Assess the situation prior to answering questions. When someone calls asking questions, they may or may not identify themselves as a reporter. Please exercise caution and refer them to the Community Relations Liaison.
- Inform the reporter you will pass their contact information and request along to the Community Relations Liaison. Then, please gather the following information:
  - Name of reporter
  - Reporter's contact information
  - Name of the media outlet
  - Topic of inquiry
  - Deadline the reporter is working against
- Inform the Building Principal of the media request and determine who should send the information to the Community Relations Liaison.

### Requesting Media Coverage:
CCS employees may wish to invite media to help promote an upcoming event. Follow the steps outlined in the flow chart on the following page to request media at an event.

## Notifying the District of News Item, Media Request or Media Inquiry

When a member of the CCS school community has a news item or event to share, is requesting media coverage or has been contacted by the media, please follow these steps:

> **Member of the CCS school community has news item to share, is requesting media coverage or has been contacted by the media**

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> **Member of the CCS school community contacts Building Principal/PR Representative**
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> Discuss requests or media inquiry and determine who will notify the Community Relations Liaison.

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> **News item, media coverage request or media inquiry is discussed between Building PR Representative, Principal and/or member of the CCS school community and Community Relations Liaison**

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> **Establish Plan**
>
> - How to Promote Events/News Items including: Timeline, Strategy, Avenues of Communication, Audience, Evaluation
> -Media Coverage Options
> -How to Respond to Media Inquiry

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> **Implement Plan**

### Promotion of Scheduled Events
Time is required to create a plan to effectively cover and promote events and activities. When possible, please allow at least two weeks lead time for any promotional coverage.

## Social Media Guidelines

Carmel Clay Schools recognizes social media will be used by stakeholders in a variety of ways, including for communication and instruction. All of Carmel Clay Schools' policies should be considered when engaging in online activity, however special attention should be paid to the following policies:

- Computer Technology and Networks Policy
- Administrative Guideline
- Student Welfare Policy
- Access to Corporation Technology Resources from Personal Communication Devices

The following best practices are offered as suggestions when using social media:

- **Be factual.**
  - Always double-check the posted information and facts for accuracy.

- **Be safe.**
  - Do not post in real-time from events/field trips/school, etc.
  - Make sure students in photographs are <u>not</u> on the Do Not Photograph list.
  - Do not post photos of students identifying them with first and last names without permission.

- **Be professional.**
  - Separate professional and personal accounts.
  - Double check spelling.
  - Ensure photos are uploaded facing the right direction (i.e. photos are not sideways or upside down).

- **Be responsible.**
  - Review privacy setting and terms of use for each site.
  - Review age requirements for student use.
  - Monitor and moderate your online presence.

## School Messenger Guidelines

The use of School Messenger is encouraged for effective and timely communication with both internal and external stakeholder groups. The following procedures are designed to make communication from School Messenger unified within the district and between schools.

**Building use of School Messenger:**
- School Messenger emails may be sent by each building as necessary for items such as:
  - Newsletters
  - School-wide events/event reminders
  - Class, grade or building-wide communication

**District use of School Messenger**
- District-wide School Messenger notifications will be sent by the Community Relations Liaison and will include:
  - Time-sensitive or "crisis" emails
  - District-wide initiatives, activities, events or opportunities
  - District-wide assessment results

## CCSpotlight Submission Guidelines

The CCSpotlight is produced weekly during the school year. The CCSpotlight will not be distributed during fall, Thanksgiving, winter, spring or summer breaks.

- All submissions should be sent to the Community Relations Liaison at ctaylor@ccs.k12.in.us by noon on Thursday for that week's publication.
- It is a Carmel Clay Schools standard to gain parental approval prior to identifying a student by name in any publication. For the CCSpotlight, it is the responsibility of the individual submitting the story/event to obtain all necessary parental permissions.
- Opportunities for Families, which are sent out in conjunction with the CCSpotlight, should be submitted via the online form here.