**Be heard**

Media tips for schools   
and their communities

**Why use the news media?**

The media is a powerful influencer and shaper of community attitudes. Many New Zealanders get their information and form opinions about issues through news media coverage.

You can use the news media to help your community understand the importance of preventing bullying and creating positive, nurturing environments in which students can thrive and learn. The news media can also be a good way of promoting your anti-bullying event or project.

**Developing key messages**

To work with the media effectively you need strong key messages. Effective key messages from other initiatives which have successfully changed attitudes include:

* Smoking in cars harms children
* Mental health problems affect all kinds of people
* Drinking and driving kills
* Wearing seatbelts saves lives

You can use key messages in different ways – to promote what your school is doing, to include in all of your newsletters, or a specific set of messages when responding to media interest about a particular issue such as a serious bullying incident.

Messages about preventing bullying could include:

* Bullying is deliberately harming another person.
* Bullying involves a power imbalance.
* Bullying is usually not a one-off - it is repeated over time.
* Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional or online (cyberbullying).
* Bullying is harmful - it is not a normal part of growing up.
* Bullying is a serious issue that all schools face.
* Schools need the support of whānau and communities to provide safe, positive learning environments for children and young people.
* We all need to work together to prevent bullying.

Use these key messages in all your media activity. People hear strong, clear key messages when we say them over and over again. They need to be statements listeners and readers can relate to and agree with.

**List your key messages here. Put them in newsletters, on posters and in emails.**

**Key Messages for (name of organisation) are:**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Know your news outlets**

To be effective in the news media, you need to know who your local news media are and what they are looking for.

**Newspapers**

Newspapers – there will be at least one daily newspaper in your community and at least one, but probably more, community newspapers.

**Dailies**

Daily newspapers are usually published six days a week, either in the morning or the afternoon. They want fresh news that’s happening now, like:

* statistics and trends
* surveys and research results
* a visit or speech by an important person
* new anti-bullying plans and programmes
* student-led events and activities
* human interest stories (stories about people and their experiences, e.g. a student who has changed from bullying others to being a mentor to others).

Daily newspapers will have space for features once or twice a week. These are longer articles, which take an in-depth look at a topic or issue such as local trends. Most daily newspapers will have a reporter responsible for reporting on social issues. By providing news stories for your local daily newspaper you can ensure your community understands what bullying is and how they can work with you to prevent it.

You can also develop a relationship with the newspaper and perhaps bring the editor on board with the issue.

**Community Newspapers**

Community newspapers are usually published weekly and delivered free to every household in a specific geographical area. They rely heavily on contributions from individuals and organisations in their readership community, and will often give space for a regular column to community organisations.

Community newspapers need news that doesn’t go out of date over the week, such as:

* events
* profiles of people and organisations
* programmes
* human interest stories.

**Radio**

Radio is the most immediate of all news outlets. It’s first with the news and can update stories hourly. Radio wants short, sharp news and stories with quotes that are easy to understand and make a point quickly and succinctly (the 20 second sound bite).

There are three national radio networks in New Zealand, plus many local and special interest stations. Radio likes big news events but there are many community stations interested in publicising local events and initiatives and talking to local people about local issues.

Radio New Zealand (RNZ) is our state-owned radio network. It has no commercial advertising and has newsrooms all over the country. RNZ also has documentary and magazine style programmes where issues are examined in more depth. They also have a dedicated education reporter.

There are two commercial radio networks with stations nationwide, RadioWorks and Radionetwork. They both have newsrooms in most cities in New Zealand.

Māori Radio has national news programmes and there are a number of local Māori radio stations. Radio NZ features a bulletin of news on topics of interest to Māori listeners which is run several times a day.

Niu FM is a Pacific Island radio station networked nationally.

**Television**

Television reporters look for stories with drama that can be told by interviews and pictures.

Television newsrooms are mainly located in the main centres, but there are some regional reporters for TV1 and TV3.

TV1 has Breakfast from 6am and regular news bulletins in the morning, early evening and late evening. Seven Sharp screens after the 6pm news and takes a closer look at the issues of the day.

TV3 has news bulletins in the early evening and late evening, and Story (a current affairs show) that screens Monday to Thursday at 7pm.

Prime has a news bulletin at 5.30pm each day.

Māori Television has a news bulletin Te Kaea at 7.00pm each day.

Television documentaries look at a topic in depth - for example, how someone has been affected by bullying.

**Internet**

New Zealanders are increasingly getting their news off the internet. Most major news outlets have online sites carrying the latest news.

