

West Jefferson Hills School District Calendar
RECORDS POLICY FOR NON-EXCEPTIONAL AND EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS and
2018-2019 PUBLIC AND PARENT INFORMATION NOTICE

Notice of Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believe are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record. They should write the school principal [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally-identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and school security personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (including therapists, medical consultants, attorneys and companies contracted with to collect student data and track post-secondary achievements); or a parent, student or other volunteer serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. A second notable exception to the consent rule relates to the disclosure of education records to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer. The West Jefferson Hills School District discloses such education records without consent. A third exception to the consent requirement relates to the disclosure of "directory information." Please see the notice below regarding the School District's policy regarding the disclosure of directory information. Finally, FERPA includes another exception permitting disclosure of student education records to a caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization authorized to access the student's case plan when the agency is legally responsible for the care and protection of the student in accordance with state

or tribal law. The West Jefferson Hills School District may disclose education records pursuant to a judicial order without providing any additional notice to the parent in specified types of judicial proceedings pursuant to the Uninterrupted Scholars Act, Public Law 112-278.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Directory Information

As is discussed above, FERPA requires the West Jefferson Hills School District to obtain written consent prior to disclosing personally-identifiable information from a child's education records, unless one of the enumerated exceptions applies. The directory information exception allows the School District to disclose appropriately-designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the School District has been advised to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School District to include this type of information from a child's education records in certain school publications, such as a playbill showing a student's role in a drama production, the annual yearbook, honor roll or other recognition lists, graduation programs and sports activity sheets (i.e., for wrestling events, weight and heights of team members are generally listed).

Directory information is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. FERPA permits the School District to disclose directory information to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside companies include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. Additionally, federal law requires the School District to provide military recruiters, upon request, with information from three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the school district that they do not want their student's information disclosed without prior written consent.

The School District has designated the following categories of information as "directory information" subject to disclosure without parental consent: the student's name, address and telephone number; date and place of birth; participation in officially-recognized sports and activities; group photos; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees, honors and awards received; school and dates of attendance and grade level in school and program of study. The School District may release this information without the consent of the parents or students.

Any parents or eligible students who object to the release of any or all of this information without their consent must notify, in writing, the principal of the school where the records are kept (the school your child attends). If no objection is received, then directory information may be released until the next annual notice of FERPA rights is received.

The School District has adopted a written policy regarding the rights of parents and students under FERPA. Additionally, this notice is posted on the School District's website at <http://www.wjhsd.net/>.

Unlawful Harassment Complaint Procedure

Step 1 – Reporting

A student, employee, or third party who believes s/he has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report the incident to the building principal or a district employee.

A school employee who suspects or is notified that a student has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to the building principal.

If the building principal is the subject of a complaint, the student, third party or employee shall report the incident directly to the Compliance Officer.

The complainant or reporting employee is encouraged to use the report form available from the building principal, but oral complaints shall be acceptable.

Step 2 – Investigation

Upon receiving a complaint of unlawful harassment, the building principal shall immediately notify the Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer shall authorize the building principal to investigate the complaint, unless the building principal is the subject of the complaint or is unable to conduct the investigation.

The investigation may consist of individual interviews with the complainant, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation.

The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded.

Step 3 – Investigative Report

The complainant and the accused shall be informed of the outcome of the investigation, including the recommended disposition of the complaint.

Step 4 – District Action

If the investigation results in a finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, the district shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases and will not recur. District staff shall document the corrective action taken and, where not prohibited by law, inform the complainant.

Disciplinary actions shall be consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, Board policies and district procedures, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and state and federal laws, and may include educational activities and/or counseling services.

If it is concluded that a student has knowingly made a false complaint under this policy, such student shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Appeal Procedure

If the complainant is not satisfied with a finding of no violation of the policy or with the recommended corrective action, s/he may submit a written appeal to the Compliance Officer within fifteen (15) days.

The Compliance Officer shall review the investigation and the investigative report and may also conduct a reasonable investigation.

The Compliance Officer shall prepare a written response to the appeal within fifteen (15) days. Copies of the response shall be provided to the complainant, the accused and the building principal who conducted the initial investigation.

The Compliance Officer may confirm, refuse or modify any finding or corrective action as part of the appeal procedure.

Individuals with questions or concerns should contact Dr. Lindsay Pfister, Director of Human Resources, at 412-655-8450 x2228.

Notice of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights regarding the conducting of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally-recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law, to determine program eligibility.

