

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA /1

REFER ALSO TO OCS POLICY 802 FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE WHEN WORKING WITH THE MEDIA.

CONTACT THE OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS MUST ALSO CONTACT THE PASTOR.

Because our schools are on private property, administrators do not have to allow the media on campus. Permission must be granted by the Pastor as well as the Superintendent of Schools for members of the press to be on campus.

POLICE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS REGARDING CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS. ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD FOCUS ON WHAT THE SCHOOL IS DOING TO SECURE STUDENT SAFETY AND MAINTAIN STUDENT WELFARE.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA /2

- Identify one school spokesperson.
- Identify and maintain a media staging area. (This should be coordinated with police.) Don't let reporters wander.
- Direct all media to the school spokesperson in order to maintain consistency.
- Prepare factual written statements for the press in cooperation with the police and the Superintendent of Schools or the Pastor. Provide updates.
- Be certain that every media member receives the same information.
- Be accurate. If uncertain, don't speculate. When appropriate, refer media to other agencies, such as the police or the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Set limits for time and location.
- When giving an interview:
 - ✓ Ask in advance what specific questions will be asked.
 - ✓ Don't say "no comment." If an answer is not known, offer to get information and to get back to the reporter.
 - ✓ Don't speak "off the record."
 - ✓ Keep answers brief and to the point.
- Emphasize positive action being taken. Turn negative questions into simple positive statements.
- Ensure that the sensitivities of those who are touched by the crisis are respected by the reporters.
- Before agreeing to let staff members be interviewed, obtain their consent.
- Students under the age of 18 may not be interviewed on campus without parental permission.