

MEDIA HANDLING POLICY

Issued: May 2016
Reviewed: August 2017
Next Review Due: August 2018

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 This policy sets out the principles all BDAT staff and volunteers, including central Trust staff, Trustees, staff and Governors in the Academies should follow when dealing with the media.
- 1.2 The policy covers both proactive and planned press activity and reactive media in response to an incident and emergency.
- 1.3 In the case of an incident or emergency this policy should be read alongside the relevant Trust or Academy business continuity plan.

2.0 Aims

- 2.1 To ensure that clear lines of communication and accountability are observed between the Trust, Academies and media when dealing with an incident or emergency.
- 2.2 To ensure that requests for information from the media are handled properly and professionally.
- 2.3 To ensure that the principles of data protection and confidentiality are observed.
- 2.4 To ensure families whose students are on the 'no publicity list' have their privacy protected.
- 2.5 To ensure that only those who have the Trust's permission to speak to the media do so.
- 2.6 To ensure all Academies are supported in handling the media and gain maximum publicity for positive news coverage
- 2.7 To ensure the Trust brand, reputation and ethos is consistently communicated and protected.

3.0 Principles

Reactive media handling in response to an incident, emergency or press enquiry

All media enquiries should be directed to the Trust Chief Executive Officer

- 3.1 In the event of an incident or emergency all press enquiries should be managed through the BDAT Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will manage the media response in conjunction with the appropriate Head Teacher/Principal, in consultation with the Chair of Governors.
- 3.2 Any staff member or volunteer who receives an enquiry from the media should report the incident to their Academy Head Teacher/Principal who will in turn notify the BDAT CEO. Staff or volunteers receiving the initial communication should take a note of the date, time and contact details of the media enquirer, a summary of the query and any information on timing for a response. Staff and volunteers should not comment on individual media enquiries or promise a response.
- 3.3 The BDAT CEO will then agree whether a response to the media is appropriate. Responses may include a media statement, to be party to an interview or no response.
- 3.4 It will be at the BDAT CEO's discretion who should be involved in the response, but routinely the Chair of the Trust, or other Trustees will be informed as appropriate. In the case of a Academy level query all responses will be agreed and coordinated in consultation with the Head Teacher/Principal and Chair of Governors as appropriate
- 3.5 The decision on whether to seek legal or professional advice will also be determined by the BDAT CEO and Chair, and will be coordinated by the Trust.
- 3.6 All other staff, volunteers and governors should not enter into discussion with the media and should refer the media to the Head Teacher/Principal. Failure to comply appropriately with this guidance may be a disciplinary offence for staff and volunteers. Governors and Trustees should refer to the BDAT Governor Code of Conduct.
- 3.7 All statements/interviews regarding events or activities related to the Academy should only proceed once the permission of the BDAT CEO is obtained. If permission is granted details of students/staff addresses and personal details should not be released to the media. The full name of the student and their age can be released, providing the student does not appear on the 'no publicity list' held in the Academy office and only with the explicit consent of the child's parent/carer. All staff and volunteers must ensure that no student on the list is included in a media photograph, video or in any form of communication with the media.
- 3.8 All reactive media handling will be joint branded with the Academy and Trust logo. The Trust standard contact details must be included as shown on Appendix A.

Reactive media handling in response to a Academy closure

- 3.9 In the event of the closure of the Academy e.g. in case of snow, lack of heating, the Head Teacher/Principal should follow the Local Authority process through BSO and follow the local Academy procedure for informing parents (text and phone trees etc). The Academy website will be main first point of reference. The BDAT CEO should be notified of a decision to close and the reason.

Proactive media handling

- 3.10 At times the Trust or Academy may wish to proactively seek media coverage to advertise or promote an Academy opportunity, success or event. This is very much encouraged.
- 3.11 Positive press stories may be drafted by the Academy staff or central Trust staff, however all press releases or adverts must be approved by firstly the Academy Head Teacher/Principal and finally the BDAT CEO prior to release to ensure accuracy and consistency. All press releases should be drafted using the BDAT Press release template and should be joint branded with the Academy and Trust as appropriate. (see appendix B).
- 3.12 If an Academy is aware of a positive news opportunity and would like support drafting press or engaging with the media, please contact the BDAT CEO.

Appendix A

Contact details for reactive media

All reactive media enquiries should be forwarded immediately to

Primary Contact: BDAT Office

Carol Dewhurst, CEO, Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust,
01274 909 120
carol.dewhurst@bdat-academies.org

Beverley Taylor. PA to CEO.
01274 909 121
Beverley.taylor@bdat-academies.org

A message should be left with Trust staff if the CEO is not available.

Out of Office Contact

Carol Dewhurst. M: 07738 948068

Appendix B

PRESS RELEASE

Date:

Embargo date (if applicable):

TITLE

Body copy

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) was set up to support and sponsor Church of England and non-Church of England Academies in Bradford on behalf of the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales.

We work with our Academies to provide a network of support and challenge to achieve our vision of improved outcomes and results for all our children and young people. BDAT is a charity and company limited by guarantee, governed by a board of Trustees who are responsible for, and oversee the management of the company.

BDAT currently sponsors six Church of England Primary Academies and four secondary academies in Bradford. Originally established in 2012, the Trust believes all children only have one chance to receive a good education and has a mission to *“provide high quality education within the context of Christian beliefs and practice”*.

For further information or media queries please contact:

Carol Dewhurst, CEO, Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust,
01274 909120, carol.dewhurst@bdat-academies.org

For more information on BDAT visit www.bdat-academies.org