For example:

* TV One News www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news
* Newshub (TV3’s online news site) www.newshub.co.nz
* Stuff, the Fairfax newspapers site at [www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz)
* The Herald at [www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz)
* Scoop at [www.scoop.co.nz](http://www.scoop.co.nz)
* Radio New Zealand at [www.radionz.co.nz](http://www.radionz.co.nz)
* Newstalk ZB (Radio Network’s news site) at [www.newstalkzb.co.nz](http://www.newstalkzb.co.nz)
* Radiolive (RadioWorks news site) at [www.radiolive.co.nz](http://www.radiolive.co.nz)

[The Bullyingfree.NZ](http://www.bullyingfree.nz/) website (launching in May 2016) will also feature what schools are doing to prevent bullying, so send your media releases to us too at [info@bullyingfree.nz](mailto:Carmel.Irwin003@msd.govt.nz)

**Magazines**

New Zealand has a range of magazines with different audiences. Many of these publish articles on bullying from time to time.

They include:

* *The Listener*
* *Women’s Weekly*
* *Mana Magazine*
* *Metro*
* *North and South*
* *Next*
* *Spasifik*

There are also many ethnic and special interest magazines. Magazines take an in-depth look at issues and people. They have a long life and may sit around for months in homes and waiting rooms. Getting your messages into magazines may reach a lot of New Zealanders.

The excellent Community Comms Collective has prepared a list of generic [newsroom contacts](http://www.communitycomms.org.nz/#!media-contact-list/cy0g), which is a good starting point when you’re looking for who to contact about a story opportunity.

**What is news?**

For a news media outlet to be interested in covering your event or project, it needs to be interesting and newsworthy for their readers and listeners. Journalists use the term ‘news values’ to identify what makes a topic or person newsworthy:

* it’s new
* it’s happening – events, new projects
* affects people
* has local significance
* names and actions of important people
* novelty – something unusual
* timeliness
* conflict
* human interest/people stories.

Most often you will be able to identify one or more news values in your media activity.

“Students teaching the teachers about bullying prevention” (novelty)

“All Blacks visit local school” (important people)

“Christchurch schools dealing with earthquake aftermath” (local significance)

“Riverton schools involve community in Pink Shirt Day” (happening now/local significance)

The language of news is black and white, bold and simple. News is pitched to a reading age of 12 years. We scan newspapers and magazines, rarely reading every word. When we listen to the radio we are usually doing something else at the same time.

To be effective in the media you need to use the language of the media – bold words, strong statements, colourful quotes.

* Schools join forces to stop cyberbullying epidemic
* Buddy system nips bullying in the bud
* Undercover bullying system no secret weapon for college.

**Being in the news**

News outlets need news. They like to know when you are doing or saying something newsworthy.

There are two ways to be part of news stories:

1. Responding to news such as:
   * a serious bullying incident
   * comments by public figures
   * new research on bullying.
2. Creating the news by releasing information such as:
   * success stories from your anti-bullying initiatives
   * a bullying prevention event at your school
   * student wellbeing survey results
   * new bullying prevention initiatives or programmes.

When you have news you can:

* phone a reporter with an idea
* send a media release
* write a letter to the editor
* hold a press conference
* let your local newspapers know about a photo opportunity.

Get to know your local media personnel; developing relationships with reporters is invaluable. Once they know you and what you do, they’ll come to you for information and comment on news events. Invite reporters to your meetings, send them your newsletters, make sure they know about events you are part of, such as Children’s Day or Pink Shirt Day.

Don’t be afraid to email or ring a print journalist directly if you know of a good photo opportunity

**Writing a press release**

A media release is the most common way to let the media know about news in your school community.

A media release gets the media interested in a story - it does not tell the whole story. The reporter will phone you for more information and some comments. It should make your position clear on an issue or topic and provide contact names and phone numbers for further information.

News outlets get hundreds of media releases a day, so yours should stand out to be noticed. Make it newsy and easy to read, and make strong statements.

A good press release has:

* a strong headline to grab attention
* a clear, simple message
* one point per paragraph
* one page only.

It must include:

* the date
* your school
* your role
* contact details.

Use:

* your key messages
* statistics
* examples
* quotes.

**Sample press release**

Contact Information:

**[School]**

**[Address]**

**[School] celebrates Bullying-free.NZ Week 2016 with <event or project>**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**[School]** staff and students are marking New Zealand’s first-ever Bullying-free.NZ week in May with <description of event or project here>

The **[Name of Event]**, taking place at < venue> on <date to be added> will see the school coming together with whānau and the local community to promote a shared understanding of what bullying looks like and how it can be prevented.

Principal <name to be added> said “[statement in support of the event of project] …..”

**[Further description of what will take place at event, including any photo opportunities]**

**For more information**

**<contact name>**

**<contact email>**

**<contact number including mobile>**

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**Writing a letter to the editor**

A letter to the editor is an expression of opinion by a person or organisation. You can be colourful and opinionated in a letter to the editor. You can use it to compliment or criticise a news outlet, to make a statement on an issue, or to recount a personal experience.

Keep letters to the editor short, otherwise they’ll be shortened by the editor. Most newspapers give a maximum word count on their letters page.

**General tips for media interviews**

Being interviewed by a reporter, whether it is for radio, television or a newspaper article, can often take you out of your comfort zone. Being prepared is essential.

