

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Board recognizes that school staff must exercise a delicate balance regarding the treatment of information that is 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 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 of 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.

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

- 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 records custodian shall remain confidential and be used only for the purpose that its access was granted.
- 2) 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.
- 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, (e.g., child abuse, sale of drugs, suicidal ideation).
- 4) 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.
- 5) A staff member is encouraged to assist the student by offering suggestions regarding the availability of community services to assist a student in dealing with personal matters, (e.g., 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.
- 6) If District officials determine there is a specific threat to the health or safety of a student or any other individual, otherwise confidential information may be disclosed to appropriate parties, as allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).



CROSS REFERENCES

*Policy 2140
Policy 3231
Policy 4040
Policy 5260*

*Guidance and Counseling
Student Records
Public Access to District Records
Personnel Records*

LEGAL REFERENCES

RCW 26.44.030

Report – Duty and Authority to Make



*POLICY ADOPTED
REVISED*

*September 13, 2004
June 28, 2011*