



North Walsall Primary Academy

PR policy



Our Mission

To provide the very best education for all pupils and the highest level of support for our staff to ensure every child leaves our academies with everything they need to reach their full potential.

We promise to do everything we can to give children the very best education that gives them the best opportunity to succeed in life. All of our academies have it in them to be outstanding and achieving this comes down to our commitment to our pupils, staff and academies.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Academy Transformation Trust (ATT or The Trust) aims to establish strong working relationships with a wide range of media and recognises the role they play in disseminating information to the public and our communities. As our brand develops, the media continues to play a crucial role in generating awareness of and building the reputation of The Trust, our academies, our achievements and objectives.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all members of the organisation and includes all staff, contracted or temporary, and sets out the context in which they should carry out communications via the media.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To ensure a continued professional relationship with the media and therefore the public, it is vital that we present a clear and consistent image of The Trust and our academies. All of the information originating from us must be factually accurate, complete and reflect the mission, vision and official position of the organisation at all times. It is also important to ensure that information is released to the media in a timely manner.
- 2.2. The way that we are portrayed in the media could have a significant influence on the public perception of the organisation so it is vital to continue to build strong relationships across all types of key media (regional, national and trade).
- 2.3. It should be noted that any news distributed via our official marketing channels, including but not restricted to social media, The Trust/academy websites, newsletters and printed information, should follow the same principles as those outlined in this document.
- 2.4. The purpose of this PR policy is to:
 - establish and maintain positive communications with the public and our stakeholders, via the media, to promote a greater understanding of our ethos, mission and values
 - encourage the public via the media to relate to us as a leading multi-academy trust (MAT) by showcasing what makes us unique and different to other MATs and academy sponsors
 - outline the ways in which we deliver services and objectives to provide the very best education for all pupils and the highest level of support for our staff
 - illustrate the ways in which we and our academies are working to the benefit of local communities.

3. Press releases

- 3.1. Press releases relating to the Trust must be sent from the ATT Marketing Team. Press releases about individual academies may be released by the academy.

3.2. The purpose of a press release is to promote our achievements, objectives, services and to enhance the reputation of The Trust and our academies.

3.3. All press releases sent out to the media must be written in line with this policy and our PR guidelines. All information supplied to external media, must be entirely factually accurate and not to the detriment of any individual, organisation, institution, governing body or political party.

4. Good communication

4.1. Good communication is the responsibility of **all staff**. Staff should keep The Trust's Marketing Team/relevant member of academy staff informed about any items which could be used to generate positive news stories.

4.2. All press releases must follow the process outlined in the ATT PR guidelines.

4.3. When approving or initiating press releases/publicity statements where The Trust is mentioned, the Marketing Team is responsible for vetting material to ensure that it is consistent with the organisation's stated values and beliefs or its agreed position on any matter.

4.4. The PR implications of all activities should be considered and reviewed on a regular basis and advice sought from the Marketing Team in the case of any queries.

4.5. Staff may be quoted in an official Trust/academy press release or as part of a planned response to external media enquiries, but all comment must reflect their official roles and not their personal or political views.

4.6. It is vital to ensure media deadlines are met at all times, as missing a deadline could mean missing a vital opportunity to raise the profile of The Trust. To meet deadlines, The Trust Marketing Team/relevant member of academy staff should be made aware of any potential stories as far in advance as possible, to ensure we can maximise all opportunities to generate positive coverage.

4.7. A good press release should:

- keep in mind topics that especially catch an editor's eye
- consider the five Ws: Who, What, When, Where and most importantly Why.
- be sent to journalists in plenty of time as they work to daily deadlines and news can very quickly go out of date
- be sent in Word or within an email so it is easy for journalists to copy and paste.

4.8. A good press release should not:

- criticise competitors – do not attempt to get PR by criticising or comparing your academy to another academy or school
- be too long, remember to keep it simple and concise, no more than 1 to 1 ½ pages in length
- use jargon or abbreviations.