Parents additionally have the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Parents also have the right to inspect, upon request and before administration or use:

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The West Jefferson Hills School District will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The School District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The School District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

Students in temporary or inadequate living situations due to a loss of housing may be eligible for certain educational rights and services. Federal law requires a responsible school district to enroll a student experiencing homelessness, upon request, even when the student and/or parent/guardian is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to district policies.

For further assistance, contact the West Jefferson Hills School District Homeless Liaison, Elizabeth Wheat, Supervisor of Special Education & Pupil Personnel at ewheat@wjhsd.net or 412-655-8450 x2243. Additional information can be obtained from Sheldon Winnick, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 333 Market Street, 5th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17126 or 717-783-6466.

Title I Performance Report

The West Jefferson Hills School District receives Title I funds annually. The funds are used to provide reading services to students in grades K-5 who are basic or below basic in their reading skills. Students are identified to receive additional reading services through multiple measures of success, and eligible students in grades 6-8 receive after-school tutoring with Title I funds.

One hundred percent of the West Jefferson Hills faculty meet state certification and licensure requirements. We take great pride in the tremendous skills and dedication of our faculty and staff.

Please note that, as parents, you have the right to request and receive timely information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher. If you have any questions about our Title I Program or about your child's teacher, please call Mr. Matthew Patterson, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education at 412-655-8450 x2224.

Services for Students Whose Dominant Language is not English

In accordance with the Board's Philosophy of Education and Curriculum policies, an appropriate educational program will be designed and provided to identified students whose dominant language is not English, who is limited English proficient (LEP), or an English language learner (ELL).

The primary goal of the ESL Program is to increase the English language proficiency of limited English-proficient students so that they can meet state and district academic standards and thus be successful in school. A related goal is to increase these students' English language proficiency so that they can fully and successfully participate in all mainstreamed classes at an age-appropriate grade level. To meet these goals, the objectives of ESL or ELL instruction are the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English, and the provision of an educational environment which helps the ESL or ELL student understand and cope with a new culture. The program shall meet the three-pronged test of program compliance: (1) sound research-based education theory, (2) sufficient resources and staffed by appropriate prepared personnel, (3) periodic program evaluation.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The West Jefferson Hills School District will not discriminate in its education program, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally-protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with county, state and federal non-discrimination laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended.

Individuals who have an inquiry or complaint of discrimination or harassment should contact Dr. Lindsay Pfister, Director of Human Resources, at 412-655-8450 x2228. Individuals who need information about accommodations for persons with disabilities, should contact Elizabeth Wheat, Supervisor of Special Education/Pupil Personnel, 835 Old Clairton Road, Jefferson Hills, PA 15025-3131, 412-655-8450 x2243. Complaints of discrimination received by the District shall be investigated promptly and corrective

action taken when allegations are substantiated. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good-faith charges of discrimination. Individuals may alternatively contact either of the following offices for assistance or to file a complaint relating to alleged discrimination or harassment: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100; Telephone: 800-421-3481 or Email: OCR@ed.gov; or Philadelphia Office, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, The Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Suite 515, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3323; Telephone: 215-656-8541 or Email: OCR.Philadelphia@ed.gov.

Child Find – Screening and Evaluation Services for School-Age Students

The West Jefferson Hills School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to eligible students. To qualify as an eligible student, the child must be of school age, in need of specially-designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities, as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, IDEIA and referenced by Pennsylvania State Standards: Mental Retardation, Autism, deaf blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment, including blindness.

The District uses the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specified needs of school-aged students requiring special programs or services. Screening efforts are designed to identify potential signs of developmental delays and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities. These procedures, as required by federal and state laws and regulations, are as follows:

As prescribed by Section 1402 of the School Code, the district routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity in the following grades: Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 7 and 11. Visual acuity is screened in every grade. Speech and language skills are screened in Kindergarten and on a referral basis. Gross motor and fine-motor skills, academic skills, and social and/or emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers and support staff on an on-going basis. Screening activities include review of group-based data, such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, curriculum-based and performance-based assessments, and ability and achievement test scores. Identified needs from these screening sources, as well as information obtained from parents and outside agencies, are assessed and noted within student records. School records may always be reviewed by parents and may only be released to school officials who have legitimate educational interest in obtaining information about the child. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written permission, by parents or the student if he or she is eligible by law to provide consent.

