

Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation Communication Policy

1. Introduction

Good communication underpins the Federation. It improves service delivery, anticipates issues, develops partnerships, manages expectations, informs of Federation policy development, and enhances participation in the Federation.

Today, it is expected that the Federation will keep all informed about programs, services, initiatives and matters which affect affiliated members benefits, rights and obligations

The affiliated members also expect the Federation to listen – to find out its views, priorities, needs and expectations - and to provide opportunities for participation in the Federation and relevant and useful two-way communications.

The affiliated members also want communication that is understandable, and that takes into account the needs of a diverse society.

The Federation has developed its Communications Policy in response to these expectations.

The policy aims to ensure effective communications between the affiliated members and the Federation, for the benefit of all. It is implemented and supported by the Federations website.

Application

The policy applies to affiliated members, Staff and Executive Members of the Federation.

Effective date

The Federations Communications Policy is issued on {INSERT DATE}.

2. Communications scope

For the purposes of this policy, 'communications' includes:

- those activities involved in the production and dissemination of material and information to the affiliated organisations – whatever the communication medium - about policies, programs, services and initiatives

- corporate identification of Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation
- corporate identification of Federation programs, services and activities
- interaction and engagement with the public
- communication activities and processes within the Federation
- communications advice to Tasmanian Parents and Friends Association, Tasmanian Catholic Education Office and Government on issues of importance or strategic value
- communications research and analysis of public information needs
- monitoring and evaluation of communication programs and projects.

3. Policy statement

It is the policy of the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation to:

1. Provide accurate, timely, relevant and understandable information to affiliated organisations about its policies, programs, services and initiatives.

The Federation has a clear responsibility to ensure that information about its policies, programs, services and initiatives is disseminated or made available.

2. Use a variety of methods to communicate, and to provide information in formats that accommodate the needs of all.

The Federation recognises that not all individuals or affiliates are equally well placed to gain access to Federation information. A range of communication channels and tools will therefore be used.

3. Engage with affiliated organisations when establishing priorities, developing policies, and planning programs and services.

Open and responsive communications and a consultative process with affiliated organisations is vital for effective policy development and gaining support for decisions. This requires a partnership approach with affiliated organisations and ensures that the Federation explains, communicates and gets feedback from affiliated organisations.

4. Ensure that the Federation is visible, accessible and accountable to affiliated organisations.

Clear and consistent branding enables the public to recognise Federations activities, and to improve service to affiliated organisations by facilitating access to Federation programs and services.

5. Ensure that communications planning, co-ordination and execution are an integral component of the strategic management processes of the Federation.

Communication programs are integral to the Federations decision-making, program delivery, and effective partnership with the affiliated organisations. Internal and external communication requirements must be identified and met when planning, implementing, managing or reviewing policies, programs, services or initiatives.

6. Foster a corporate and collaborative approach to communication across the catholic community.

Co-ordination and collaboration within, between and among the catholic community is imperative to ensure coherent and consistent communications across the Federation, and to deliver best value information services for all affiliated organisations. This involves communications specialists who are involved in program delivery.

4. Policy requirements

4.1 Informing affiliated organisations

4.1.1 Availability and Dissemination of Information

Principles

The Federation has a duty to ensure that information about policies, programs, services, initiatives and matters which affect the benefits, rights and obligations of its affiliated organisations can be readily and easily accessed through a range of communication channels and tools that take into account the needs of the particular target audience(s) concerned. Information should be available to all affiliated organisation.

Policy Requirements

To meet the information needs of affiliated organisation, the Federation must ensure that:

- a variety of communication methods are used
- information about the Federation's mission, structure, programs and services is publicly accessible through the Federation's website at www.tcspff.org.au
- information is clearly identified as being from the Federation
- published information is available on request
- published information affecting the rights, benefits and obligations of affiliated organisations is delivered in formats that accommodate all

- the target audience has a convenient means of contacting the Federation so that questions, comments, requests for further information or complaints may be dealt with promptly
- opportunities are available for the public to provide feedback on major policies, programs, services and initiatives, and that such feedback is considered in reviews or evaluations.

4.1.2 Cataloguing and securing information

Principles

To ensure current as well as long-term accessibility, communication materials and published information in all formats need to be well catalogued, easily retrievable and securely maintained.

Policy Requirements

The Federation must:

- ensure that communication records, documents and materials in any format are maintained
- ensure that copies of publications that the Federation issues, in all formats, are maintained
- ensure that all requirements of the [Personal Information Protection Act 2004](#) and other relevant privacy legislation are met.

