

3. MEDIA CONFERENCE

Secondary 4 and 5

Choose a topic

This involves selecting a topic that is worthy of public interest. It should ideally relate to Drug Awareness Week, or at the very least, relate to the theme of the week.

The students themselves should identify the topic and prepare the contents to convey to the media. It goes without saying that a topic on which young people express themselves should arouse media interest, for instance by presenting a position on **binge drinking** or on smoking pot. It could also be a group initiative prepared by the students, for instance a song, drawings, a Website, etc.

Prepare the rollout of the media conference

The media conference should not exceed 40 to 50 minutes. In order for it to unfold without any problems, a detailed program will enable the organizers to make sure they don't forget anything, and will help to ensure the success of the event.

SAMPLE PROGRAM

1. ROLLOUT

7:30 a.m.	Preparation of the signage and the room (ideally, this should be done the day before).
9:00 a.m.	Guests and the media arrive and are greeted.
9:30 a.m.	The facilitator welcomes them and briefly explains how the media conference will unfold. He introduces XXX and YYY, who will take the floor.
9:40 a.m.	The facilitator thanks XXX and YYY and announces a presentation by: <i>to be determined</i> .
9:50 a.m.	The facilitator initiates a question period for journalists. The facilitator ensures that only one question is asked at a time, and effectively leads the question period. The spokespersons answer the questions.
10:00 a.m.	Event wraps up.

2. TASK ALLOCATION

TASKS	NAMES
Researching media particulars:	
Drafting the media invitation:	
Drafting the guest invitation:	
Spokespersons:	1. 2. 3.
Facilitator:	
Drafting the media releases:	
Calling the media:	
Organizing the room and the signage:	
Persons responsible for greeting the guests and journalists:	
Others:	

Media conference logistics

- Make sure everything is in place with regard to signage at the event site in order for journalists to find the room as quickly as possible. This is very important because journalists are often in a hurry and have several events to cover on the same day. In this respect, ask that students be stationed in strategic locations to direct the guests and the journalists.
- Prepare the room: A classroom would be an ideal venue. The spokespersons will stand at the front and face the room of guests and journalists, who can sit at desks.

Note: Allow an aisle through the centre and along the sides of the room to enable a camera operator to easily move around with a video camera on his or her shoulder. In the front of the room make sure there is enough room for people to take the floor.

- Place a reception table outside the conference or event, near its entrance.
- Provide paper and pencils for people to take notes.

- Prepare media kits (release, information about the organization, event program, etc.).
- Bring all documentation that is relevant to the event.
- Make sure any necessary audiovisual equipment is working properly and is on hand for the start of the conference or event.

Note: If the room that is chosen is very big, it is a good idea to use a voice amplification system (microphone, speakers).

Drafting the invitation and media release

Guidelines for drafting the media invitation

- Select an appealing title (“*Students at St. Jude School take a stand on...*” or “*Three hundred students raise their voices to...*”)
- Event topic or theme.
- The name of the participating organization or organizations.
- Date and time of the conference.
- Location (address of the location and name of the room where the event will be held).
- Name, title, and position of a few of the VIPs who will attend the event in order to arouse media interest.
- Particulars of the contact person to reach for additional information and interview requests.

Sending out the invitation

The invitation can be delivered in person or sent by fax, email, or regular mail.

EXAMPLE

MEDIA INVITATION

THE STUDENTS AT ST. JUDE SCHOOL TALK OPENLY ABOUT MARIJUANA

As part of Drug Awareness Week 2006, the students at St. Jude School invite you to come and meet with them to learn their position on...

On this occasion, a group of students will present... and answer journalists' questions. This is a unique opportunity to hear the perspectives of these young people on a current event. Don't miss it.

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R.S.V.P. before November 21, 2006

DATE:	Wednesday, November 22, 2006
TIME:	9:30 a.m.
LOCATION:	St. Jude School 22 St. Jude St. St. Jude
ROOM:	Room 1120 (1st Floor)
Contact:	Stephanie Blanchet-Couture Telephone: 222-222-2222

What is a media release?

- A media release consists of a notice, information, or a document that is officially transmitted by a company or a person.
- A media release announces news, issues an idea, informs about a service, product, cause, or event that is apt to interest the general public or a specific group.
- A media release is drafted specifically for the media and is intended for publication or broadcast.

What are the qualities of a good media release?

For journalists, a well-written media release represents a work and reference tool. Furthermore, the quality of its writing is essential, because the release can be used in whole as the final text for a press article. Accordingly, a good media release should take the following points into consideration:

- interest in terms of the topic,
- quality of the writing,
- brevity of the text (ideally no longer than one page),
- accuracy of the information,
- captivating title.

It is important to specify when the media release should be released in order for the news to be released at the right time. Furthermore, it is necessary to always end the release with the mention -30- to indicate the end of the text that is being published. Under all circumstances, all of the information that comes after the -30- mention is intended as additional information for the journalist.

EXAMPLE

Media Release

For immediate publication

STUDENTS AT ST. JUDE SCHOOL SPEAK OPENLY ABOUT SMOKING MARIJUANA

(Montréal, November 22, 2006) – This morning, at a media conference, the students at St. Jude High School invited the media to hear their position on...

In fact, as part of Drug Awareness Week 2006, more than 20 15- and 16-year-old students took a stand and spoke openly about...

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Contact: Stéphanie Blanchet-Couture or Antoine Côté
 Telephone: 222-222-2222

Circulation

The media release must not be used before the media conference is held. In addition to being handed out to the journalists who are present, it may be sent out by fax, by email, by regular mail, or delivered in person to the media who are targeted and who were not represented at the event.

Telephone calls

Telephone calls should be made to journalists to make sure they received the media invitation and to ask them if they are interested in covering the event or in featuring it as a news item, to find out if they would like to receive additional information by means of a media release or other documents, or if they want to arrange an interview with the spokespersons.

It may be a good idea to call and remind journalists who responded to the invitation on the morning of the media conference to confirm their plans to attend.