

How to Gain News Coverage for Your Walkout

First of all, before contacting any news organizations, you **MUST** get approval from your school's administration. Since most of the students at your school are minors, there are legal ramifications to having media on your campus. If you do not inform your administration that the media is coming to your walkout, reporters and cameramen may be barred from coming on campus on the day of your walkout and you will unfortunately not get the media coverage you want. Your administration may have to get approval from the school district to let media come onto campus and film and interview students. This means that you should let your administration know as soon as possible that you are considering this course of action so you have ample time to organize the media.

Once you have gotten administrative and district approval, you can move onto contacting new organizations. We recommend reaching out to as many organizations as possible, such as the Mercury News, NBC, KTVU, and others. Most will have contact information listed on their website so you can easily shoot them an email. Below, we have included a template for contacting media that you can use.

Hi,

My name is (----) and I am a high school student at (-----). I am currently an ambassador to my school for March For Our Lives San José, and I am organizing a school walkout for March 14th, 2019 at 10 AM to protest congressional inaction regarding gun violence and to honor the lives that have been lost in mass shootings across the country. This walkout will take place one year after the original National School Walkout, during which hundreds of thousands of students walked out of their classrooms to protest the gun violence epidemic in the United States. Since this event is taking place on our school's campus, we would love your help in extending our message to the greater Bay Area community. If you are interested in covering our event or if you are doing an upcoming piece on local activism, gun violence, or firearms legislation, please reach out to me at (insert email or phone number) and I would be happy to provide you with more information. You can also find more information about the Bay Area Walkout and March For Our Lives San Jose at marchforourlivessj.org. Thanks so much!

You **do not** have to use this template, and in fact, we recommend that you personalize it a bit more towards your own walkout so that the news organizations don't get multiple

emails from different schools all with the same wording and information. However, if you do create your own contact template, you should include the following information:

- Your name
- Your school
- The fact that you are a high school student
- The date, time, and location of your walkout
- Your connection to MFOLSJ and the link to our website (to legitimize the organization and the event)
- The purpose of the walkout
- Your contact information

Make sure that you stay concise and relevant, as the news moves quickly and they do not have time to read a long, complicated email. As well, try not to use language such as “we think you should cover our walkout.” Instead, focus more on how the media can help you in your mission such as “we would love your help in promoting our message/ reaching the surrounding community with our event.” As always, make sure that you stay professional in your email and proofread before you hit send.

If you have any further questions about media coverage or if you run into any issues, make sure to contact us at march4ourlivesj@gmail.com.