	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	(2) Information Management	**Effective Date:**	March 2014
	Policy Title:	Contact with the Media, Legislators, County Officials and Board Members		
	Policy Number:	2.7	**Previous Policy #:**	2109.10 2109.11

CODES/REFERENCES

N/A

REQUIREMENT

The Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. Protect the privacy of the children and families served by ensuring that all information requests from the media, legislators, county officials and board members are forwarded to the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications.
2. Manage media requests in the following manner:
    a. Forward all media requests for information to the DHS Office of Communications. Only the Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications is authorized to grant permission for media interviews.
    b. Manage all planned contact with the media, including solicitation of advertisement of DFCS events, through the DHS Office of Communications.
    c. Notify the Regional Director immediately of any requests received from the media or any planned contacts with the media.
    d. The Regional Director will assure that the Office of Communications is contacted for the purpose of securing the needed approvals.
3. Forward all requests for information from Legislators, County Officials and Board Members are immediately to the Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications.

PROCEDURES

Upon the request by the media, legislators, county officials or board members for information related to a DFCS related matter, DFCS staff shall:

1. Obtain contact information for the individual and organization making the request. **NOTE:** Do not provide any information or confirm and/or deny any statements.
2. Notify the County Director immediately.
3. The County Director shall forward the request to the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications, and inform the Regional Director of request. (See policy PRO1501 Office of Communications for more specific information regarding the handling of such requests.)

For all planned contacts with the media, the DFCS staff shall:

1. Notify the County Director of the planned event or other needed media contact.
2. The County Director shall forward the media request to the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications, and inform the Regional Director of request. (See

policy PRO1501 Office of Communications for detailed information regarding media contact.)

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the County Director to ensure that the Regional Director is made aware of all requests for information from the aforementioned entities and regarding requests or planned contact with the media.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Media Requests

If contacted by the media regarding a DFCS-related matter[1], DFCS staff shall not release any information, confirm or deny involvement with the family or individual in question. Obtain the name, and contact information of the organization or individual and immediately notify the county director of the media request.

Board Members

In accordance with Georgia law, board members are responsible for safeguarding any confidential information to which they have access. County boards are state entities, but they are not state employees. The application of policy to a specific case situation is appropriate only when it is possible to remove from the discussion those details which can identify a specific client.

Legislators and County Officials

Disclosure should not be made to legislators or county officials except as permitted by law.

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A

[1] A DFCS related matter includes any case involving a child receiving or having received services in any program area including child protective services, foster care, family preservation and adoptions.