

In accordance with the Columbia County Board of Education Policy KB which states that, by virtue of employment, each staff member assumes the responsibility for fostering good public relations, the Columbia County School System encourages open communication between its schools and the community. The following procedures supplement the policy with additional guidance in fostering positive public relations.

Photographing of Students by the Media

The photographing of **Columbia County School System** students by the media is acceptable as long as **the intended purpose is** to highlight successes, accomplishments, awards, etc. As a general guideline, photographing students in **non-descript, group** settings (i.e. students participating in community service projects, team or club accomplishments, assembly coverage, etc.) is permissible and would not give rise to any confidentiality issues. The request by the media to photograph students in these settings should be made to the school administration for approval.

However, if the media request is to enter a particular area of the school, where the issue is not one as described above and/or possibly relates to a confidential or sensitive matter, this request may be denied. Such media coverage should always be at the discretion of the school administration and with parent knowledge and permission.

Sensitive Communications from School to Home

During the course of a school year it may be necessary for the principal to communicate with the school community regarding issues of a sensitive nature. This is usually done by letter and often to notify parents of particular health issues, such as cases of varicella, meningitis, tuberculosis, etc., within their school, or to communicate safety concerns.

Principals should use the following guidelines when issuing letters to their school community:

- **The principal will notify the superintendent's office to verify if a letter should be sent to the school community**
- **The superintendent's office will make the decision if any notification to the media is necessary**
- **The principal will fax a copy of the letter for approval by the superintendent's office before it is sent to the school community**
- **The letter should be on school letterhead and signed by the principal**

Regarding particular health issues, the Columbia County School System will follow the guidelines established by the Columbia County Health Department.

ADOPTED: 1/13/03

REVISED:

Columbia County Board of Education