*Before the interview*

Here is a checklist to ensure you go in to the interview as prepared as possible.

When the reporter calls, ask

* What news organisation are they from?
* Is the interview live or pre-recorded? (for radio)
* What news programme is it for?
* What issues does the reporter want to discuss?
* Who else have they spoken to?
* Why are they ringing you today?

If you are happy to be interviewed, always take at least 10 minutes to prepare – tell the reporter you are happy to speak and you will be available in 10 minutes.

* Always follow your media policy
* Clarify key messages and practice them
* Imagine the worst question the reporter could ask you and have an answer ready.

*During the interview*

* Aim for responses between 10 and 20 seconds
* Avoid using YES and NO
* Avoid using jargon
* Always stay on the record
* Brand your organisation
* Pause and think before you speak
* Stop talking when you are finished
* Ring back the reporter if you have anything further to add
* Remember you are being interviewed because you are the expert
* Use strong statements and interesting language
* Give facts, lists and examples
* Remember who your audience is - local or national, specialised or general.

*Following the interview*

* When you see the story in the newspaper or hear it on the radio, ring the reporter if there are any factual mistakes. This will help to ensure these mistakes are not repeated in future stories.

**Dos and don’ts**

**Do:**

* Always call reporters back or they’ll call someone else.
* Know what you are going to say. Practise with a colleague, don’t be hurried by the reporter, take ten minutes to prepare.
* If you don’t want to answer a question, have a refusal ready (“I’m sorry I don’t have the information to answer that question”).
* Know and respect deadlines. It’s difficult for them to use information they receive right on the deadline - by tomorrow it will be out of date.

**Don’t:**

* Go off the record. This is when you give information to the reporter and ask them not to use it.
* Lie.
* Comment on other organisations or people; speak for your own school only.

**Involving students in media activity**

Often a news media outlet may want to interview or take photographs of your students to support coverage of an event or project. Obviously your school’s first priority will be to ensure the wellbeing of children and young people in your care and to protect their privacy.

If you have invited media to attend your event, be prepared by seeking written permission from parents and caregivers for publication of images of their children before the event takes place. On the day, staff will need to work together to ensure that students whose whānau have not given permission are not filmed or photographed.

If a journalist wants to talk directly to students associated with a project, it’s important to seek prior written permission from their legal guardian (particularly if they are under the age of 16). Allow sufficient time to prepare students for the interview. Consider nominating students who are resilient and confident, and therefore more likely to be comfortable with the process.

Depending on the age of the young person, you could help them prepare for a media interview by encouraging them to write down their top three key messages and practising some likely questions.

Checklist:

* Are under-age students being interviewed with the consent of adults?

* Is the interview being conducted in a child-friendly manner, including having an adult they trust present, allowing sufficient time and a comfortable environment?

* Have the potential consequences of the student’s comments, both short-term and long-term, been considered and explained to the interviewee?

* Have they been told what will be done with what they say?

**SAMPLE CONSENT FORM – photos/video/artwork**

**Permission to allow <insert media outlet name> to interview/publish photos/video your child/your child’s artwork.**

**On <date> our school will be holding an event <details to be added> which media may attend. We are seeking permission in advance from whãnau for students to feature in media coverage about the event.**

**Please circle one:**

**I give permission for my child to be filmed/interviewed and understand that the resulting article and images may be published in print and online.**

**I do not want my child to appear in coverage of the event.**

**Full name**

**Class**

**Signature of parent or legal guardian.**

**Date**

PRINT NAME

## Please return your completed form to your child’s teacher by <insert date>.

**Responding to media queries about a bullying incident**

There may be significant media interest following a serious bullying incident. It is essential that schools anticipate this and have guidelines in place for liaising with the media.

It is recommended that:

* Schools appoint one media spokesperson to front the media, usually the principal or chair of the Board of Trustees (and a back-up person).
* If asked for an interview, schools ask what the key questions will be, who else is being interviewed, who the reporter or interviewer will be, is it live or pre-recorded, and what the deadline is.
* Schools do not feel under pressure to respond on the spot. Take time to prepare and be confident of your messages – rehearse what you will say.
* Schools develop and agree up to 5 key messages that sum up their story, what happened and what is being done about it.
* Schools establish a process for when the media contact the school. For example, when a call is received it is referred to the principal who contacts the chair of the Board of Trustees before responding to the caller.
* Schools ensure the school community (staff, students, parents and whānau) are kept as informed as the media – and remember anything you tell them is in the public arena and can quickly reach media.
* Schools consider accessing media training for the principal and/or chair of the Board of Trustees.

The appointed media spokesperson should:

* always be truthful
* repeat the key messages when speaking to the media
* if they do not know, say so
* say why not if information cannot be shared
* make sure the privacy of students is maintained.

The appointed media spokesperson can specify that they will only respond to questions by email.