If it is determined that a child needs additional services/interventions, the instructional team will make adjustments relative to such things as the child's learning style, behavior, physical inabilities and speech problems to be more in keeping with traditional classroom expectancies. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of intervention strategies. When the student does not make expected progress with this assistance or the screening results suggest that the student may be eligible, the District seeks parental consent to conduct a multi-disciplinary evaluation (MDE). By law, Parents may also initiate a request for an initial MDE of their child to determine if he or she is an eligible child with a disability at any time.

If an MDE is appropriate, the district will provide the "Permission to Evaluate" form to the parent outlining the purpose of the evaluation and the type of assessments that will be used. Parents must provide informed consent by signing and returning the permission before any evaluations can be completed. The purpose of the MDE is to assess the student's eligibility and need for special education and/or related services. Upon receipt of the signed permission, the district has 60 calendar days, excluding summers, to complete the evaluation process. Parents who suspect their child is eligible may request an evaluation at any time to the building principal or contact the Special Education Department at 412-655-8450, ext. 2243. The request must be in writing. If the request is made orally, a copy of the "Permission to Evaluate" form will be provided to the parents within 10 calendar days of the oral request.

After the assessments are completed, an Evaluation Report (ER) will be compiled with parent involvement. The ER will determine if the student has a disability and requires specially-designed instruction or related services. The report will include specific recommendations for the types of interventions necessary to accommodate the child's specific needs.

A copy of the Evaluation Report will be provided to the parent and the instructional team working with the student. For the student who has been found to be eligible for, and in need of, special education services, a meeting of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will be scheduled with parent involvement in order to develop the IEP for the student.

Eligible students are provided with a continuum of supports and services designed to meet their individual needs. These services may include supplementary aids and services, and/or itinerant, supplemental or full-time support. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the student's IEP team and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the intensity of the specified intervention. The school district also provides related services such as transportation, physical therapy, and occupational therapy that are required to enable the student to derive educational benefits. Services are provided in the least restrictive environment and with the student's regular education peers to the maximum extent appropriate. The IEP team must first consider the regular classroom with the provision of supplementary aids and services before considering the provision of services in other settings.

Prior to the initiation of services, a "Notice of Recommended Educational Placement" (NOREP) must be signed by the parent indicating approval for the services to be provided. Parents may obtain additional information regarding special education services and/or parental due-process rights by contacting the child's school principal or the Special Education Department at 412-655-8450, ext. 2242.

Services for Nonpublic School Students

Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is eligible and in need of special education or gifted education services may also make a request for screening and/or evaluation. Parental requests should be made in writing and be directed to the West Jefferson Hills School District Special Education Department at 835 Old Clairton Road, Jefferson Hills, PA 15025. Special education services and gifted services are accessible to eligible nonpublic school students through dual enrollment following the multidisciplinary evaluation and the development of the IEP or GIEP.

Services for Protected Students with Disabilities / Chapter 15 Regulations

In compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, the West Jefferson Hills School District will provide to each protected student with a disability, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected student with a disability, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in, or access to, an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected students with disabilities" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected students with disabilities, contact your child's school principal or the Special Education Department at 412-655-8450, ext. 2242.

Services for Pre-School Aged Children

The Pennsylvania Early Intervention Services System Act entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services.

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth through two years of age. Contact The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Hough Building, 2801 Custer Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15227, 412-885-6000.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from ages three through five. Contact Project DART, 475 E. Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120, 412-394-5739.

Services for Gifted Students

According to the Pennsylvania Regulations and Standards in Special Education, mentally gifted pupils are defined as having:

Outstanding intellectual and creative abilities to the development of which require special services not usually available in the regular education program. This term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher or when multiple criteria as set forth in the Department of Education guidelines indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability shall not be assessed based on IQ score alone. Intellectual ability is and should reflect a range of assessments including a student's performance as well as potential. A person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability. Determination of mentally gifted shall

include a full assessment and comprehensive report by a certified school psychologist specifying the nature and degree of the ability.

West Jefferson Hills School District reviews student performance data to identify when a student may require differentiated instruction. These data include standardized and criterion-referenced test data, developmental checklists, curriculum-based assessments, formative evaluation procedures and portfolios. For students who require differentiated instruction, the instructional team reviews the strengths of the child and plans strategies designed to meet the child's needs (strengths). When a student's needs cannot be met within the general curriculum, a gifted multidisciplinary evaluation will be initiated upon written permission from the parents. If appropriate, a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) will be written.

If you suspect that your child may be mentally gifted, please contact the building principal or Special Education Department at 412-655-8450, ext.2242.