4.1.3 Copyright and licensing

Principles

Copyright law protects a broad range of material resulting from intellectual activity in the areas of art, literature, science and industry. The Federation must ensure that the ownership rights associated with works subject to copyright are fully respected in all media applications.

The copyright in materials created by Federation employees in the course of their employment and by any other person under the direction or control of the Federation is owned by the Federation, except where there has been prior agreement to the contrary. Note that copyright ownership rests with the Federation.

Policy requirements

The Federation must:

- comply with the *Copyright Act 1968* and the *Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000*
- obtain permission from the relevant copyright owner before reproducing or communicating any material which has not been created by the Federation

- manage the administration and licensing of Federation copyright
- attach the [Copyright and disclaimer notices: web publishing](#) to the website.

4.1.4 Publishing

Principles

The Federation must facilitate public access to their publications that are available (whether by sale or otherwise) to affiliated organisations.

Policy Requirements

The Federation must:

- maintain a register or record of all publications
- make available the register of published works to the Executive Officer, on request
- publish all public information first on the internet
- publish the list of publications produced each year in the Annual Report for that year
- ensure that all published material includes title of publication, author(s), source, date of publication and Federation identity (logo)
- make publications available on request (for purchase if applicable)

The Federation must also ensure that the permission of subjects is gained when publishing photographs in Federation publications. See [Acknowledgement of use of image: template](#).

4.1.5 Plain language

Principles

Federation's obligation to inform the public includes the obligation to communicate effectively.

Policy requirements

Information about Federation policies, programs and services should be relevant to parents and friends needs, use plain language and correct grammar, and be expressed in a clear and consistent style.

This also applies to internal communications, whether delivered in writing or in speech.

See Toolkit: [Plain language in communication: guide](#)

4.1.6 Advertising

Principles

Federation advertising is co-ordinated to ensure that affiliated organisations are adequately informed about Federation programs and priorities.

Policy requirements

Commercial advertising/advertising features

This includes display advertising or advertising features in local and national newspapers, specialist magazines and trade publications.

The Federation should only engage in commercial advertising to communicate a specific message to a target audience.

As a general rule, advertising should be treated in the same way as sponsorship, with advertising funds allocated annually against identified objectives, target audiences, best value for money, and the most effective means of delivering the message. Exceptions are advertising requests which may need to be considered as part of relationship building with organisations, or which promote attendance at particular events.

The Federation President must be consulted before publishing advertisements in print and electronic communication materials, or purchasing advertising space, particularly where advertisements are likely to be contentious.

The Executive Officer has responsibility for co-ordinating requests for Federation advertising features and for ensuring features and supplements support overall Federation objectives.

Affiliated organisation funds must not be used to purchase advertising in support of a political party, and advertisements in any electronic medium must be clearly distinguishable from party-political messages.

4.1.7 Film, video, multimedia and new media

Principles

The new media, in particular websites, CD-ROMs and interactive kiosks, offer considerable scope for providing information and for two-way communication, particularly for consultation and engagement.

However, the Federation must continue to reach, in a timely manner, affiliated organisations whose access to technology may be limited, or who prefer to receive Federation information through more traditional means.

Investments in new communications technology must serve to:

- enhance access to information, programs and services

- achieve efficiencies in the preparation, accessibility and dissemination of information, while preserving its availability to current and future generations
- foster interactive communications and facilitate public consultation in the development and delivery of policies, programs, services and initiatives
- improve service performance and integrate service delivery.

4.1.8 Internet and electronic communication

Principles

The internet (World Wide Web, email) is an important tool for providing information and services to all, 24 hours a day, and for facilitating interactive, two-way communication and feedback both internally and with external audiences.

The following broad principles, apply to the Federations website:

1. Public information is to be published online except for reasons of:
 - a) high cost relative to the benefit of electronic accessibility;
 - b) low usage;
 - c) high publication complexity, or
 - d) low suitability for web delivery.
2. Details of public information not made available on the web must be able to be discovered on the web. A brief summary must be provided together with details on how to access a copy via email, telephone or mail.
3. The Federation must ensure that all web publishing complies with all laws.
4. The Federation must ensure access to, and usability by, the widest possible target community appropriate to the service or information resource.
5. The Federation is responsible for the content and must ensure that the services and information resources provided via the online environment are comparable in quality and functionality to those delivered by other means.

