

STUDENTS

Student Records: Confidentiality and Access to Student Records

I. POLICY

The Board of Education ("Board") complies with the state and federal regulations regarding confidentiality and access to and amendment of student records. The Board shall implement procedures that protect the privacy of parents and students while providing proper access to records. Availability of these procedures shall be made known annually to parents of students currently in attendance and eligible students currently in attendance.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Access

"Access" is defined as the right to inspect, review, or obtain copies of a student's educational records or any part thereof.

B. Directory Information

"Directory information" includes information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the parent's name and/or e-mail address, the student's name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, photographic, computer and/or video images, date and place of birth, major field(s) of study, grade level, participation in school-sponsored activities or athletics, weight and height (if the student is a member of an athletic team), dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

C. Eligible Student

An "eligible student" is a student or former student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of post-secondary education or is an emancipated minor.

D. Law Enforcement Unit

An individual, office, department, division, or other component of an educational agency or institution, that is officially authorized or designated by that agency or institution to 1) enforce laws or refer matters of law enforcement to appropriate authorities or 2) maintain the physical security and safety of the agency or institution.

E. Parent

The word "parent" is defined as a parent or parents of a student, including a natural parent, a guardian, or surrogate parent, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. The rights of a parent shall transfer to an eligible student, however, a parent of a student who claims that student as a dependent under Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 is entitled to the student's records without the eligible student's consent.

F. Personally Identifiable Information

"Personally identifiable information" includes, but is not limited to, the name and address of the student, student's parent, or other family member, the student's personal identifier, such as social security number or student identification number, or a list of characteristics or other information that would make the student's identity easily traceable.

G. Student Records

1. "Student records" shall include any information directly related to a student that is recorded in any manner (e.g., in writing, on film, or on tape or disk) and that is maintained by the school system or persons acting for the school system.
2. "Student records" shall not include:
 - (a) private, personal, or working notes in the sole possession of the maker thereof, and which are not accessible or revealed to any other individual except a "substitute";
 - (b) employment records used only in relation to the student's employment by the school district;
 - (c) alumni records that contain information about the student after he/she is no longer in attendance at the school;
 - (d) records on an eligible student that are maintained by a physician, psychologist, professional or paraprofessional made in connection with the treatment of the student and disclosed only to individuals providing such treatment; and
 - (e) records maintained by a law enforcement unit of an educational agency or institution that were created by that unit for the purpose of law enforcement.

III. PROCEDURES

The following procedures shall apply regarding student records:

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all education records of their child (or, in the case of an eligible student, all education records pertaining to himself/herself). A request to inspect and review records shall be in writing.

For the records of regular education students, the Board will make records available for inspection and review by parents or eligible students within a reasonable period of time, but in any event, no more than forty-five (45) calendar days from the receipt of a written request. For the records of special education students, the following time frames apply: As required by Section 10-76d-18(b)(1) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, written requests by parents of students requiring special education and related services will be accommodated within ten (10) school days of the receipt of such requests, within three (3) school days of the receipt of such requests if the requests are made in order to prepare for a meeting regarding an individualized education program or within three (3) calendar days of such a request if the request is made in order to prepare for a meeting related to any due process proceeding. One free copy of a student's records will be provided to parents of students requiring special education and related services on written request within five (5) school days of the request.

The school district will appoint an individual to be responsible for the care and upkeep of all student records. Educational records are kept by categories, each of which encompasses a specific type of data collected during a student's education career. These categories also determine how long the school district must maintain the records. The school district will provide to parents, on request, a list of the categories and locations of education records collected, maintained, or used by the school district.

On an annual basis, the school district will notify parents of students or eligible students currently in attendance of their rights regarding a student's education records. This notice will be published in all student handbooks in the District and will also be published in the school district's guide to Pupil Personnel Services and will be published in any other manner "reasonably likely" to inform such parents and eligible students of their rights. The school district will take steps to ensure that parents or eligible students whose primary or home language is not English or who are disabled will also be notified of their rights regarding a student's education records.

IV. CONFIDENTIALITY OF EDUCATION RECORDS

- A. All school staff must understand that personally identifiable information in student records is confidential. Each person who has access to student records is responsible for ensuring personally identifiable information is protected from disclosure at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages.

