

Media and Public Relations Policy

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1.0 Introduction

This policy is designed to ensure that Localise makes the most of its media coverage and public relations activities to help protect and boost its reputation and support the organisation in its mission of enabling girls and young women to develop to their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world.

As a transparent organisation, Localise supports the fostering of strong, professional relationships with different types of journalists and photographers. We recognise the significant role media coverage can play in people's perceptions of the organisation and so we aim to maximise opportunities for positive media coverage.

1.1 Aims of Policy:

- To raise national and local awareness of Localise in terms of its name and role.
- To see Localise recognised as an organisation that supports young people to contribute to their community and grow as a result.
- To see Localise recognised as a relevant non-political organisation that fosters youth empowerment, gender equality and the empowerment of marginalised young people in Ireland.
- To support Localise staff and volunteers when they have any contact with the media (which includes television, radio, print and online media).

2.0 Media Interviews

The Communications Officer is the first point of contact for all national media enquiries, including both proactive (planned) and reactive (unplanned) enquiries. Should journalists from national media approach Localise staff or volunteers directly on any issue that relates to Localise or its activities, or to ask for an opinion or comment on a relevant issue, they should pass the query on to the Communications Officer or Director.

If the Office receives a query from national media when the Communications Officer isn't in the office, they must be contacted immediately. If they cannot be contacted or is on leave, the Director must be contacted asap.

National media opportunities are offered initially to the Director. If he is not available, he will suggest an alternative.

Local media interviews may be undertaken by the Communications Officer or youth worker staff.

3.0 Media Statements

Media statements are official responses from Localise to negative or controversial media enquiries or anticipated enquiries. Media statements are written by the Communications Officer and signed off by the Director.

4.0 Press Conferences & Spokespersons

In the unlikely event that Localise would need to disseminate important critical information to the public, the Communications Officer will organise a Press Conference. The official spokesperson for the organisation will be one of the following: the Director or the Communications Officer or the Chairperson of the Board.

5.0 Proactive (planned) Media Relations

One of the roles of the Communications Officer and Communications Committee is to maximise publicity for good news stories, provide necessary information to the media and identify suitable spokespeople for interviews.

Their roles also include being creative about developing new ideas, ways and forums in which to promote the work of Localise and the benefits of volunteering.

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6.0 Press Releases

Press releases are the main way in which good news stories are highlighted to the media. The Communications Officer is responsible for writing press releases to be issued to national media.

Press releases for local media may be initiated by the Communications Officer. Coming up to big events the Communications Officer prepares a press release to distribute to local media.

7.0 Media Filming and Photography Requests

Where possible, the Communications Officer or a member of the Communications Committee will be present to oversee filming or photography of Localise members for national use. Before filming/photographing takes place, the relevant Leader(s) must check Personal Registration Forms to ensure the relevant parents have given permission for filming and photography of their child or children.

8.0 Good Practice

Localise is a signatory of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages and it is our policy to only use images and messages that are based on the paramount principles of:

- Respect for the dignity of the people concerned;
- Belief in the equality of all people; and
- Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice.

9.0 VIP Visits

The Communications Officer and the Director are responsible for managing visits by

VIPs to Localise events. It is vital that guests are well looked after as well as, of course, aiming to gain maximum online and traditional media coverage for such visits.

10.0 Critical Incidents

A critical incident is an incident that presents a significant danger to Localise members and the public or which has the potential to significantly disrupt or harm the reputation of Localise. Critical incidents could attract significant media interest. In the case of a critical incident it is the role of the Communications Officer, in consultation with the Director to manage internal and external communications (keeping volunteers, parents, the public and other stakeholders informed) with reference to Localise's Critical Incident Plan. A major incident will attract immediate and probably large-scale media interest, depending on the nature of the incident or emergency Localise is dealing with. Dealing effectively with the media is therefore critical to the effective handling of the major incident. This is especially important as the public will turn to the media immediately for information during such an incident. It is therefore essential that information given out to media is accurate, timely and delivered through easily accessible channels to prevent the media from going elsewhere for information which may be from a less reliable source.

11.0 Social Media & Group Messaging

The Communications Officer has overall responsibility for Localise social media with volunteers from the Communications Committee heading up activity on some platforms e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Pinterest. Members are asked to adhere to Localise's Social Media Procedures when utilising social media, including no tagging of under 18's.

Due to Data Protection legislation, certain requirements must be followed to protect people's privacy e.g. phone numbers and email addresses. All users of such groups for Localise purposes should follow the Guidelines on Use of Group Messaging. A close eye is kept on comments made on our social media and Localise removes any inappropriate comments on Facebook and, where necessary, bans offenders. Offensive tweets are reported to Twitter with the request that the offending tweets be removed.

12.0 Localise Logo

It is essential that the Localise logo is used correctly and consistently in all its applications and that all members adhere to the Guidelines for Use of Localise Logo in order to create a professional, recognisable identity for Localise at national and local level. Reproducing the logo on any clothing, bags or items needs approval from the Director.

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13.0 Data Protection

Localise is very conscious of protecting people's personal data, including emails and their photographs. As such, all staff and volunteers must follow the Data Protection Policy of the organisation which complies with GDPR.

14.0 Localise Website

The Localise website is managed by the Communications Officer. It provides information on Localise's structure and governance, information for volunteers, parents and other partners.

15.0 Publications & Leaflets

The Publications Officer is responsible for producing professional quality leaflets and promotional material. These are available at the office for staff to download and add their details to for local use.