Policy requirements

To ensure publishing standards and communications requirements are met, the Federation must:

- manage their websites and portals in accordance with standards
- clearly identify their website as being part of the Federation
- have the website linked to Archdiocese of Hobart and Tasmanian Catholic Education Office
- ensure that information on policies, programs, services and initiatives published on the internet is regularly updated, accurate, easy to understand, and accessible in formats appropriate for all
- provide a mechanism on the website for receiving and acknowledging feedback from the everyone

- provide a means for enabling online interaction with affiliated organisation, including input to policy development
- respect privacy rights and copyright ownership in all online publishing and communication in compliance with the [Personal Information Protection Act 2004](#), and the [Copyright Act 1968](#)
- ensure that the permission of subjects is gained (whether they be staff or affiliated organisations) when publishing photographs on the Federations website (see [Acknowledgement of use of image: template](#))
- procure the services of external website consultants and developers

4.1.9 Media relations

Principles

For many, media outlets such as newspapers, radio and television are their primary source of news and information about activities, issues and events.

Media coverage of Federations activities and issues therefore needs to be accurate, timely and in context.

Policy requirements

While the Federation is expected to take a proactive approach to working with the media in order to promote awareness and understanding of Federation policies, programs, services and initiatives, they must at all times abide by the Federations rules. These rules aim to achieve sensible co-ordination of media activities and issues within the Federation.

To ensure effective media communications, the Federation must:

- have a designated officer responsible for managing media activities
- have in place internal processes and procedures for responding to media enquiries and requests that may come directly to the Federation
- identify members with the knowledge and/or technical expertise to provide input to media responses or to speak as official representative of the Federation
- provide media training for those members designated to speak as official Federation representative.

See: Spokespersons 4.1.12

4.1.10 Public events and announcements

Principles

Public events are occasions attended by Executive Members for the purpose of publicising significant initiatives or contributions of the Federation.

Adequate planning and preparation are important in ensuring a professional image for the Federation.

Policy requirements

When undertaking a public event, the Federation should:

- in consultation with the Executive Officer, determine if the Executive Members will represent the Federation at the event
- plan and co-ordinate such events with the relevant Executive Member
- take the necessary time to ensure that all presentation or speech material is consistent with Federation policy and provides as much information as possible
- clearly identify all materials, displays or presentations as emanating from the Federation
- provide opportunities for feedback.

4.1.11 Shows and exhibitions

Principles

Where a Federation presence is required for shows and exhibitions

Policy requirements

Exhibits and display materials must clearly communicate the Federation, identify the Federation and be of the highest possible standard in terms of format and presentation.

4.1.12 Spokespersons

Principles

Spokespersons must respect privacy rights, security needs, matters before the courts, at all times.

Responsibility for public statements on policies, priorities and decisions lies with the Federation President.

The Federation President may assign other people to speak in an official capacity on issues or subjects for which they have responsibility and expertise.

Policy requirements

With the exception of the Federation President, no public statement is to be made or question from the media answered by anyone in the Federation, without approval of the statement or of the spokesperson by the Federation President.

To ensure that the requirements of the Federation and this policy are met, the Federation must:

- identify appropriate spokespersons to speak on the Federation's behalf, including technical or subject matter experts
- develop, disseminate and maintain inhouse protocols regarding designated spokespersons
- ensure that designated spokespersons receive instruction, particularly in media relations, to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

See: Media relations 4.1.9

4.1.13 Sponsorship/partnering

Principles

'Sponsorship' is where organisations contribute money, goods or services either directly or 'in kind' to have their company associated with a Federation event or service that will enhance their corporate profile.

Sponsorship support should only be considered where it would be likely to produce significant net benefit for the Federation but with no detriment to the affiliated organisations.

Sponsorship/partnering should be sought in an open and even-handed manner from businesses competing in a particular field. A chosen sponsor/partner's competitors should not be given grounds to complain that they were not given a fair chance.

Sponsorship/partnering should be of activities or events.

Policy requirements

The Federation must put procedures in place to ensure that sponsors/partners do not receive returns that are greater than is proper and proportionate and that any sponsorship agreement is able to withstand scrutiny. The Federation will set out what benefit is reasonable for the sponsors to expect.

Like all collaborative arrangements, sponsorships/partnerships must be communicated in a manner that is fair and equitable to each party. The Federation must acknowledge their sponsors/partners when communicating with affiliated organisations about a sponsored activity. Similarly, the Federation must ensure sponsorship/partnership recipients - individuals, groups or companies - acknowledge the Federation's contribution(s) to their activities.

