

RELEASING INFORMATION FROM THE OFFICE

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose and Scope

The Office recognizes its responsibility to keep the public thoroughly and accurately informed about all policies, programs, and procedures of the Office. The Office further recognizes the importance of carrying out this responsibility in an atmosphere of full disclosure and in a timely manner. The release of information from the Office affects both the Office's relationship with the public and the Office's ability to perform its duties, internally and externally. Therefore, it is imperative that all released information be complete and accurate. It is the conviction of the Office that a coordinated and consistent system for information release will ensure completeness and accuracy. The purpose of this regulation is to establish guidelines for a coordinated and consistent system for release of information.

Nothing in this regulation shall restrict access to public records. For guidelines on accessing and releasing public records, see AR 1111--PUBLIC ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AND OTHER RECORDS.

Nothing in this regulation shall restrict an employee's right to free speech. See AR 1250--EMPLOYEE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH.

1.2 Definition of Terms

- Media contact is an exchange of information between the Office and any media source, including newspapers, radio, television, and periodicals.
- Routine information is information generated through established procedures of the Office and which cannot be construed as discretionary information.
- Discretionary information is information on Office procedures, programs, or records which may be construed as economically, politically, or socially sensitive.
- Legal information is information on Office procedures, programs, records, employees, or students which may be construed as legally sensitive.

References: AR 1111, OP 1120, AR 1250, BP 5630

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**Santa Clara County
Superintendent of Schools**

2.0 RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA

In order to ensure complete and consistent disclosure of information released to the media, all media contacts shall be coordinated through the Director of Communication Services. Any employee desiring to release information to the media shall coordinate efforts with the Director of Communication Services. Similarly, any employee receiving a request for information from a media source shall refer the request to the Director of Communication Services for coordination. This restriction shall apply to the release of routine and discretionary information.

Video or audio recording by a media source of students or student activities in schools under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education shall be coordinated by the Director of Communication Services. Additionally, student interviews shall be governed by Board Policy 5630.

3.0 RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

3.1 Routine Information

Employees shall obtain approval of their supervisor before releasing routine information to any person or agency outside of the Office, except as required by their regular job duties.

Any employee who, without the approval of his/her supervisor, releases routine information which impairs the administration of the Office's duties or functions may be subject to disciplinary action.

3.2 Discretionary Information

Employees shall obtain approval of their supervisor and the Director of Communication Services before releasing discretionary information to any person or agency outside of the Office. Release of such information shall be coordinated by the Director of Communication Services.

Occasionally, an employee may have difficulty in unambiguously deciding whether or not information is discretionary. If any uncertainty exists, the employee's supervisor and/or the Director of Communication Services should be consulted.

Any employee who, without the approval of his/her supervisor and the Director of Communication Services, releases discretionary information which impairs the administration of the Office's duties or functions may be subject to disciplinary action.

4.0 RELEASE OF LEGAL INFORMATION

As noted in section 1.2, legal information is information on Office procedures, programs, records, employees, or students which may be construed as legally sensitive. Employees shall obtain approval of their immediate supervisor and their Division Head before releasing such information to any person or agency outside of the Office. Any employee who, without the approval of his/her supervisor and Division Head, releases legal information may be subject to disciplinary action.

The Division Head may wish to consult with Legal Counsel and the Superintendent before authorizing the release of legal information. Should it appear that there is the possibility of any media involvement, the Division Head may also wish to consult with the Director of Communication Services to assure that the provisions of section 2.0 will be followed.

NOTE: When the request for legal information is submitted in the form of a subpoena, employees shall follow the steps outlined in OP 1120--RESPONSE TO SUBPOENA DUCES TECUM.