

# Policies

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## Westerly Public Schools Interviewing and Photographing Students

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### **INTERVIEWING & PHOTOGRAPHING STUDENTS -**

The Westerly School Committee respects the public's right to information and recognizes that the media significantly influences the community's understanding of school programs, thus generating support for Westerly Public Schools. In order to develop and maintain positive media relations, the School Committee desires to accommodate reasonable media requests for information and to provide accurate, reliable and timely information.

#### 1. **Interviewing and Photographing Students**

The building principal or administrator determines what activities his/her school shall participate in, including fundraisers, special events and community activities. He/she also determines what activities he/she wishes to have publicized.

Media representatives, like all other visitors, shall register immediately upon entering any school building or grounds during school hours. This does not include athletic events.

##### a. **Interviews:**

The District shall not impose restraints on students' right to speak freely with media representatives at those times which do not disrupt students' educational program. However, interviews of students may not create substantial disorder or impinge on the rights of others. Therefore, in order to minimize possible disruption, media representatives who wish to interview students at school are required to make arrangements one working day in advance with the building principal.

##### b. **Photographs:**

In order to protect the privacy and safety of students, a media representative who wishes to photograph students on school grounds shall first make arrangements with the principal. Some student's parent/caretaker have their child on a "do not photograph list". The media representative must confirm with the principal or his/her designee whether or not students are on the list before taking photographs.

##### c. **Special Education Students:**

When interviewing or photographing a special education student, he/she shall not be identified as a special education student without prior, written parent/guardian permission.

#### 2. **Student Information:**

Staff may provide the media with student information, including, but not limited to, the name of a student, school of attendance, grade level, honors, and activities, unless the student's parent/guardian has submitted a written request that such information not be disclosed. No other access to student records or personally identifiable student

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information may be provided without written parent/guardian permission. The District shall not release information that is private or confidential as required by law, school committee policy or administrative regulation.

Adopted: November 18, 2009

Revised: