I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Media Policy is to provide the City of Naperville with guidelines to keep the media and the public fully, fairly and accurately informed of programs, services, events and issues in a timely and forthright manner.

Efficient and effective communication with the media is critical to the City of Naperville’s ability to carry out our goal of operational transparency. Coordination, uniformity, accuracy and timeliness are the cornerstones of strong and productive media relations.

The City of Naperville utilizes a variety of communication methods to disseminate information about the City and its projects, events and initiatives. As communication methods and associated technology evolves, the City will consider participating in new communication formats when approved by the City Manager, the Information Technology Team Leader and the Communications Manager and adapt its media policy accordingly.

Effective media relations best serve the City through:

- Providing accountability to the public and transparency of government
- Ensuring that timely and accurate information is conveyed to the public regarding incidents or issues of a sensitive or controversial nature
- Establishing and maintaining an accurate public perception of the City
- Increasing the visibility of the City on local, statewide and national levels
- Informing residents of City programs and services
- Promoting the City’s achievements, activities and significant events
II. POLICY

GENERAL MEDIA

The Communications Manager serves as the primary spokesperson for the City of Naperville and conveys the official City position on routine media inquiries, issues of citywide significance and situations that are sensitive and controversial in nature. The Naperville Police and Fire Departments operate under specific departmental policies and dedicated public information officers (PIOs).

Directors and other designees may receive and handle routine media inquiries themselves when pertaining to their department. When a director or designee participates in a media interview or inquiry on a topic which may need to be closely monitored in the media or has the potential to present the City in an unfavorable light, please inform the Communications Manager via e-mail or phone for the sake of maintaining consistency in our responses. Inquiries of a controversial nature that have citywide impact should be directed to the Communications Manager.

In cases of community-wide significance, defined as a significant operational event that is likely to disrupt or alarm members of the community, the Communications Manager will work with other City leaders to assess the situation, develop key messages and/or a written statement to detail the known facts and summarize the City’s position.

In the event of a community-wide crisis or significant emergency situation, the Communications Manager will handle all contacts with the media and will coordinate the information flow from the City to the public as well as from the City Manager’s Office to City staff. Examples of these types of situations include severe weather events, flooding, acts of terrorism, major power failures/outages or major water/gas service disruptions. In such situations, all City departments should refer calls from the media to the Communications Division in accordance with the City Emergency Operations Plan.

Depending on the situation, the City Manager may designate another or an additional City leader to serve as a spokesperson. In such a situation, initial media calls will be directed to Communications. A single initial media contact ensures uniformity and consistency in coordinating a focused and targeted City message. Several uncoordinated responses increases the risk of contradictory information being disseminated, which will leave the public confused and ultimately mistrusting of City administration.

SOCIAL MEDIA

To address the changing way residents communicate and obtain information relating to the missions, programs and goals of the City online, the City of Naperville may consider participating in select social media formats to reach a broader audience where appropriate and when approved by the City Manager, the Information Technology Team Leader and the Communications Manager.
A. All official City of Naperville presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the City’s Communications multimedia network. All City use of social media must be approved by the Communications Manager and be in compliance with this policy. The City Manager and Communications Manager will review and approve requests to use social media sites as deemed appropriate. It is the responsibility of the Communications Division of the City Manager’s Office to act as the City’s official spokesperson, including acting as the City’s official web presence via social media. The City will maintain one official page per each approved social media outlet, which is to be created, maintained and monitored by the Communications Department, all of which are to be regularly updated. The singular exception to this policy is a Twitter account for the Naperville Police Department allowing for afterhours and weekend updates to incident reports. The Communications Division will distribute all social media content and ensure each of the approved uses and sites adheres to the social media policy for appropriate use, message and branding consistent with the goals of the City of Naperville.

B. Use of social media must comply with applicable federal, state and City ordinances, regulations and policies, as well as proper business etiquette. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, release of public information, the First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by the City of Naperville.

C. Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the City’s official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Naperville.

D. Communications employees and their designees representing the City via the City’s social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City of Naperville.

E. Violation of this policy may result in the removal of pages from social media outlets.

F. The City of Naperville reserves the right to remove any messages or postings, including those that are obscene, and in violation of the copyright, trademark right, or other intellectual property right of any third party. Violations can include but are not limited to:
   a. Foul, defamatory or disparaging language or comments;
   b. Purposely inaccurate and/or misleading comments;
   c. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
   d. Comments on work-related legal proceedings or ongoing investigations;
   e. Solicitations of commerce;
   f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
g. Confidential or proprietary information; and/or
h. Information that may tend to put at-risk the safety and security of the public or public systems.
III. GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

Media inquiries should be referred to Communications if they involve issues of citywide significance and/or are of a controversial or sensitive nature. This enables Communications to track pertinent issues and to anticipate problems or concerns in the proactive development of the City’s message.

The Communications Division promotes the City through media releases and several additional communication avenues regarding special accomplishments, events, activities, programs, initiatives and plans. All media releases intended for external audiences should be routed through Communications.

Since positive media solicitation is an integral element of the City's communications strategy, any ideas for articles or media pieces that would positively portray the City, its work or its community should also be directed to Communications.

Guidelines for communicating with the media when the issue is non-controversial and limited to the staff member’s area of expertise are as follows:

When fielding a media inquiry, it is not necessary to respond immediately. It is acceptable to gather your notes and thoughts and call the reporter back. Be cognizant that the reporter is on deadline. If necessary, you may obtain in writing via e-mail: the name of the person calling, the media organization, the deadline, the anticipated time of release of information in print or broadcast and his/her questions. Request that they copy the Communications Manager on their inquiry. Additional questions to ask are the content of the story and the other sources the reporter will be utilizing.

Guidelines for dealing with TV and radio interviews:

When you receive a request for an on-air interview, please contact Communications and provide the reporter’s name and affiliate. Communications
will handle scheduling the interview and will be available for consultation prior to the interview.

The best approach with the media is to be prompt, helpful and honest. All contacts from the media should be returned as soon as possible, in deference to reporters' deadlines. At the most, a call should be returned within a half-day. If that is not possible, an alternate employee (if appropriate) or a Communications Specialist should be asked to handle the call.

Issues that should not be discussed with reporters are:
1) Legal issues, including liability issues and pending litigation;
2) Personnel issues, including those surrounding existing and former employees;
3) Questions that involve City integrity, such as ethics; or
4) A community-wide situation or emergency.

Refer all such inquiries to the Communications Manager or City Manager.
VI.  CONTACT INFORMATION

Linda LaCloche – Communications Manager
laclochel@naperville.il.us  |  (630) 420-6034

Kate R. Schultz – Communications Specialist
schultzk@naperville.il.us  |  (630) 305-5341

Rick Sander – Deputy Fire Chief, Naperville Fire Department
sander@naperville.il.us  |  (630) 305-7081

Bill Davis – Sergeant, Naperville Police Department
davisb@naperville.il.us  |  (630) 420-4137