



## **West Bend School District Media Guidelines**

**Updated: February 2018**

The West Bend School District recognizes the important role the media plays in providing information to the community concerning educational programs, issues, and events that happen in our schools.

The WBSD is committed to working with the media and providing access to our schools, students, and employees. It is the role of the district's communications manager to assist the media by providing information about the district in an accurate and timely manner.

### **Media Requests**

Media who want to film, photograph, or interview WBSD staff members, students, or board members are asked to make a request directly to:

#### **Nancy Kunkler**

Communications Manager

West Bend School District

Office phone: 262-335-5459

Mobile: 262-307-4947

Email: [nkunkler@wbsd-schools.org](mailto:nkunkler@wbsd-schools.org)

### **Visiting Our Schools**

The WBSD is committed to providing accurate information on the district and its activities in a timely and appropriate manner.

To ensure that the time the media spend in the district is successful, please contact the communications manager prior to your visit. Media should understand that it is the responsibility of the district to maintain an atmosphere that supports learning with as few disruptions as possible. Therefore, anytime a member of the media is on district property, the communications manager or a designee will escort the media at all times to minimize disruption at the school and to assist with additional requests. Media must keep in mind that standardized testing, school-wide events, or similar activities may prohibit a visit on a specific day.



Interviewing, filming, or photographing students on campus can only be done with the permission and supervision of the communications manager and/or school staff (see release information below).

Whenever on a school campus or at the district office, media are asked to wear/display any press identification badges they may have from their employer. This is in addition to any ID stickers provided by the school/district.

### **Interviews with the West Bend School District**

Our district employs educators and administrators who, often times, are leaders in education. Our staff is prepared to discuss current and important issues with reporters. If you are interested in interviewing, filming, or photographing a district employee or board member, your first point of contact is with the communications manager. We are glad to help you find the correct resource for your story and arrange an interview time.

### **Photographing or Interviewing Students**

The WBSD operates in compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This law allows students and parents to opt out of the release of certain information about students including photographs. The communications manager will work with each school to determine who cannot be photographed and interviewed according to FERPA guidelines. Therefore, no interviews, photographs, or videotape is allowed without the prior approval from the communications manager, the WBSD superintendent, or other authorized designees such as principals.

As a general rule, media may take general shots of students without parental consent during school events which are open to the general public, including athletic events.

### **Board of Education Meetings**

The media is invited to attend all open meetings of the West Bend School District School Board. Media may film and/or record these meetings.

To avoid disruption of the meeting, reporters and photographers must only approach board members, guest speakers, or members of the audience outside of the board meeting room. Further, interviews must be conducted outside the board meeting room in the hall or in a pre-arranged location in the building. Board members may request that interviews are scheduled for a later time with the communications manager rather than conducting interviews before or after a board meeting. Reporters can then contact the communications manager to schedule a time.

There is a table for media in the board meeting room where media is invited to sit during meetings.



Copies of the board agenda, informational items, and other meeting materials are available on the School Board page of the district's website at [west-bend.k12.wi.us](http://west-bend.k12.wi.us).

### **Emergencies**

It is the district's practice to work as cooperatively as possible to supply timely information to the media in the event of an emergency on school grounds. Working alongside the West Bend Police Department and/or Jackson Police Department, the district will release information as it becomes available provided the information does not jeopardize the emergency response activities or conflict with federal privacy laws. During an emergency, media will not be allowed inside affected school buildings. Media will be assigned to a designated external area to ensure that the work of emergency response teams are not hindered.

During an emergency, all media calls are referred to the communications manager. The goal of this policy is to allow the crisis response team at the site to give full attention to relief efforts. The district will work as quickly as possible to provide accurate information to the media through a spokesperson, written releases, or news briefings.