

HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Before reacting or responding to any complaints immediately after yearbook distribution, consider the following tips. Many staffs even maintain the “48 Hour” rule of not addressing a complaint until all 48 hours after distribution in order to allow the staff time to enjoy all the hard work put into creating the book.

1. Take a deep breath. Don't respond to any yearbook concern until there has been time to research all the facts.
2. Consider enclosing a letter with each yearbook that briefly explains that although every effort has been made to avoid errors, the yearbook is a student-created publication and may have some errors for which the staff is truly sorry.
3. Encourage students to quickly check their own books at distribution to be sure there are no missing or damaged pages before they begin having friends sign their books.
4. Establish a policy for dealing with any errors in the senior section of the book. Missing portraits, misspelled names, etc. can all cause disappointment for students and parents.
5. Establish a policy for dealing with any business or parent ads that are missing or contain errors. Maintain detailed records of each ad received and on which page it was placed.
6. Refund policies need to be well thought out and publicized. If someone is so unhappy with the yearbook that they expect a full refund of the purchase price, it should be clear that a clean, unused copy of the yearbook would need to be returned in order to get the refund.
7. Post a distribution list of students who have pre-ordered yearbooks in advance of the actual distribution event. Encourage students to check the list so that any discrepancies can be checked before distribution.
8. A clear, concise voicemail message should be left on the official yearbook office phone that addresses the distribution process, procedures for dealing with concerns and emphasizing that the student yearbook staff has made every effort to avoid any errors.
9. Student editors should make the initial return call concerning any yearbook complaints. If concerns have been expressed via voicemail or email, then that allows time for the editors and adviser to think about reasonable solutions.
10. Contact your Varsity Yearbook representative to discuss the various types of complaints that may be expressed at distribution time and various options that could help deflect the concerns. Also contact your Varsity rep with any specific concerns after distribution so they can offer viable solutions.