
4020 Confidential Communications

The Board recognizes that school staff must exercise a delicate balance regarding the treatment of information that was revealed in confidence. A staff member may, in their professional judgment, treat information received from a student as confidential while at other times be required to disclose what was learned to the school administration, law enforcement officers (including child protective services), the county health department, other staff members or the student's parents.

The staff member should advise the student regarding the limitations and restrictions regarding confidentiality. The student should be encouraged to reveal confidences to the student's parents. If the staff member intends to disclose the confidence, the student should be informed prior to such action.

The following guidelines are established to assist staff members in making appropriate decisions regarding confidential information and/or communications:

- 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 records custodian shall remain confidential and be used only for the purpose that its access was granted.
- While certain professionals may have a legal confidential relationship, as in attorney-client communications, school staff members including counselors (except licensed psychologists) do not possess a confidentiality privilege, excluding health care exceptions under state and federal law.
- 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 or that the student is in crisis with imminent danger to the student or others, (e.g., child abuse, sale of drugs, suicidal ideation).
- A staff member shall exercise professional judgment regarding the sharing of student disclosed information when there is reasonable likelihood that the student's welfare may be endangered.
- If the principal, department head, or an Executive Director of Schools determines there is a specific threat to the health or safety of a student or any other individual, he or she may disclose otherwise confidential student information to appropriate parties, as allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Superintendent Procedure:

Policy Cross References:

- 1400 – Board Meetings
- 2140 – Advising and School Counseling
- 2145 – Suicide Prevention
- 3143 – Notification and Dissemination of Information About Student Offenses and Notification of Threats of Violence or Harm
- 3207 – Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying of Students
- 3208 – Sexual Harassment of Students Prohibited
- 3211 – Gender-Inclusive Schools: Transgender and Gender-Expansive Student Rights and Supports
- 3225 – School-Based Threat Assessment
- 3231 – Student Records
- 3232 – Parent/Guardian & Student Rights in Administration of Surveys, Analysis or Evaluations
- 3410 – Student Health
- 3414 – Infectious Diseases
- 3421 – Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Response
- 3520 – Student Fees, Fines, or Charges
- 4000 – Public Information Program
- 4010 – Staff Communications Responsibilities
- 4040 – Public Access to District Records
- 4200 – School Visitations and Maintaining Safe and Orderly Environments
- 4265 – School and Community Partnerships
- 4270 – Lead Community Partners
- 4280 – Research Activity
- 4310 – District Relationships with Law Enforcement and Other Government Agencies
- 5251 – Ethics
- 5253 – Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries.
- 5260 – Personnel Records
- 6501 – Data Privacy

Previous Policies:**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.
- RCW 28A.605.005 Parental rights.
- 20 U.S.C. § 1232g Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Management Resources:**Last Board Review:****Revisions:**

- November 26, 2025 (Administrative Update per Policy No. 1310)

Adopted by the Board:

- September 7, 2011