



# Media & Communications Policy

## OBJECTIVE

As a public-facing organisation, Daughters Of Tomorrow (DOT) recognises the benefit of media as an important tool of engagement, to communicate with and rally stakeholders and supporters in achieving its mission.

It is important that the reputation of DOT, as well as that of its beneficiaries, staff (including employees and contractors, hereafter referred to as “staff”) and Board members, volunteers and partners, are not tarnished in any way by anyone using media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that directly references DOT. The DOT Board, staff, and volunteers, therefore, are expected to behave and express themselves appropriately and in a manner that is consistent with DOT media communications guidelines.

The aim of this guideline is to spell out the policy that the Board and the staff of DOT must strictly adhere to in the area of communications with the media, both traditional and online media platforms.

## BACKGROUND

The media, both traditional and online media, may, at any point in time, approach DOT for information on a range of issues and those who are selected to be spokesperson(s) need to work closely with DOT’s Communications team in order to understand and adhere to the organisation’s media & communications guidelines.



## KEY COMMUNICATIONS RELATED POLICIES

### MAINSTREAM MEDIA RELATED GUIDELINES

1. Communications with the media, both traditional and online, on DOT-related matters will be undertaken solely by the President, the Executive Director, or the DOT Communications & Outreach Department, unless otherwise specified.
2. No staff shall reveal any information pertaining to DOT, including but not limited to organization plans and strategy, to external parties, including the media, both traditional and online.
3. No staff shall provide any quotes in any capacity unless authorised by the Executive Director or the DOT Communications & Outreach Department. This required authorization will ensure that the Organisation's communication processes and key messages are coherent and consistent at all times.

### SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY

This policy covers all forms of social media. Social media includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn etc.)
- Content sharing including but not limited to, using sites such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram (video sharing)
- Commenting on blogs or digital platforms for personal or business reasons
- Taking part in online votes and polls
- Taking part in conversations on public and private web forums (message boards)
- Editing a Wikipedia page

The intent of this guideline is to include anything posted online where information is shared that might affect staff, the Board, partners, government agencies, volunteers, or supporters of DOT as an organisation and the reputation of DOT associated therewith.

Staff who are tasked to maintain and/or update the DOT's official social networking sites - including Instagram, Facebook, Website and Internet Blogs - are expected to maintain a high level of professionalism when they communicate with others online similar to how they would communicate with external parties through email or over the phone. They should adopt good writing practices (i.e. respectful, proper sentence structures, helpful, etc) that maintain the professional image of DOT.

1. No staff shall share any information including textual or visual material that is proprietary and/or confidential to DOT. In all cases, staff shall never post anything that is confidential, sensitive or private to DOT or any individual associated with DOT.



2. Staff must at all times comply with the law in regard to copyright and fair use. Staff must ensure that they have the right to use something with attribution before they publish any content online.
3. Staff should refrain from posting items that could reflect negatively on DOT or otherwise affect the organisation negatively, including comments or other posts about drug or alcohol abuse, profanity, sexual humour and other inappropriate conduct.
4. Staff should not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not otherwise be acceptable at the workplace and going against DOT's core values.
5. Staff should never indicate a political allegiance on social networking sites, either through profile information or through joining political groups with the organization's account.
6. Additionally, for all DOT staff using social media, such use:
  - a) Must not bring DOT and any affiliated governing bodies into disrepute.
  - b) Must not otherwise be in breach of the DOT Media & Communications Guidelines.

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN A PERSONAL CAPACITY

1. While there is no prohibition against staff engaging in various social networking sites, including but not limited to Instagram, Facebook and Internet blogs, they should refrain from making any comments related to DOT, its staff, Board, volunteers, partners, beneficiaries, other charities, and government agencies.
2. Staff should seek permission from their Head of Department or Communications & Outreach Department before posting any DOT-related event photographs and videos including but not limited to closed door training sessions, and private/unofficial events on their personal digital platforms.
3. Staff should not use the DOT logo, unless specifically authorized to do so. Staff should be aware that even if their postings are made only visible to a limited number of selected people, such contents may still end up in the public domain. Hence, staff should always exercise good judgment and common sense and be responsible for the content he/she publishes on any form of social media.
4. When a staff member is contacted by the media about posts on their social networking site that relate to DOT, they should consult their Head of Department and the Communications & Outreach Department before responding.
5. Staff, especially appointed spokesperson, should be mindful that any comments which are deemed improper, bring the organisation work into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting may lead to disciplinary action.