- B. Student records are not public records and any disclosure other than to persons authorized to receive the records without prior parent consent violates the law and Board policy, except as provided in federal and state statutes.

V. ACCESSIBILITY TO STUDENT RECORDS

- A. A parent or eligible student may have access to specific confidential information about the student unless such rights have been waived under Section IX, below.
- B. Aside from a parent or eligible student, only professional staff members who have been determined by the school system to have a legitimate educational need, and the other exemptions as set forth in Section VI, may have access to a student's records. Pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section V(E), below, the district maintains a record of parties that have requested access to education records, including information found in computer memory banks.
- C. Parents' rights of inspection and review are restricted to information dealing with their own child. In the case of an eligible student, the right to inspect and review is restricted to information concerning himself/herself. All requests for access to student records must be in writing. A parent does not lose his or her right to access to records upon divorce. Non-custodial parents retain their rights to review their child's education records unless otherwise ordered by a court.
 - 1. When requesting inspection or review, a parent or eligible student must submit a written request that identifies the record or records being sought. The school district will notify the parent or eligible student of the date, time, and location where the records may be inspected and reviewed. Requests will be accommodated within a reasonable period of time, but in no case more than forty-five (45) calendar days after the receipt of such requests.
 - 2. The parents or eligible students may designate in writing a representative to inspect and review the records.
 - 3. A school professional shall be present at all such inspections and reviews and shall explain and interpret data in the records whenever access is granted.
- D. A fee cannot be charged by the system to search for or to retrieve the educational records of a student. If a student has been identified as requiring special education and related services, the parents' right to inspect and review the child's records shall include the right to receive one free copy of those records. An eligible student who is identified as requiring special education and related services is entitled to one free copy of his/her records. A request for the

free copy shall be made in writing. The board of education shall comply with such request as stated above. A charge will be levied for additional copies; in no case will the charge exceed 50¢ per page.

- E. Except as provided below, a record (log) will be kept documenting each request for, and disclosure of, personally identifiable information from the education records of each student, including information found in computer memory banks.
1. The record (log) shall indicate the name of any individual, agency, or organization that requested or obtained access to the student's records, the date of the request for access, whether access was given, and the purpose for which the party was granted access to the records, including the names of additional parties to whom the receiving party may disclose the information on behalf of the school district, and the legitimate educational interest in obtaining the information.
 2. The record (log) requirement does not apply to requests from, or disclosure to:
 - a) a parent or eligible student;
 - b) a party seeking directory information;
 - c) a party who has written consent from the parent and/or eligible student;
 - d) school officials from the school district in which the student is currently enrolled who have a legitimate educational interest in the information contained in the student's record;
 - e) persons seeking or receiving the information as directed by a Federal grand jury or other law enforcement subpoena (provided that the information requested is not to be redisclosed).
 3. The record (log) is a permanent part of the student's records and must be available to the parent or eligible student upon request.
- F. The following individuals may inspect a student's record: the parent or eligible student, the school official or other school personnel responsible for maintaining the student's records, school personnel with a legitimate educational interest, and authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States, the Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, the Attorney General of the United States or his/her designee, acting in accordance with an ex parte order in connection with the investigation or prosecution of terrorism crimes as specified in sections 2332b(g)(5)(B) and 2331 of title 18, U.S. Code.

VI. THE RELEASE OF RECORDS OR PERSONAL DATA

- A. The school system or its designated agent(s) may not permit release of personally identifiable records or files of any student to any outside individual, agency, or organization without the written consent of the parents or eligible student, except as indicated in Section VI.D below. Personally identifiable information contained in the student record, other than directory information, will not be furnished in any form (i.e., written, taped, person-to-person, statement over the telephone, on computer disk, e-mailed, etc.) to any person other than those listed below, unless written consent has been obtained.
- B. To be effective, the written consent must be signed and dated and must specify the records that may be disclosed, note the purpose of the disclosure, and identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made.
- C. The school district shall provide a copy of the records, as disclosed to a parent, to a student under age 18, if the parent requests the student receive the copy.
- D. Personally identifiable information may be released without consent of the parents, or the eligible student, only if the disclosure is:
 - 1. To other school officials who have been determined by such agency or institution to have legitimate educational interests in the records. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Education; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
 - 2. To officials of another public school, including a public charter school, in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Disclosure of personally identifiable information will be made only upon condition that the student's parents be notified of the transfer, receive a copy of the record if desired, and have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the record pursuant to Section VIII.
 - 3. To authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States; the Attorney General of the United States; the Secretary of Education; or State and local educational authorities, under the following conditions: the school shall provide such authorized representatives access to student or other records that may be necessary in connection with the

audit, evaluation, or enforcement of state and federally supported education programs, but shall not permit such representatives to collect personally identifiable information unless specifically authorized to do so by state and federal law or if the parent or eligible student has given written consent for the disclosure.

