

Supporting Possibilities in Responsible Independent Teens (SPIRIT NYS)
Media Communications Policy
June 2021

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we maintain a positive and consistent message through all communications about SPIRIT NYS in print, social media, interviews, presentations or other forms. SPIRIT NYS manages communications through clearly defined channels to protect the population we serve, promote good public relations, mitigate crisis, and maintain a reputation of leadership and transparency on vital issues and breaking news.

Spokespeople

- Only the CEO and the Board Chair of SPIRIT NYS or other individuals designated by the Board are authorized to speak with the media. These spokespeople and the Board will collaborate on message development and coordinate who will handle which press inquiries.
- All other staff, board, and committee members should be professional and helpful to the media by connecting them with the spokespeople but should neither speak to the media nor provide any information unless prior approval was given by the CEO or the Board Chair.
- Designated spokespeople may rely on others to provide talking points, handle technical information or assist in communicating with the media.
- Documents that are published to the SPIRIT NYS website have been reviewed by the CEO, Board Chair and often the entire Board of Directors and these resources may be shared with interested parties.
- SPIRIT NYS does not use its students for marketing, communications, or public relations purposes. Only youth who are 18 years and older, have provided SPIRIT NYS with written consent to be used in media communications, are provided training, and have received authorization from the CEO may speak with the media.

Crisis Management

- All crises should be reported to a Board member who will alert the CEO or Board Chair.
- Only one designated spokesperson (the CEO or Board Chair) will speak to the media to provide information about SPIRIT NYS's response to a crisis.
- If needed, a crisis management lead person can be appointed by the CEO or Board Chair after notifying the Board. This person will direct and coordinate all aspects of the organization's response including managing messages and the media.
- All comments should be guided by professionalism and transparency and serve to mitigate the crisis while reinforcing the leadership role of SPIRIT NYS.
- "No comment" is not an acceptable response. If an answer is unknown or cannot be immediately answered, we will make note of the question, tell the inquirer we will get back with them, and when we do get back with them, provide the best information we have. If the question cannot be answered due to a policy (such as sharing personnel information, etc.) we will let the inquirer know that.
- If a story relates to improper actions by any member of the board, the board may choose to engage legal counsel prior to any statements being made to the media or the general public. An individual accused of wrongdoing may need to retain his or her own legal counsel and may not be able to communicate with the organization's legal counsel in order to avoid waiving the attorney-client privilege.