MEDIA INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AISSA

The following framework for dealing with the media is provided as a guide for Heads of Schools.

1. Schools should be seen as co-operating with one another although they are competing, in many instances, for students from a common pool.

2. It would be helpful if schools could refrain from direct comparison that, from its very nature only serves to denigrate others.

3. While it seems sound to describe a school as ‘good’ and/or ‘different’, to say it is ‘superior’ or ‘better’ introduces an unfortunate comparison.

4. School media releases need to be carefully vetted so that incorrect statements are not made and that damaging comparisons cannot be drawn from what is represented.

5. Schools are being marketed to show their worth and offerings and it is likely that many comments and advertisements are produced by persons other than the Head.

   It would seem appropriate for the Head to be involved in the preparation of all media releases about the school to remove any comparison details and to read the intended release to ensure there is nothing that can be construed as an unfortunate comparison with another school in what is written.

6. In interviews, the same avoidance of comparisons should be adopted. When the comments are ‘live’ there is little difficulty; however, when what is said is subject to editing, it is placed beyond any real control. The juxtaposition of one comment with another from an entirely different source (as has happened in the past) can create difficulties.

7. Although reporters are, in general, honest, they are needing to ‘sell’ their report. It is wise then, to have some person always listening when a comment is requested over the telephone, or to record the conversation in its entirety, so that it is clear what was actually said. Then at least when the edited version is released, and if there are some inaccuracies and ambiguities which were neither stated not intended, there is an answer to be given when and if criticisms are laid at the speaker’s door.

8. As is well known, the media thrives on controversy for its own sake and the ‘sales’ it produces. Schools should not knowingly contribute to this where such controversy may negatively affect the integrity of other schools.

9. While it is acknowledged that schools need to advertise and to market themselves as best they may, to make unfortunate comparisons which might injure colleague schools should be deliberately avoided.
Heads agree not to take out paid advertisements which record Year 12 results in public papers. Speech Day reports published in public papers should not include students’ results.

Schools will not respond to advertising of a mass public relations nature that is solicited by the media. Schools are free to advertise as and when they wish but not at the behest of any media group soliciting the advertising.

Schools can advertise in January of each year in the SATAC Results Supplement of the Advertiser and in the Courses and Careers section of the Messenger Press (taking into account the approved media policy).

In relation to Clauses 10 and 11, any complaints about contravention should be made to the Principal/Head of the school in the first instance. Member schools may seek advice from the Executive Director as to whether advertisements or requests from the media for mass advertising contravene these guidelines.