Communications Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all Board Members and employees under the jurisdiction of the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. It applies to all forms of written, verbal, and electronic communication.

Purpose

To provide a comprehensive communications plan that will give clear guidelines and define roles and responsibilities for all those involved in the sharing, distributing, and exchange of information within the Board. It is hoped that the procedures set out in this policy will help to manage the flow of information between all stakeholders and staff of the CB-VRSB. The Board believes that miscommunication and/or lack of awareness will be avoided by providing clear directions to all stakeholders regarding fair, reasonable and effective communication.

Policy Statement

The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board recognizes the need for effective and organized communications among members of the school system and with the community at large. It is the belief of the CB-VRSB that open, honest, and clear communications are fundamental to efficient operation within the Board. The Board recognizes its responsibility for proactive, two-way communications with its stakeholders in the belief that an informed community will enhance student learning and build support for public education.

The CB-VRSB believes that all employees, as well as members of the Board, have a role to play in fostering pride in our Board and celebrating success in the learning community. To that end, the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board will provide accurate and appropriate information to the public in a timely manner that is not disruptive to the learning environment.
Cross Reference

CB-VRSB Conflict of Interest (HR 301)
CB-VRSB Network Access and Use Policy (PSS 255)
CB-VRSB Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding & Human Rights (PSS 257)
CB-VRSB Respectful Working and Learning Environment (HR 309)
CB-VRSB Use of Communications Technology Devices (PSS 258)
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP)
CAPER (Checklists of Administrative Procedures for Emergency Responses) Guidelines

Authorization

The policy has been authorized by the Board under motions number 2013-06-30.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Director of Human Resources to ensure that this policy and administrative procedures are implemented.

Implementation

The Director of Human Resources (or designate), with the assistance of the Board Communications Officer, will implement the policy and administrative procedures.

Procedures

1. Channels of Communication

   1.1 The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board recognizes that a formal and proper line of communication encourages the immediate resolution of issues at the local level.

   1.2 Individual complaints, concerns and/or questions should be referred to the immediate administrator/supervisor unless otherwise stated in CB-VRSB policy.
1.3 All formal communication between Board Members and staff will be coordinated through the Superintendent (or designate), unless otherwise prescribed in Provincial Acts and Regulations, CB-VRSB policy, Board By-laws, or a Collective Agreement.

1.4 Generally, the appropriate line of communication for employees extends through their immediate administrator/supervisor unless otherwise prescribed in Provincial Acts and Regulations, CB-VRSB policy, Board By-laws, or a Collective Agreement.

1.5 In such situations where there is any doubt about matters of communication, the Board Communications Officer should be contacted who shall then direct the matter to the appropriate person for response.

2 Media Relations

2.1 Newspapers, radio, television, school and board web sites, and other information media play an important role in keeping people informed about the operation of the CB-VRSB and its schools.

2.2 The Superintendent (or designate) is considered to be the official spokesperson for the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board when dealing with the media on issues regarding the day to day operation of the board. At times, the school principal may communicate with the media upon request of the Superintendent (or designate).

2.3 The Board Chair is considered the official spokesperson for the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board when dealing with the media for all matters pertaining to the responsibilities of the elected Board.

   i. When speaking with the media, the decisions and views of the CB-VRSB supersede those of individual Board members.

3 Communicating With the Board

3.1 Any person or group, except employees (who shall communicate with the Board through channels provided for that purpose), has the right to appear, (according to CB-VRSB By-Laws 7.01), as a delegation to express opinions and make proposals with respect to matters (excluding personnel issues) within the jurisdiction of the Board or the Committee as the case may be.
4 Responsibilities

4.1. All Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board staff are responsible for:

   a. understanding their roles as ambassadors of the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board by communicating and publicly supporting the decisions of the elected Board and the Superintendent;

   b. following approved channels of communication;

   c. understanding their communication responsibilities extend to all written, verbal, and electronic communications;

   d. notifying their immediate administrator/supervisor of any issues, questions, or concerns related to communication;

   e. striving to ensure all communication is prepared in a culturally inclusive and gender neutral manner;

   f. striving to ensure all communication is respectful and follows rules of confidentiality.

4.2. The Superintendent is responsible for:

   a. ensuring staff are aware of all official communications, policies and directives of the Board related to the operation of the system;

   b. maintaining effective and consistent channels of communication within the board;

   c. delegating responsibility to appropriate staff for responding to media inquiries;

   d. approving all system-level media releases.

4.3. Communications Officer is responsible for:

   a. Assisting the Superintendent, Board Chair and staff as needed, consistent with his/her job description.
4.4. **School Administrators are responsible for:**

a. Ensuring informal and formal methods of communication are used within the school to foster two-way communication between home and school;

b. Using a variety of communications methodologies to promote student success;

c. Ensuring staff members are aware of their communication responsibilities as outlined in CB-VRSB policies and procedures, By-Laws;

d. Ensuring school web sites contain accurate, useful, and up-to-date information;

e. Reporting any potential issue, event, or crisis situation taking place regarding their school/students to the appropriate Coordinator in a timely manner as per CAPER guidelines;

f. Approving all school communication prior to distribution;

g. Maintaining open lines of communication with School Advisory Councils.

**Associated Forms**

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources within five years from this authorization date.

**Distribution**

Board Members
All Policy Manual Holders
CB-VRSB Board Website