6. DOT reserves the right to monitor its employees' use of social media and social networking websites even if they are engaging in such activities away from the office. Detected breaches of this policy should be reported to DOT. If detected, a breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action from DOT under the DOT disciplinary procedures. A breach of this policy may also amount to breaches of other DOT documents and policies. Disciplinary action may involve a verbal or written warning or, in serious cases, termination of employment or engagement with DOT.
7. The Board and staff are encouraged to share DOT public posts and communications on their personal social media.

## STANDARD PROCEDURES IN DEALING WITH MEDIA QUERIES

Any employee who receives a media query should first determine the nature of the query:

### ➤ OPERATIONS RELATED QUERIES

- If the query is straightforward and technical in nature, such as about DOT's courses and programmes, who can be referred to DOT, the types of positions offered by employer partners etc, the staff will alert his/her Head of Department and Communications & Outreach Department, respond to the query accordingly within 24 hours/ 1 business working day.
- The employee will inform the Communications & Outreach Department the name of media, nature of query and response given. The Communications & Outreach Department will in turn inform the Executive Director within 24 hours but before the publication of the article on traditional and online media.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will monitor the specific media(s) the following day(s) and check with the staff concerned to ensure accuracy in the article(s). The Communications & Outreach Department will inform and request for corrections to be published should there be any inaccuracies in the information provided by the DOT staff within the working day of the publication of the article.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will distribute the staff and his/her Head of Department a copy of the published article. Then the slant of the article will be analysed internally to ensure accuracy and any feedback be provided otherwise.

### ➤ ALL OTHER QUERIES

- For all other related queries, the employee will alert his/her Head of Department and forward the query to the Communications & Outreach Department who will follow-up with the reporter within the next 3 hours.



- The Communications & Outreach Department will work out the key angle of the proposed story and the names of the interviewees who will be featured in the write-up. The Communications & Outreach Department will immediately inform Executive Director about the query, with supporting details such as story angle.
- The relevant Head of Department(s) will work on crafting the draft reply which should be sent to Communications & Outreach Department within the next 6 hours for their inputs.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will subsequently incorporate further inputs and suggestions in the revised reply which should be sent to the Executive Director for review within the next 2 hours.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will send the final version to the media only upon approval by the Executive Director.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will monitor the specific media(s) the following day(s) and ensure accuracy in the article(s). The Communications & Outreach Department will inform and demand for corrections to be published should there be any inaccuracies in the quotes attributed to the DOT staff within the same working day of the publication.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will distribute the staff and his/her Head of Department a copy of the published article. Then the slant of the article will be analysed internally to ensure accuracy and any feedback be provided otherwise.

#### TIME FRAME

We aim to respond to the media query within 12 hours upon receiving the request. Both the Communications & Outreach Department and relevant Head of Department(s) must work together from the time of crafting the first draft reply until the final version has been approved by Executive Director.

#### STANDARD PROCEDURES IN HANDLING INTERVIEW REQUESTS

- Unless authorised by the Executive Director, employees should not accede to media request for interviews. Employees should politely ask the reporter to contact the Communications & Outreach Department for any interview request and inform the Communications & Outreach Department about the request accordingly.
- Upon receiving the official interview request via email, the Communications & Outreach Department will work out the key angle of the proposed story, the names of the interviewees who will be featured in the write-up, and get tentative list of questions & mode of interview (i.e. Face-to-face, email, video or phone) from media.
- The Head Of Department(s) should work with the Communications & Outreach Department to identify the relevant spokesperson - and work with him/her to prepare the first draft of talking points and list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).



