



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE CENTRAL QUÉBEC
CENTRAL QUÉBEC SCHOOL BOARD

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COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

LEARNING FOR ALL

The Central Québec School Board recognizes the importance of clear, precise, open and continuous communication with all its partners.

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1. PREAMBLE

The Central Québec School Board (CQSB) is an English-language public organization that ensures the management of a network of schools scattered over a vast territory which caters to the needs of more than 5,200 students, youth and adults.

The purpose of this Communications Policy is to identify and define the Central Québec School Board's orientations with regard to communications, public relations, media relations and emergency communications.

The CQSB recognizes the importance of clear, accurate, open and continuous communication with all its stakeholders. Communications are an integral part of strategic management at all levels of the organizational structure and an essential management tool that enables the CQSB to:

- Fulfill its mandates.
- Implement and share orientations and priorities with its internal and external partners.
- Take action in crisis or emergency situations.

2. OBJECTIVES

To ensure that its objectives are achieved and that its application runs smoothly, the Communications Policy must be endorsed, applied, and respected by all CQSB members of personnel, related councils and committees.

In keeping with the school board's **mission, vision, values** and **beliefs**, this policy aims to promote and facilitate circulation of information, coherence of messages and complementarity of actions, notably by:

- Ensuring the school board's presence by regularly providing objective communications on its decisions, orientations and activities;
- Establishing and defining the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in the communications process;
- Determining the activities and means of communication to be prioritized, while
 - Projecting a positive and coherent corporate image,
 - Adapting communication methods according to needs and targeted audiences.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It is essential to display and maintain a coherent, high-quality organizational image in all aspects of daily public, communications activities.

The quality of communications is a **shared responsibility** to which every administrative department, establishment and staff member must adhere to.

4. STAKEHOLDERS AND TARGET AUDIENCES

Internal Partners

Personnel
Students
Council of Commissioners
Internal Committees
Governing Boards
Parents' Committee

External Partners

Parents/Guardians
Professional associations
Unions
Taxpayers
Local population
Local associations and organizations
Municipalities
Other school boards and school service centres
Government
Commercial businesses
Medias

5. SCOPE

Communication activities within the CQSB are coordinated by the Communications Department.

5.1. Internal and External Communications

The goal of **internal communications** is to provide our internal partners with relevant information to help them carry out their duties, as well as to communicate the school board's administrative decisions.

External communications are intended to convey corporate information to our external partners, as well as to promote the quality of the services offered by the school board.

See section 4.

5.2. Advertising and Public Relations

Advertising, also known as publicity, aims to promote the services offered by the CQSB and its establishments, as well as the achievements of students and staff members.

Public relations aim to ensure the presence and participation of the CQSB in certain community events.

5.3. Media Relations

The goal of media or press relations is to bring a situation or news topic to the widest possible audience via the media. It also involves following up on media requests for information or interviews. See sections 6 and 11.

Emergency communications, depending on the situation, may also require media relations. See paragraph 5.4.

5.4. Emergency Communications

Communications in crisis or emergency situations relate to extraordinary events that become difficult to manage locally, given their impact on different partners and/or audiences, and which can jeopardize an establishment's reputation and/or operations.

In order to minimize the impact and optimize the transmission of information to the concerned stakeholders, the best channel of communication will be established by the General Directorate in collaboration with the Emergency Measures Committee (EMC) and the Communications Department.

See paragraph 6.4 and section 8.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure coordinated action and coherent messages, it is essential that everyone understands their role and abides by this policy.

6.1. Chairperson of the Council of Commissioners

The Chair of the Council of Commissioners, or in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair, **is the only official spokesperson for the school board**. At his or her request, commissioners may also act as spokespersons for the school board.

- He or she is the school board's official representative in dealings with the population and with organizations.
- He or she is responsible for communications relating to decisions and political orientations issued by the Council of Commissioners and the Executive Committee. The same applies to all other social, cultural or sports representations made on behalf of the School Board.
- He or she is responsible for all public statements and administrative communications.

