



Chatham-Kent Police Service Board Policies

PSB.AI.24 - BOARD COMMUNICATION

Effective January 14, 2026 – Chair Patrick Weaver

Approved by Chair of the Chatham-Kent Police Service Board

A STANDARDS

- A1 *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*
- A2 *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- A3 *Ontario Regulation 408/23 – Code of Conduct for Police Service Board Members*
- A4 *Inspectorate of Policing of Ontario, Advisory Bulletin: Municipal Police Service Board Policy – Critical Points (2024)*

B PURPOSE & SCOPE

- B1 The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for communication practices that promote transparency, accountability, and public trust in accordance with the *Community Safety and Policing Act* ("CSPA"). This policy applies to all Chatham-Kent Police Service Board (the "Board") members and designated staff involved in communication activities. It covers interactions with municipal councils, the public, media, and other stakeholders.

C PRINCIPLES & LEGAL FOUNDATIONS

- C1 This Board commits to communication grounded in the principles of transparency, respect, inclusion, and procedural fairness as required under the CSPA and Ontario Regulation 408/23. All communication must uphold the highest standards of professionalism, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity. The Board is committed to fulfilling its obligation to publish strategic plans, annual reports, and directions to the Chief of Police of the Chatham-Kent Police Service (the "Service") in a timely and accessible manner.

D ROLES, AUTHORITY & DELEGATION

Authorized Spokespersons

- D1 Only the Board Chair or those designated by the chair are authorized to speak publicly or issue formal statements on behalf of the Board. Staff support will be provided to assist with the preparation and review of communications, including press releases and media statements.



Handling Public and Media Inquiries

D2 Board members are expected to refrain from providing official comments or information to the media or public unless specifically authorized. If approached for comment, members should:

- a. politely direct inquiries to the Board Chair or designated communications officer;
- b. clearly state if offering personal opinions, ensuring these are not mistaken for official Board positions;
- c. avoid discussing confidential or sensitive information; and
- d. in critical or sensitive situations, all media engagement must be coordinated through the Chair or communications lead.

Personal Opinions

D3 Members must clearly distinguish personal views from Board positions when communicating publicly and ensure compliance with the code of conduct outlined in Ontario Regulation 408/23.

Public Engagement & Channels

D4 The Board will utilize appropriate platforms, including the municipal website, social media, public meetings, and press releases, to engage with the community. All communication channels will be managed to ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and responsiveness to diverse communities, including Indigenous peoples, racialized groups, and persons with disabilities.

Critical Events & Sensitive Situations

D5 A critical event is any occurrence that may significantly affect public safety, community trust, the reputation of the Board, or its ability to fulfill its responsibilities. Examples include serious injury, an officer-involved incident, a major policy failure, or any matter that draws considerable public or media attention.



D6 This definition is informed by the concept of a "Critical Point" as outlined by the Toronto Police Service Board, which describes situations that quickly elevate operational, reputational, financial, or governance risk and require the Board's immediate attention. It also reflects the guidance issued by Ontario's **Inspectorate of Policing**, which encourages municipal police service boards to adopt formal "Critical Point" policies and establish clear information-sharing protocols with police leadership during significant or high-impact events.

D7 The Board recognizes that not all communications during a critical event are appropriate for Board comment. Operational information, investigative details, or statements concerning active police activity remain the responsibility of the **Chief of Police** of the Service. The Board's role is to focus on communication related to governance, oversight, accountability, and community reassurance, while avoiding interference in operations.

D8 By combining these perspectives, the Board acknowledges that critical events extend beyond operational matters to include those that influence governance, accountability, and community confidence. This broader definition supports the Board's duty under the CSPA to ensure transparency and effective communication while maintaining clear respect for operational independence.

Communication and Response Protocol

D9 When a critical event occurs, the Board will follow the following structured process to manage communication, assess risk, and coordinate an appropriate response.

- Immediate internal notification to the Board Chair, communications lead, and, where appropriate, legal counsel.
- Preliminary assessment to determine whether the event meets the criteria for a critical event.
- Verification of facts through reliable and authorized sources before making any public or internal statement.
- Coordination with the **Chief of Police** of the Service to confirm which elements of the event fall under operational communication.
- Preparation of approved Board messaging limited to governance-related matters, such as expressions of support, transparency commitments, or confirmation of oversight processes.