4. In connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid, if such information is necessary to determine eligibility for, the amount of, or the conditions for financial aid, or to enforce the terms and conditions of financial aid.
5. To state and local officials or authorities to whom such information is specifically required to be reported or disclosed pursuant to state statute adopted prior to November 19, 1974, if the disclosure concerns the juvenile justice system and its ability effectively to serve the student whose records are released. If reporting or disclosure is permitted pursuant to a state statute concerning the juvenile justice system adopted after November 19, 1974, such disclosure may be made without consent only if the officials and authorities to whom the records are disclosed certify in writing to the school district that the information will not be disclosed to any other party without the prior, written consent of the parent of the student, except as provided under State law.
6. To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions for the purpose of developing, validating, or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs, or improving instruction, so long as the study does not permit personal identification of parents or students by individuals other than representatives of the organization and the information is destroyed after it is no longer needed for the purposes for which the study was conducted.
7. To accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions.
8. To parents of an eligible student who claim that student as a dependent student as defined in Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
9. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, provided that the educational agency makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent or the eligible student in advance of compliance, unless such disclosure is in compliance with (a) a federal grand jury subpoena and the court has ordered that the existence or the contents of the subpoena or the information furnished in response to the subpoena not be disclosed; or (b) any other subpoena issued for a law enforcement purpose and the court or other issuing agency has ordered that the existence or the contents of the subpoena or the information furnished in response to the subpoena not be disclosed.

10. In connection with a health and safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
 11. Between two or more public schools in which the student is enrolled or receiving services.
 12. Directory Information as identified in Section II. The school district will notify parents (of students currently enrolled within the district) or eligible students (currently enrolled in the district) annually of any categories of information designated as directory information. This notice will provide such individuals with an opportunity to object to such disclosure. An objection to the disclosure of directory information shall be good for only one year. School districts are legally obligated to provide military recruiters or institutions of higher education, upon request, with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of secondary school students, unless a parent or eligible student objects to such disclosure in writing. Such objection must be in writing and shall be effective for one year. In all other circumstances, information designated as directory information will not be released when requested by a third party unless the release of such information is determined by the administration to be in the educational interest of the school district and is consistent with the district's obligations under both state and federal law.
 13. If the school district initiates legal action against a parent or student, the school district may disclose to the court, without a court order or subpoena, the education records of the student that are relevant for the school district to proceed with the legal action as plaintiff.
 14. If a parent or eligible student initiates legal action against the school district, the school district may disclose to the court, without a court order or subpoena, the student's educational records that are relevant for the school district to defend itself.
 15. To the Attorney General of the United States or his/her designee in response to an ex parte order in connection with the investigation or prosecution of terrorism crimes specified in sections 2332b(g)(5)(B) and 2331 of title 18, U.S. Code. When producing information or permitting access to student records pursuant to this subsection, the school district is not required to record its disclosure in the record (log) referred to in Section V(E).
- E. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the school district from:
- a. Including in the education records of a student appropriate information concerning disciplinary action taken against the student for conduct that

posed a significant risk to the safety or well-being of that student, other students, or other members of the school community.

- b. Disclosing appropriate information concerning disciplinary action taken against a student for conduct that posed a significant risk to the safety or well-being of that student, other students, or other members of the school community, to teachers and school officials who have been determined to have legitimate educational interests in the behavior of the student.
- c. Disclosing appropriate information concerning disciplinary action taken against a student for conduct that posed a significant risk to the safety or well-being of that student, other students, or other members of the school community, to teachers and school officials in other schools who have been determined to have legitimate educational interests in the behavior of the student.

F. The District will also facilitate the transfer of a student's disciplinary records to officials of any private school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.

