

CONFIDENTIALITY

GENERALLY SPEAKING

Unless we have a need to know or need to discuss information about a student with another professional directly involved with the student, we shouldn't ask about, or tell anyone else about anything that includes a student's personally identifiable information.

PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

- ❖ A student's name, parent or family name or other student/family information
- ❖ Address or place of residence
- ❖ SS number or other ID number
- ❖ Information about health and disability

ALSO, ANY DISCUSSION OF

- ❖ A student's program, plan or evaluation
- ❖ Team meeting information
- ❖ Academic or behavioral issues
- ❖ Accommodations
- ❖ Other challenges

YOU HAVE A NEED TO KNOW IF

- ❖ You are a student's teacher, advisor or directly work with the student
- ❖ You are an IEP, EST, 504 or evaluation team member

COMMON SITUATIONS

A parent, guardian or community member asks you a question in the community, such as the market, convenience store, a sporting event or at a community function:

If you're not the student's teacher or case manager, although it may be tempting to respond, don't. It is not ethical and could lead to an administrative disciplinary action. Simply advise the parent to contact the case manager, teacher or school administrator – or whoever is appropriate to address the person's inquires.

If the person asking questions is not the specific parent or guardian of the student in question you must decline to discuss any aspect of the situation and refer the person to the office.

It is not appropriate to discuss student information with those not professionally involved with the student. That means that discussions about a student's behavior plan in the staff lunch room, among all of the teachers and support staff, is unethical. We should refrain

from necessary exchanges of such information in settings in which our discussion can be overheard by anyone else. This includes the office, staff room, library, hallway, or in the community: anywhere but a private area. Only the staff that has a working relationship with the student should be privy to discussions about the student's progress in school.

You see a behavior or intervention and wish to assist or comment:

Again, unless it is an emergency, report any concerns you might have to the teacher, case manager or principal. If there is someone working with the student, ask if additional help is necessary. Don't assume that a situation requires additional personnel or that you have a better idea as to how to deal with the student.

FINAL NOTE

In small school districts such as ours, everyone seemingly knows an awful lot about everything: Who is or isn't on an IEP; who's having behavioral issues; and who's doing well or poorly on a given day. Our smallness notwithstanding, however, we cannot take anything for granted. We need to treat each situation with confidentiality and professionalism.

If you have questions about confidentiality or specific situations, discuss them with your direct supervisor or school administrator.