

STUDENTS

Confidential Communications with Students

Student information shall not be disclosed to non-employees, nor to employees without a need to know, except as authorized by Board Policy.

The Board recognizes that school staff must exercise a delicate balance regarding the treatment of information that was revealed in confidence. Consistent with this policy, a staff member may, in his/her professional judgment, treat information received from a student as confidential while at other times must disclose what was learned to the school administration, law enforcement officers (including child protective services), the student's parents, the county health department, or other staff members. The staff member will advise the student regarding the limitations and restrictions regarding confidentiality. If the staff member intends to disclose the confidence, the student shall be informed prior to such action. The student shall be encouraged to reveal confidences to his/her parents.

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

- A. While certain professionals may have a legal confidential relationship as in attorney-client communications, school staff members including counselors (except licensed psychologists acting in a clinical capacity) do not possess a confidentiality privilege.
- B. A staff member shall notify his/her supervisor of 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).
- C. A staff member shall notify his/her supervisor of student-disclosed information when there is a reasonable likelihood that the student's welfare may be endangered.
- D. A staff member who learns that a student is dealing with a sensitive personal matter such as substance abuse, mental illness, pregnancy, or a sexually transmitted disease should encourage the student to discuss the matter with his/her parents unless, after consultation with the principal, it appears likely that it is unsafe for the student to do so.

Cross References:

(cf. 2140 Guidance and Counseling)
(cf. 3231 Student Records)
(cf. 4040 Public Access to District Records)

Legal References:

RCW 26.44.030 Reports--Duty and authority to make
WAC 246-100-071 Responsibility for reporting to and cooperating with the local health department

Adopted: August 13, 2003