VII. AMENDMENT OF STUDENT RECORDS

- A. If a parent or an eligible student believes that information in the student's records is inaccurate or misleading or in violation the student's right to privacy, he/she is entitled to:
 - 1. Request in writing that the school district amend the records;
 - 2. Receive within a reasonable period of time a decision from the school district with respect to its decision on the amendment(s) requested by the parent or eligible student.
- B. If the school district decides to amend the records, the school district shall promptly take such steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect with respect to the requested amendments.
- C. If the school district decides that an amendment of the records in accordance with the request is not warranted, it shall so inform the parent or eligible student and advise him/her of the right to a hearing.

VIII. HEARING RIGHTS AND PROCEDURES

- A. Rights
 - 1. Upon written request of a parent or eligible student to the Superintendent, an opportunity for a hearing shall be provided to challenge the content of a

student's education records on the grounds that the information contained in the education records is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student.

2. If, as a result of the hearing, the school district decides that information contained in the education records of a student is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, the records shall be amended, and the parent or eligible student shall be informed in writing.
3. If, as a result of the hearing, the school district decides that information contained in the education records of a student is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, the parent or eligible student shall be informed of the right to place in the student's records a statement setting forth the reasons for disagreement with the decision.
 - a. Any explanation placed in the records of the student shall be maintained by the school system as part of the records of the student as long as the record or contested portion is maintained by the school system.
 - b. If the records of the student or the contested portion are disclosed by the school system, the statement of disagreement by the parents and/or eligible student shall also be disclosed.

B. Procedures

1. The hearing shall be held within a reasonable time after the school system has received the request, unless the parent or eligible student requests a delay.
2. The parent or eligible student shall be given notice of the date, place, and time of the hearing, within a reasonable time in advance of the hearing.
3. The hearing will be conducted by a person or persons appointed by the Superintendent of Schools. This person(s) shall be knowledgeable of the policies relating to confidentiality and shall not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing.
4. The parent or eligible student and the school system shall have the right to be represented by person(s) of their choosing at their own expense, to cross-examine witnesses, to present evidence, and to receive a written decision of the hearing.
5. The decision reached through the hearing shall be made in writing within a reasonable period of time after the hearing. The decision will be based

solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing and shall include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.

IX. WAIVER OF RIGHTS

- A. A student who is an applicant for admission to an institution of post-secondary education or is in attendance at an institution of post-secondary education, may waive his or her right to inspect and review confidential letters and confidential statements of recommendations with the following limitations:
 - 1. The student is notified, upon request, of the names of all individuals providing the letters or statements.
 - 2. The letters or statements are used only for the purpose for which they were originally intended.
 - 3. The waiver is not required by the agency as a condition of admission to or receipt of any other service or benefit from the agency.
 - 4. The waiver is in writing and executed by the student, regardless of age, rather than by the parent.
- B. A waiver may be revoked with respect to any actions occurring after the revocation.
- C. Revocation of a waiver must be in writing.
- D. If a parent of a student executes a waiver, that waiver may be revoked by the student at any time after he/she reaches the age of 18.

X. SPECIAL CONFIDENTIALITY PROCEDURES FOR HIV-RELATED INFORMATION

- A. The following definitions shall apply to Section X of this policy:
 - 1. Confidential HIV-Related Information

"Confidential HIV-related information" means any information pertaining to the protected individual or obtained pursuant to a release of confidential HIV-related information, concerning whether a person has been counseled regarding HIV infection, has been the subject of an HIV-related test, or has HIV infection, HIV-related illness or AIDS, or information which identifies or reasonably could identify a person as having one or more of such conditions, including information pertaining to such individual's partners.

2. Health Care Provider

"Health Care Provider" means any physician, dentist, nurse, provider of services for the mentally ill or persons with mental retardation, or other person involved in providing medical, nursing, counseling, or other health care, substance abuse or mental health service, including such services associated with, or under contract to, a health maintenance organization or medical services plan.

3. Protected Individual

"Protected individual" means a person who has been counseled regarding HIV infection, is the subject of an HIV-related test or who has been diagnosed as having HIV infection, AIDS or HIV-related illness.