- If the situation makes it necessary, he or she may designate a member of the General Directorate to respond to media requests for the release of administrative information.

6.2. Members of the Council of Commissioners

At the request of the Chairperson of the Council of Commissioners, a commissioner may issue an official statement on behalf of the School Board on a mandate granted by the Council of Commissioners.

When delegated by the Chairperson, a Commissioner may act as an occasional representative of the School Board.

A Commissioner may issue a statement of public interest in a personal capacity, binding only himself or herself.

6.3. General Directorate

The General Directorate controls and manages official communications to school principals, centre directors, directors of service and other managers, as well as to school board personnel and staff associations.

The Director General, or in his or her absence, the Assistant Director General, is the direct link with the school board's official spokesperson.

The Director General, with the authorization of the Chairperson of the Council of Commissioners, may act as the School Board's spokesperson for the release of administrative information. When applicable,

- He or she is responsible for all public statements relating to administrative information.
- If the situation makes it necessary, he or she may designate an employee to respond to media requests.
- He or she participates in the Emergency Measures Committee for all crisis situations.

The General Directorate oversees the application of this policy and informs the Communications Department of any changes deemed necessary for its application and evaluation.

6.4. Communications Department

The Communications Department recommends, applies, or makes any changes deemed necessary for the implementation, evaluation and revision of this policy. It also ensures that it is applied and respected by CQSB members.

This department is responsible for all internal and external communications activities, as set out in the Annual Communications Plan and the Communications Guide.

Information on the principles and application of communications standards can be found in the Communications Guide.

The Communications Department

- Is responsible for the content of the Communications Guide and ensures that it is adapted to the needs of the school board.
- Draws up, in conjunction with the Administration Council, the CQSB's Annual Communications Plan. Specific communications plans prepared to meet certain needs are also the responsibility of this department.
- Verifies/validates media requests received for the school board as a whole and works with the official spokesperson and the General Directorate to obtain and relay the necessary authorizations to employees, as required.

- Gathers information from the media in order to identify their requests and outlines the advantages and disadvantages of such requests to the official spokesperson.
- Participates in the Emergency Measures Committee for all crisis situations.

6.5. Director of Service

The Director of Service supports the General Directorate in all communications related to the management of the services and activities for which he or she is responsible. He or she ensures that information concerning the department he or she manages is released in accordance with this policy and/or the Communications Guide. See paragraph 6.4.

The Director of Service who has received authorization from the General Directorate, handles media relations for a subject or activity affecting only his or her department (unless CQSB representatives are involved, or the intervention of the Communications Department is deemed necessary). When applicable, and

- If the situation makes it necessary, he or she may designate an employee of his or her team to act as media spokesperson for a subject or activity affecting only his or her department. See sections 6 and 11.
- Unless he or she is a designated member of the Emergency Measures Committee on request, he or she participates in the Emergency Measures Committee for crisis situations concerning his or her department. See paragraph 8.1.

6.6. School Principal or Centre Director

The School Principal or Centre Director supports the General Directorate in all communications related to the management of the services and activities for which he or she is responsible. He or she ensures that information concerning the establishment that he or she manages is released in accordance with this policy and/or the Communications Guide. See paragraph 6.4.

The School Principal or Centre Director who has received authorization from the General Directorate, handles media relations for a subject or activity affecting only his or her establishment (unless CQSB representatives are involved, or the intervention of the Communications Department is deemed necessary). When applicable, and

- If the situation makes it necessary, he or she may designate an employee of his or her school team to act as media spokesperson for a promotional activity (educational, cultural or sporting). See sections 6 and 11.
- On request, he or she participates in the Emergency Measures Committee for all crisis situations concerning his or her establishment. See paragraph 8.2.

6.7. Chairperson of a Governing Board

The Chair of a Governing Board is responsible for informing the school community of decisions taken by the Governing Board.

6.8. School Board Employees

An employee may be designated by his or her Director of Service or by his or her School Principal or Centre Director as a media spokesperson for a subject or activity affecting only his or her department or his or her establishment. See paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6 and section 11.

