



Confidentiality is the obligation not to disclose willingly any information obtained in confidence. A 1974 federal law, the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA), protects the privacy interests of students in elementary and secondary schools (and their parents) with regard to certain types of education records. FERPA requires that prior consent be obtained from the student (if 18 or older) or the student's parents before certain types of information can be released from school records

Through your work in the schools, you may have access to information about students and their families which is private and confidential. You may also have access to information that is confidential to school staff members. In both instances it is essential that your practice complies with the principles of FERPA. FERPA requires that any information, about students and their families encountered during your work, is not shared with anyone outside your work environment. You share information with those you are working with as it relates to providing support for a student, and you share information with other professionals who also maintain confidentiality. As a school employee, access and sharing of student registration information, including address and phone numbers is a violation of family privacy. As many of us live in the community in which we work, it is critical you maintain student confidentiality.

- Confidentiality restrictions *protect embarrassing personal information from disclosure*. This information may include histories of emotional instability, marital conflicts, medical problems, physical or sexual abuse, alcoholism, drug use, limited education, or erratic employment.
- Confidentiality provisions also *prevent the improper dissemination of information about children and families that might increase the likelihood of discrimination against them*. Such information--about HIV status, mental health history, use of illegal drugs, or charges of child abuse--can be harmful if released. Harm can occur even if records show that the information is unproven or inaccurate.
- Confidentiality provisions also *protect family security*. Many immigrant families, for example, shy away from using public health clinics or other social services for fear that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will take action against them.
- Children and families also want to *avoid prejudice or differential treatment* as knowledge of their economic status can lower expectations (free/reduced lunch). This may set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy in which lowered expectations lead to lowered performance.
- Confidentiality provisions also may be necessary to *encourage individuals to make use of services designed to help them*. Adolescents may avoid seeking mental health services at a school-based clinic, for example, if they believe that information will get back to their teachers, parents, or peers.

I acknowledge and agree to the confidentiality guidelines.

School: _____

Name (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____