



quick tips

When a reporter calls or shows up at your school, here are some pointers:

- Don't panic! There's no reason to panic because a reporter has shown up at your school or is on the phone.
- Take a reporter's call if you can - if not, ask your secretary to find out what the call is regarding and tell them you will return the call. If it's going to be a while before you call back, make sure the reporter knows that.
- Be nice. Remember, you catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.
- Their deadlines are not your deadlines. However, be sure to RETURN THE CALL - even if it's your secretary telling them you are unable to call them back due to your schedule. Ignoring a reporter won't make them go away - it will only make them angry.
- Think before you speak. Remember, you can't un-say something.
- If the subject requires some research, tell them so - they will understand. Again, be sure to return their call - either with the proper information or the name and/or department they should call to get the information.
- You have the final say-so when it comes to your school - what YOU say, goes. If you do not want a reporter on campus, then that's that. However, don't use this as a standard response - there must be a reason behind your "no."
- Reporters, like all other visitors, MUST follow established rules at your school. They MUST check-in at the front office and should not be allowed to roam around without an escort.
- When it comes to students, remember one thing: NO student can be interviewed and/or photographed unless they have a current media release on file that is signed by their parent(s) or guardian giving permission.
- Never, ever say "no comment." There are other ways to say "no comment" without saying "no comment." Some examples are:

That isn't something I can discuss now because I don't have all the facts.
I'm really not the best person to talk with about that. You should call (XXXX)

- DO NOT SPECULATE. If you do not have the facts about something, don't try to guess. Either take a few minutes to gather the facts, or refer the reporter to the right person.
- DO NOT ELABORATE. If you are asked a Yes or No question, give a Yes or No answer.
- There is NO SUCH THING as "off the record." This just means you won't be quoted directly, but what you say may still be used in the story. Assume when you are talking with a reporter, you are always on the record.

When in doubt, you can always call the Communications & Media Relations Department - that's what we're here for. The number is 754-321-2300.