5. Media enquiries and interview requests

- 5.1. All media enquiries and interview requests should be referred to the ATT Marketing Team.
- 5.2. The media may on occasion print or broadcast stories that do not show us in a positive light. Therefore it is important to maintain this strong relationship so that we can balance such stories with appropriate comment.
- 5.3. The Trust's Marketing Team will be the initial point of contact for all media enquiries. This is to ensure that the correct response is drafted and/or spokesperson is briefed on the nature of the enquiry, the type of publication and the correct course of action.
- 5.4. No person other than the agreed spokesperson(s) should represent the official view of The Trust/an academy unless specifically requested and approved to do so by the Marketing Team.
- 5.5. The spokesperson(s) will represent the brand to all media. Any direct approach of staff by the media, other than specifically invited via press release, must be referred back to The Trust's Marketing Team who will ensure that the enquiry is handled appropriately.

Any staff approached by the media or asked to speak on behalf of ATT or their academy should take the journalist's contact details, publication name and the nature of the enquiry, and advise them that they will refer the enquiry to the relevant member of staff. They should then contact the Marketing Team.

- 5.6. The agreed spokesperson(s) will only comment on matters of fact rather than speculation, and not express a personal opinion unless it is in line with The Trust's ethos, mission and values. A professional opinion may be appropriate in some instances, however.
- 5.7. A quick response will be provided wherever possible as replying promptly and efficiently helps to reduce negative speculation, negate inaccurate information and alleviate any public concerns. Having an effective system in place for responding to media enquiries will also enhance the reputation and image of The Trust/an academy.
- 5.8. When speaking to members of the media, responses will always concentrate solely on facts or explanations or both. Where publicity is used to comment on, or respond to, the policies and our objectives, the comment or response will be objective, accurate, balanced and informative.
- 5.9. Further information on dealing with the media can be found in the PR Guidelines or by contacting the Marketing Team.

6. Negative press and crisis communications

- 6.1. All negative press and crisis communications should be referred to the ATT Marketing Team.
- 6.2. It is important to note that while we aim to seek out and generate positive media sentiment, there may also be occasions where The Trust/an academy may receive negative coverage either as a direct result of an issue within the organisation or by association with the concept of academies or government policies or proposals, should they suffer negative press.

- 6.3. The media may also publish articles which could misrepresent us and/or our position. A crisis or incident could also occur, attracting media attention and requiring a timely and appropriate response.
- 6.4. On occasions such as these it is important to give a measured and carefully planned response as quickly as possible, since negative sentiment left unchallenged could lead to eventual damage of our image or reputation. Critical media coverage will be monitored wherever possible to ensure that the relevant responses, if required, can be prepared in line with the PR Guidelines.
- 6.5. Should an internal PR issue arise within the organisation, The Trust Marketing Team must be given as much notice as possible of issues that may attract negative or contentious media sentiment. The earlier contact is made, the better the situation can be managed.
- 6.6. A clear strategy and chain of command for handling and effectively managing negative media interest must be followed at all times. This is explained briefly below and is outlined in the PR Guidelines and the crisis management flowchart.
- 6.7. The exact process for handling negative coverage may differ depending on the nature of the query or issue, but the overall process is below:
- Issue raised, either internally or externally
 - Inform Marketing Team and Head of Communications
 - Decide way forward involving CEO/MD/ID/Principal as appropriate
 - Draft and agree statement and spokesperson
 - Issue statement to all relevant stakeholders
 - Monitor media coverage and follow up if necessary
 - Update relevant stakeholders and partners on actions and outcomes

7. Filming and photography

- 7.1. We need and welcome publicity to promote the positive image of The Trust and our academies. Photographs and video are a key element to publicity and to building a meaningful reputation of our organisation and the work that we do.
- 7.2. We recognise that we must use images in a responsible way that is also compliant with ATT's Data Protection and E-Safety policies as well as national legislation.
- 7.3. Images should only be used for legitimate and lawful purposes, such as education, and images should be stored in a secure place.
- 7.4. Consent should be obtained if images are to be published on the internet or used for commercial purposes. Each academy should have a photo/image consent form including clear rules on how and when pictures can be taken and published. Specific details of children appearing in photos should not be shared without considering the potential for misuse. Keep personal information to a minimum.
- 7.5. Consider the human rights of individuals, especially their right to privacy. Consider where they are, what they are doing and whether or not they have an expectation of privacy.



Privacy notices should be used to inform people that photography or filming is taking place at events. It should describe what the images will be used for.



8. Social media

8.1. For detailed guidance on social media and PR please refer to the ATT social media policy.