Any statement made by an employee to the media without the prior authorization of his or her Director of Service or School Principal or Centre Director is binding only on that employee.

7. OFFICIAL SPOKESPERSON

See sections 6 and 11.

8. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The School Board has an Emergency Measures Committee (EMC), of which the Communications Department is a member.

8.1. Emergency Measures Committee - Composition

The CQSB's EMC is made up of designated management employees from the following departments/services:

General Directorate	Buildings and Equipment
Human Resources	Educational Services
Transportation Services	Communications

Depending on the nature of the crisis, the participation of other staff members may be required.

8.2. School and Centre Emergency Measures Response Team

The role and composition of the establishments' Emergency Measures Response Team are defined in the establishment's Emergency Measures Plans, which can be found on the dedicated web portal. See paragraph 5.4.

8.3. Crisis and/or Emergency Communication Plan

The Crisis and/or Emergency Communications Plan is detailed in the Corporate Emergency Response Plan and is available electronically on the dedicated Web portal. Each establishment has its own emergency measures plan on that same web portal. See paragraph 5.4.

9. COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

The Communications Guide, tailored to the needs of the school board, is developed by the Communications Department in compliance with this policy. See paragraph 6.4.

10. ANNUAL COMMUNICATION PLAN and SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION PLANS

The annual communications plan is drawn up by the Communications Department, in conjunction with the Administration Council, in compliance with this policy.

Specific communications plans prepared to meet certain needs are also the responsibility of this department. See paragraph 6.4.

11. REQUESTS FROM MEDIA

Considering that the media may forward their information and/or interview requests to CQSB employees, regardless of their function, it is the duty of each director to ensure that its employees are aware of this policy.

The school board's **official spokesperson** is the **chairperson of the Council of Commissioners**. See paragraph 6.1 and section 7.

Only persons authorized by the present policy may communicate or respond to the media on behalf of the CQSB. See section 6.

Management employees are required to inform the Communications Department of any interview request, event or intervention that may lead to media involvement. The Communications Department will perform basic verifications to enable the official spokesperson to determine if the management employee can act as a media spokesperson for his or her department or establishment.

Employees (Teacher, Professional, Support) are required to inform their Director or Principal of any interview request, event or intervention that may lead to media involvement. Employees must obtain the necessary authorization before speaking to the media.

Further information can be found in the Communications Guide.

12. VISUAL IDENTIFICATION

The corporate image, also known as the brand image, and all its various uses must meet the graphic standards approved by the Communications Department.

Further information can be found in the Communications Guide.

13. ORGANIZATION OF FORMAL EVENTS

When organizing events involving the presence of dignitaries (ministers, deputies, governors, mayors, prefects, etc.), certain standards must be respected, particularly with regard to precedence, installation of flags, speaking order, room layout and so on.

Directors or Principals should contact the Communications Department for support and guidance.

Further information can be found in the Communications Guide.

14. LINGUISTIC QUALITY IN COMMUNICATIONS

As an educational organization, the CQSB considers the linguistic quality of all its communications to be of the utmost importance. Therefore, any person communicating on behalf of the CQSB or one of its establishments is responsible for the linguistic quality of his or her communications and must ensure that they adequately meet these principles.

All communications must be made available in both French and English.

Further information can be found in the Communications Guide.

15. SITES WEB, INTRANET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Only persons designated by the Directors, School Principals or Centre Director and the Communications Department may add or communicate information via these platforms.

Further information can be found in the Communications Guide.

16. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS-RELATED FRAMEWORKS

To meet ever-evolving communication needs, other guidelines to support establishments and administrative departments in their communications will be developed in compliance with this policy and will be included in the Communications Guide. In case the required information is not available, employees should contact the Communications Department.

17. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE POLICY

This policy was adopted by the Council of Commissioners at its meeting of April 17, 2024. It comes into effect on that same date.

18. POLICY UPDATE

This policy will be updated as needed.