

Confidential Communications

Purpose

This policy sets forth the parameters for the treatment of information revealed to staff in confidence by a student.

Scope

This policy applies to the Superintendent, administrators, staff, volunteers, students and parents or guardians.

Policy

1. The Board of Directors recognizes that school staff must exercise a delicate balance regarding the treatment of information that was revealed in confidence. A staff member may, in his/her professional judgment, treat information received from a student as confidential while at other times decide to disclose what was learned to the school administrators, law enforcement officers (including Child Protective Services), the county health department, other staff members or the student's parents.
 - 1.1. A staff member should advise the student regarding the limitations and restrictions regarding confidentiality. The student should be encouraged to reveal confidences to his/her parents. If the staff member intends to disclose the confidence, the student should be informed prior to such action.
2. The following guidelines are established to assist staff members in making appropriate decisions regarding confidential information and/or communications:
 - 2.1. Information contained in the student's cumulative record folder is confidential and is only accessible through the custodian of student records. Information secured through the authorization of the record's custodian will remain confidential and will be used only for the purpose for which access was granted.
 - 2.2. While certain professionals may have a unique confidential relationship (e.g. attorney-client privileged communications and licensed psychologists), school staff members, including counselors, do not possess a confidentiality privilege.
 - 2.3. A staff member is expected to reveal information given by a student when there is a reasonable likelihood that a crime has or will be committed (for example, child abuse, sale of drugs, suicidal ideation).
 - 2.4. A staff member will exercise professional judgment regarding the sharing of student-disclosed information when there is reasonable likelihood that the student's welfare may be endangered.
 - 2.5. If district officials determine there is a specific threat to the health or safety of a student or any other individual, they may disclose otherwise confidential student information to appropriate parties, as allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- 2.6. A staff member is encouraged to assist the student by offering suggestions regarding the availability of community services to support a student in dealing with personal matters, (for example, substance abuse, mental illness, sexually-transmitted diseases, pregnancy). The staff member should encourage the student to discuss such matters with his/her parents. Staff members are encouraged to discuss problems of this nature with the school principal prior to making contact with others.

Related Procedures

3231P1-Student Records

4040P1-Public Records Requests

5630P1-Volunteers

Policy Cross References

3231-Student Records

4040-Public Access to District Records

5630-Volunteers

Policy Legal References

RCW 26.44.030 – Reports — Duty and authority to make — Duty of receiving agency — Duty to notify — Case planning and consultation — Penalty for unauthorized exchange of information — Filing dependency petitions — Investigations — Interviews of children — Records — Risk assessment process

Management Resources

N/A

Policy History

Action:	Date:
Approved by the Board	January 28, 2015
Revised	
Revised	
Revised	