- f. Designation of the appropriate spokesperson, ensuring alignment between the Board's communication and the service's operational updates.
- g. Notification of the full Board and relevant partners, including police leadership and municipal officials if applicable.
- h. Coordination of all public or media communication through official channels, maintaining transparency while protecting sensitive information.
- i. Monitoring of media coverage and public reaction, with adjustments as necessary to preserve accuracy and trust.
- j. Post-event review to evaluate the effectiveness of communication and identify improvements for future incidents.

All communication related to critical events must balance transparency with confidentiality, ensuring that operational independence is maintained at all times. For all communications related to critical events Members shall refer to the Communication Flowchart for Critical or Sensitive Incidents, attached hereto as **Appendix A**.

E PRIVACY, DATA & MISCONDUCT REPORTING

- E1 All personal and confidential information received by the Board shall be handled in compliance with applicable privacy laws, including the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and regulations concerning Regulated Interactions.
- E2 Board members and staff are required to follow formal procedures for reporting suspected misconduct, including whistleblower protections against retaliation, in accordance with the CSPA and Ontario Regulation 408/23.

Complaints or Concerns

- E3 Complaints or concerns must be directed as follows:
 - a. **complaints regarding the Board or Police Leadership** (including governance issues, failure to comply with legislation, or breaches of the Board Member Code of Conduct) should be submitted to the **Inspectorate of Policing of Ontario (IoP)** at www.iopontario.ca or by email at complaints@iopontario.ca;



- b. **complaints regarding individual police officers or members of a police service** should be filed with the **Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA)** at www.leca.ca or by email at info@leca.ca; and
- c. **complaints regarding Board employees or contractors** will be managed through the Board's internal human resources and complaint procedures.

E4 Conflicts of interest must be disclosed promptly and managed in accordance with Ontario Regulation 408/23.

F TRAINING & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

F1 Board members should receive training on communication protocols, media engagement, that align with the mandatory training on human rights, and systemic racism to ensure effective, respectful, and lawful communication practices. This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly, at minimum in alignment with the Board's strategic planning cycle, to incorporate feedback and evolving best practices. Training costs should also be included as part of the board budget process for governance development.

G SAMPLE CLAUSES

G1 The following sample clauses shall be considered for the corresponding situation:

- a. **Authority Statement** - "Only the Chair or designated spokesperson(s) may issue formal statements on behalf of the Board. Individual members must preface any personal comments with a disclaimer that such views do not represent the Board."
- b. **Critical Point Definition** - "Critical events are defined as occurrences that significantly affect public safety, operational effectiveness, community trust, or the reputation of the Board, and that require immediate notification to the Chair, coordination with the Chief of Police or OPP Detachment Commander, and a structured public communication response."

This definition is informed by the concept of a 'Critical Point' adopted by the Toronto Police Service Board (2023) and the guidance of Ontario's Inspectorate of Policing (2024), which encourages boards to establish clear communication and information-sharing protocols during significant or high-impact events.



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- c. *Privacy Clause* - “All confidential information will be handled in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and related legislation. Unauthorized disclosure is prohibited.”

PREVIOUS ISSUE	EFFECTIVE DATE
N/A	N/A



APPENDIX A

Communication Flowchart for Critical or Sensitive Incidents

1. Incident Occurs

A critical or sensitive incident occurs within the jurisdiction of the Board.



2. Initial Assessment

Board Chair and Communications Lead assess whether the event meets the definition of a critical incident.



3. Information Verification

Gather facts from verified and authorized sources before any statement or discussion.



4. Determine Communication Path

- **Operational matters:** Chief of Police or OPP Detachment Commander leads all public communication.
- **Governance or oversight matters:** Board Chair or designated spokesperson leads communication on transparency, accountability, and community reassurance.



5. Message Coordination

Ensure consistency between Board and Service statements while maintaining independence of roles.



6. Public Communication

Release approved statements through official channels such as the municipal website, press release, or public notice.



7. Monitoring and Adjustment

Track media coverage, public response, and social media activity. Correct inaccuracies promptly and factually.



8. Post-Event Review

Conduct a debrief to evaluate communication effectiveness and update Board policy or protocol as needed.