- The Communications & Outreach Department will get list of tentative questions from media and propose story angle to the Executive Director, who will decide whether to approve the interview request.
- Upon approval by the Executive Director, the Communications & Outreach Department will work with the relevant Head of Department/spokesperson to fine-tune the set of talking points and messaging before confirming with the reporter the details of the interview.
- Unless approved by the Executive Director, the interview should never be scheduled on the same day the media request was submitted (unless for special/ urgent reason).
- Staff from the Communications & Outreach Department should be present during the media interview and ensure that the interview flow goes smoothly.
- Interviewees should refrain from using phrases such as “No Comment”, “Between us”, “Within the four walls” and “Off-the-Record” etc. during the interview. The Communications & Outreach Department must step in to address this inconsistency when it occurs during interviews. Such comments must and should never be documented as part of the interviews.
- The Communications & Outreach Department should contact the reporter after the interview to check, verify and confirm that the facts and quotes to be attributed to the interviewee are accurate and aligned with the contents shared during the interview.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will monitor the specific media vehicle(s) the following day(s) and ensure accuracy in the article(s). The Communications & Outreach Department will inform and request for corrections to be published should there be any inaccuracies in the article.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will distribute the staff and his/her Head of Department a copy of the published article. Then the slant of the article will be analysed internally to ensure accuracy and any feedback be provided otherwise.

## STANDARD PROCEDURES IN RESPONDING TO MAINSTREAM FORUMS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- The Communications & Outreach Department or staff must alert the Executive Director and the relevant Head of Department(s) before 12 pm on the day issues pertaining to DOT are published as letters in the forum sections of the print media or comments in social media.
- The Communications & Outreach Department will work with the relevant Head of Department(s) to craft the first draft of the reply which should be sent to Executive Director before 4 pm on the same day.
- Both the Communications & Outreach Department and relevant Head of Department(s) will work together to revise the reply, taking into account the inputs from Executive Director, and should also adhere to the word count limit of the respective medium vehicles.



- Upon approval of the Executive Director, the Communications & Outreach Department will subsequently email the reply to the respective Forum editor(s) before 12 pm on the next day and reply comments on social media on the same day.
- Communications & Outreach Department will monitor the specific medium vehicle(s) the following day(s) and ensure that our reply is published factually (notwithstanding the possibility that the letter may be edited for clarity and length).

#### TIME FRAME

Our reply must be sent within three days from the day the forum letter was published. Both the Communications & Outreach Department and relevant Head of Department(s) must work together from the time of crafting the first draft reply until the final version has been approved by Executive Director.

#### OTHER GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. The general rule is that staff will not comment on matters which involve external parties (including government policies and political related issues).
2. In the even that there are public / closed door dialogues of benefit to strategically advancing DOT's mission, staff can be selected as spokesperson(s), with approval from the Communications & Outreach Department and / or the Executive Director.
3. Staff should never make public comment on the merits of a matter / proceeding pending or impending in any court of law or upon the court verdict of any matter.
4. If an employee is uncertain of the sensitivity of a particular query or issue, he/she should refrain from making any comment and should instead refer the query to his/her Head of Department and/or the Communications & Outreach Department for further clarifications.
5. All media queries or interview requests should be sent in writing (email) addressed to the Communications & Outreach Department. Other communication channels such as WhatsApp, online messengers etc. are not considered as proper channels for requests.
6. Wherever possible, replies to media queries should be sent in writing in order to ensure that the correspondences can be traced and verified accordingly (when necessary). Other communication channels such as WhatsApp, online messengers etc. are not considered as proper channels for replies.
7. Any staff who fails to comply this policy and its guidelines spelt out in this paper will be subject to disciplinary action(s), up to and including termination.



## Document History & Version Control

This Media & Communications Policy has been duly approved by the Board on 28 June 2017. This version supersedes the Media & Communications Policy dated 30th June 2017.

Subsequent changes will be updated.

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Revision Details</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
2017June_Version 1	Not Applicable	Updated controls	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
2021_Version 1	28/7/2021	Updated controls	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2021