

# GRADUATION

## ***Privacy and Freedom of Information Considerations***

### ***Privacy Considerations***

Information about graduates, including names, photos, academic standing, awards and scholarships is personal information under *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (LAFOIPP)*. This information cannot be released without consent.

### ***Consent forms***

General consent or release forms generally do not cover the particular issues around graduations.

Consent must be informed - there should be complete disclosure of how the information will be shared and with whom.

For administrative convenience it is preferable to obtain a wide-ranging consent covering all the types of requests usually received by the school.

### ***Who should provide consent?***

In the case of students who are 18 years or older the consent must be obtained from the student. Consent of parents is not needed unless the student is not mentally competent.

Younger students of 16 or 17 years are usually mature enough to understand the issues involved and consent for the release of information should be obtained from the students.

Parental consent for students under 18 can be requested as well. If a parent consents but the student does not, the information should not be released. If the student consents but the parent does not, it should be dealt with on a case by case basis to determine the issues behind the matter.

### ***Providing a List of Graduates to MPs, MLAs or community organizations***

Requests for lists of graduates from MPs, MLA's or other politicians or from community organizations should be treated

in the same way as any other information request under *LAFOIPP*. The names of students must not be released unless there is consent from the students.

If consents are obtained, they could be made on the understanding that the recipient will use the information solely for the purpose of sending a congratulatory message and that it will not be used for any other purpose including being placed on a mailing list.

As an alternative, the school may wish to offer to provide the letters to students from politicians or community organizations if they wish to send congratulatory messages.

### ***Providing a Lists of Graduates to Newspapers***

The release of a list of names and/or photos of students to a newspaper is personal information and should not be made without consent of the students.

### ***Graduation Ceremonies***

Graduation ceremonies are invitational events just as all other school events. The school can restrict who may attend. This is the case even when the event takes place off school property.

Publishing the names of graduates in programs for graduation exercises does not require consent. The event is a closed school event - publication is limited and solely for school purposes.

If members of the press are invited to ceremonies they should be informed that it is their responsibility to obtain any consents that may be required for publication unless the school otherwise advises. If the school has obtained consents from graduates for release of information then those names can be shared with the press.

### ***Photos and Videos***

Taking of photos and video during ceremonies can be allowed but the school can impose whatever conditions it considers appropriate.

Attendees should be informed of the conditions at the commencement of the event or in the program. A statement similar to the following should be included:

*"Photos and video are allowed only for personal use and cannot be published in any form without appropriate consents."*

This restriction also applies to students. If students wish to place photos on a website or

social networking site they will need consent of the individuals in the photos. Students who violate this policy can be subject to school discipline.

### **Scholarships and Awards**

When students apply for awards or scholarships the application form should state whether or not one of the conditions of winning is that the name of the winner will be published. The application of the student will then act as implied consent for the publication.

### **Yearbooks**

Much of the information usually contained in a yearbook, including photos of graduates,

graduation ceremonies, and lists of scholarship and award winners is personal information. The publication of yearbooks is a well-known tradition and yearbooks are usually of very limited circulation. Therefore parents and students can be informed that the information about the student will be published in the yearbook unless the student advises that he or she does not consent. Students must be informed of the option and must be given a reasonable opportunity to object.

If the yearbook or portions of it are more widely published, such as on the internet, then specific written consents must be obtained

*NOTE: The information provided in this document should not be regarded as legal advice. If you have questions about a specific fact situation please contact your legal counsel.*

### **Consent to Release of Information - Graduation**

*The school receives requests for information about graduating students. By signing this consent form you agree that the school may release the specified information to the named parties.*

I consent to the release of the following information:

- my name; my graduation photo; my awards and scholarships to the \_\_(insert name)\_\_ newspaper. I understand that the paper may also publish an electronic version of the information on the newspaper's website.
- my name and home address to the Member of Parliament for \_\_(constituency)\_\_ and the Member of the Legislative Assembly for \_\_(constituency)\_\_ on the condition that the MP/MLA is informed that information can be used solely for the purpose of sending a congratulatory message and that it cannot be used for any other purpose including being placed on a mailing list.
- *(Add any other ways in which information is usually shared)*

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent (if student under 18)