

The “FOI” Paper Trail: How does a principal manage it? *An Educator’s Guide to the Role of the Principal (Roher & Wormwell)*

Are there any tips on making this easier? We have some occasional workers and volunteers in the office and it is important that they know the basics.

You should make a list of the information it is okay to give out to the public. Make another list of the information that should never be given out and present some suggestions on how to handle those calls. Make a third list of unique or special circumstances, e.g. parents or police, and how to handle those calls. Do remind staff that very few requests need to be answered instantly. Take a message and call back. If in doubt—don’t.

Occasionally I interview individuals for assignments in my school. How can I manage notes and other paperwork after the interview has taken place?

Remember that MFIPPA applies only to recorded information; it does not apply to any oral comments, deliberations or discussions. All your records of meetings and interviews should be factual. And avoid rumours, speculation or gossip. Your notes should not include irrelevant or third hand information. Keep your personal notes direct and forthright. Avoid subjective comments or innuendo. Any recorded information should be based on your first hand knowledge of the situation. Afterwards, keep your records in a secure location as they may become the subject of an information request under MFIPPA. If you need to send notes to the school board, be sure to use a secure envelope and ensure that it is addressed properly with “Confidential” prominently placed.

Principal’s Best Practice: Follow a prearranged, planned set of questions for your interviews. These will serve to keep you on track throughout the interview and thus keep comments factual.