The Federation should examine rigorously whether particular activities should be excluded from sponsorship and particular types of company should be considered

unsuitable as sponsors on the grounds of potential conflicts of interest or inappropriateness.

'Appropriate' sponsorship is that which is consistent with the Federation's vision, and with companies whose products and ethics are consistent with and complementary of this vision. No agreement should be entered into without careful assessment of the potential benefits and risk(s) to the core business of the Federation, which may emerge as a result of the sponsorship. In other words, the company the Federation enters into an agreement with must be reputable and not likely to damage the Federations's credibility or cause embarrassment.

See Sponsorship/partnering: checklist

The Federations staff or Executive Members responsible for arranging or administering sponsorships/partnerships must consult with State Council before seeking sponsorship.

Approval to proceed must be sought from State Council before issuing or accepting a sponsorship, to ensure its compatibility with the Federations goals.

Once agreement with the sponsor is reached, a formal agreement must be prepared which covers details about delivery obligations, use of corporate identity, cancellation and operational responsibilities.

See Sponsorship/partnering: guidelines

See Sponsorship agreement/deed (receipt): template

5. Accountability and responsibility

The communications function is a shared responsibility that requires support, co-operation and interaction across the Federation.

The Federation in the eyes of the community is dependent upon it meeting the demands for information and for active listening. While the Federation can leave this task to communications specialists alone, this won't be as effective as where communications specialists work in conjunction with Federation President, Executive Members and staff who are involved in program delivery

5.1 Federation President

Within the Federation, The Federation President is accountable for presenting and explaining the Federations policies, priorities and decisions.

The President is the principal spokesperson for the Federation. It is their role to provide leadership in establishing the priorities and overall themes of Federation communications.

5.2 Executive Officer

The Executive Officer has responsibility for providing advice and support on communications issues to the Federation, managing day-to-day media relations, including media enquiries and press releases, and co-ordinating and overseeing the effective communication of Federation policy, initiatives and programs.

The Executive Office is managed by the Federation President, who has responsibility for providing leadership in initiating and mobilising communications activity, positioning the communications function in line with the strategic directions of the Federation, and promoting Federation services.

The Executive Office is specifically responsible for:

- collecting and analysing information in order to provide high level advice
- advising of priorities and themes to be reflected in communication plans and strategies
- authorising and distributing all media comment
- liaising with and providing advice to the Federation President on day to day media issues
- writing press releases and co-ordinating press conferences
- liaising with the media regarding stories of the day and queries they may have
- coordinating media issues relating to Federation initiatives and policies and major announcements
- overseeing the development and implementation of media strategies
- overseeing the Federation's website
- co-ordinating Federation promotions, including shows and exhibitions.
- Provide communications advice and expertise to Executive members as needed
- ongoing development of the Federations Style Guide and Tool Kit
- co-ordinating paid advertising, marketing and sponsorship activities through regular meetings with State Council
- providing advice on advertising campaigns
- providing advice on sponsorships
- implement mentoring and/or development programs for Executive Members and staff of the Federation.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this policy is important for three main reasons: to determine if objectives are being met; for accountability; and for continuous improvement.

The objectives of this policy are to ensure well-coordinated and effectively managed communications which are appropriate for the information and communication needs of affiliated members and which contribute to the advancement of the Federation's objectives and priorities. This can only be determined through monitoring and evaluation.

It is a key principle that the Federation is accountable for its expenditure of affiliated members monies. Accountability is not possible unless the results of expenditures are measured and reported.

Evaluation is good management practice. Without continuous efforts to measure, consider and improve their approaches, the Federations communications practitioners will not be able to refine their techniques, nor to follow the rapidly changing environments.

6.1 Procedures

The Executive Officer has responsibility for monitoring and evaluating implementation of this policy throughout the Federation.

In consultation with stakeholders, the Executive Officer will conduct evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the Federation in meeting the policy requirements and to assess the effectiveness of the policy in helping the Federation to meet its objectives.

The Executive Officer will monitor compliance with all aspects of this policy in a variety of ways that can include:

- examining communication plans and strategies
- scrutinising formal evaluations of communication projects e.g. major advertising or information campaigns
- monitoring usage of the Federation Website
- testing the website to ensure they meet the accessibility requirements
- conducting 'spot checks' of communication products e.g. publications
- checking requests for information and correspondence.

7. Contact Information

Affiliated members or Executive Members should direct all enquiries about this policy to the Executive Officer, regarding its application and interpretation.