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Intent

Effective media relations are critical to the ongoing success of the Shuswap Association for Community Living (SACL) and the way that SACL is perceived by our Persons Supported and the public at large. SACL will work to ensure that information regarding the organization is accurate, informative and positive. SACL will work to manage information provided to media outlets, including traditional news media formats and online coverage.

Guidelines

Responsibilities

SACL will provide information regarding our products, services and performance to the media and the public at large as appropriate or required.

SACL will provide a consistent source of information when posting news to any media format, and when responding to inquiries.

Only the Executive Director or Board Chair may act as designated SACL media spokesperson to convey news to Persons Supported, stakeholders or community members, and respond to their inquiries.

SACL employees are prohibited from speaking on behalf of the organization, releasing confidential information, releasing news, or communicating as a representative of the organization without prior express authorization to act as a designated SACL representative.

SACL employees shall direct any and all media inquiries to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible for gathering all facts in a crisis situation.

Public Statements

Public statements regarding or in reference to SACL must use positive language, and shall not defame, and/or speak negatively of SACL as an organization, SACL staff or SACL departments.

SACL strictly prohibits the disclosure of confidential information regarding our processes, products, objectives, Person's Supported information, financial information, or any other information protected as confidential under the SACL Confidentiality Policy.

SACL strictly prohibits the public communication of unverified information, e.g. rumours or information gathered from a third party.



SACL media releases must use appropriate trademark, branding and logo information.

SACL media releases must be approved by the Executive Director or Board Chair prior to their release.

Only a designated SACL spokesperson shall be allowed to make public statements and/or provide media releases.

Crisis Communication

In the event of a crisis, SACL will communicate with the public/media in a timely fashion and provide as much detail as is deemed necessary by the Executive Director, the Board Chair, and legal and confidential restraints.

When a crisis happens it is important to gather all the facts of the situation and develop a clear message to transmit to the public/media. The message should include:

- ❖ A concise, clear, and appropriate explanation of the crisis and what caused it
- ❖ An expression of care and concern for the crisis and its impact on stakeholders (employees, Person's Supported, the general public, etc.)
- ❖ An honest and sincere apology, if warranted
- ❖ An expression that SACL takes responsibility for any mistakes it might have made
- ❖ A commitment to identifying the underlying factors that caused the crisis and how SACL will address/correct them
- ❖ A positive conclusion that establishes confidence that the crisis will be resolved and that SACL will move forward in a positive/successful manner

Depending on the severity and type of crisis, the message may be written and delivered to the media or announced verbally by (designated media spokesperson). In most cases, a written message will suffice, but at times SACL may want to make a formal public announcement or media interview.

SACL's Executive Director and/or Board Chair should continue to monitor the media/public's reaction to the crisis and SACL's response in order to determine if further messages/announcements are necessary. Monitoring public reaction can clarify what information might need to be transmitted in more detail and will help SACL remain pro-active in their management of the crisis.



Any SACL employee who discloses confidential information, releases news, or communicates as a representative of the organization without prior authorization will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This includes communications made to the media, public at large, friends, family members, etc. through all forms of transmission including, but not limited to, verbal, written, and electronic (email, social media, blogs, etc.).