



Interaction &
Communication

— Academy Trust —

Media Handling Policy

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Review Cycle	3 years
Review Date	May 2023

Covid-19 Addendum

As per the standard Media Policy, all press enquiries regarding Covid-19 should be sent straight to the ICAT Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will manage the media response in conjunction with the appropriate Principal and Chair of the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Chair of Governors. Failure to do so may be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct Policy.

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 This policy sets out the principles all Interaction and Communication Academy Trust (ICAT) staff, 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 children 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 ICAT Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will manage the media response in conjunction with the appropriate Principal and Chair of the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Chair of Governors.
- 3.2 Any staff member who receives an enquiry from the media should report the incident to their Academy Principal who will in turn notify the ICAT CEO and Chair of the Board of Directors. In the case of an enquiry directly relating to ICAT, the referral should be immediately to the ICAT CEO and Chair of the Board of Directors. Staff 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 should not comment on individual media enquiries.
- 3.3 The ICAT 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 ICAT 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 an Academy level query all responses will be agreed and coordinated in consultation with the 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 ICAT CEO and Chair and will be coordinated by the Trust.
- 3.6 No other staff, Trustee or governor should enter into discussion with the media but should refer the media to the Principal and/or ICAT CEO as outlined above. Failure to comply appropriately with this guidance may be a disciplinary offence for staff.
- 3.7 Any statements/interviews regarding events or activities related to the Academy should only proceed as instructed and coordinated by the ICAT CEO. If permission is granted details of pupils/staff addresses and personal details should not be released to the media. The full name of the pupil and their age can be released, providing the child 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 must ensure that no pupil 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 jointly branded with the Academy and Trust logo. The Trust standard contact details must be included as seen in Appendix A.

Reactive media handling in response to an Academy closure

3.9 In the event of the closure of an Academy e.g. in case of snow, lack of heating, the Principal should follow the Local Authority process and follow the individual Academy procedure for informing parents (phone trees etc). The ICAT 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 appropriate Academy Principal and finally the ICAT CEO prior to release to ensure accuracy and consistency. All press releases should be jointly branded with the Academy and Trust.

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 ICAT Director of Operations.

Appendix A – Contact details for reactive media

All reactive media enquiries should be forwarded immediately to

Primary Contact: ICAT Office

Amanda Costello, CEO,
ICAT Office, C/O Castle Hill School, Newsome Road South, Huddersfield HD4 6JL

Nicola Roys - Director of Operations
01484544558
info@icat.org.uk

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