4. Release of confidential HIV-related information

"Release of confidential HIV-related information" means a written authorization for disclosure of confidential HIV-related information which is signed by the protected individual, if an eligible student, or a person authorized to consent to health care for the individual and which is dated and specifies to whom disclosure is authorized, the purpose for such disclosure and the time period during which the release is to be effective. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not a release of confidential HIV-related information, unless such authorization specifically indicates its dual purpose as a general authorization and an authorization for the release of confidential HIV-related information.

5. School Medical Personnel

"School medical personnel" means an employee of the Board who is a school nurse or the school district medical adviser.

B. Confidentiality of HIV-related Information

1. All school staff must understand that no person who obtains confidential HIV-related information regarding a protected individual may disclose or be compelled to disclose such information. Each person who has access to confidential HIV-related information is responsible for ensuring that confidential HIV-related information is protected from disclosure and/or redisclosure.
2. Confidential HIV-related information is not public information and any disclosure, other than to persons pursuant to a legally sufficient release or to persons authorized by law to receive such information without a legally sufficient release, violates the law and Board policy.

C. Accessibility of Confidential HIV-related Information

1. No school staff member who obtains confidential HIV-related information may disclose or be compelled to disclose such information, except to the following:
 - a. the protected individual, his/her legal guardian or a person authorized to consent to health care for such individual;
 - b. any person who secures a release of confidential HIV-related information;
 - c. a federal, state or local health law officer when such disclosure is mandated or authorized by federal or state law;
 - d. a health care provider or health facility when knowledge of the HIV-related information is necessary to provide appropriate care or treatment to the protected individual or when confidential HIV-related information is already recorded in a medical chart or record and a health care provider has access to such record for the purpose of providing medical care to the protected individual;
 - e. a medical examiner to assist in determining cause of death;
 - f. any person allowed access to such information by a court order.

D. Procedures

1. If a school staff member, other than school medical personnel, is given confidential HIV-related information regarding a protected individual who is also a student from the student's legal guardian or the student, the school staff member shall attempt to secure a release of confidential HIV-related information for the sole purpose of disclosing such information to school medical personnel.
2. If a school medical personnel member is given confidential HIV-related information regarding a protected individual, who is also a student, by a student's legal guardian, or by the student, and the legal guardian or the student requests accommodations to the student's program for reasons related thereto, the school medical personnel member shall inform the legal guardian or the student, if an eligible student, that a release of confidential HIV-related information is necessary before such information may be

disclosed to other educational personnel capable of assessing the need for and implementing appropriate accommodations to the student's program.

3. Any school staff member who obtains confidential HIV-related information from a source other than the protected individual or his/her legal guardian, shall keep such information confidential and shall not disclose such information.
4. No school staff member may disclose confidential HIV-related information to other school staff members without first obtaining a release of confidential HIV-related information.
5. Any record containing confidential HIV-related information shall be maintained in a separate file, and shall not be subject to the provisions of this policy regarding accessibility of general student records.
6. If school medical personnel determine that the health and safety of the student and/or others would be threatened if a release of confidential HIV-related information is not obtained, the school medical personnel may seek a court order authorizing disclosure. In such cases, such confidential HIV-related information may be disclosed as set forth in and subject to any limitation of such court order.

E. Disclosures Pursuant to a Release

1. Any disclosure pursuant to a release shall be accompanied by a notice in writing stating, "This information has been disclosed to you from records whose confidentiality is protected by state law. State law prohibits you from making any further disclosure of it without the specific written consent of the person to whom it pertains, or as otherwise permitted by said law. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is NOT sufficient for this purpose."
2. Oral disclosures must be accompanied or followed by the above notice within ten (10) days.
3. Except for disclosures made to a federal, state or local health officer when such disclosure is mandated or authorized by federal or state law, a notation of all disclosures shall be placed in the medical record or with any HIV-related test result of a protected individual, who shall be informed of such disclosures on request.

F. Child Abuse Reporting

Nothing in this policy shall limit a mandated reporter's responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect under the Board's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy 4116.35.

XI. RIGHT TO FILE A COMPLAINT

FERPA affords parents and eligible students the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Legal References:

State Law:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 1-210 et seq.
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15b
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-581 et seq.
Regs. Conn. State Agencies § 10-76d-18

Federal Law:

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §§ 1232g et seq.
USA Patriot Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-56
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110
34 CFR 99.1 - 99.67
34 CFR 300.560-300.576

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