Visitors and Observations in School

1. Any person wishing to visit the school and/or observe any student program must obtain prior approval from the Administration or designee of the respective program.
2. A visitor to the school or program must be able to articulate a legitimate reason for the proposed visit and/or observation. Where the visitation involves direct contact with Bethany Public School District (District) students or observation of an identified student or student program, the visitor must have a sufficient educational nexus with the District, its educational programs, or the student to support such request.
3. All visits must be reasonable in length and conducted in a manner designed to minimize disruption to the District's educational programs.
4. When a parent/guardian makes a request to observe an identified student or student program, the request will be reviewed with the student's parent/guardian to determine the purpose of the observation, specific questions being addressed, the location(s) of the observation, and the date, time, and length of the observation.
5. When determining whether to approve a request to visit and/or observe individual students or student programs, the responsible administrator or designee shall consider the following factors:
    a. the frequency of visits;
    b. the duration of the visit;
    c. the number of visitors involved;
    d. the effect of the visit on a particular class or activity;
    e. the age of the students;
    f. the nature of the class or program;
    g. the potential for disclosure of confidential personally identifiable student information;
    h. whether the visitor/observer has a legitimate educational interest in visiting the school;
    i. whether the visitor/observer has professional ethical obligations not to disclose any personally identifiable student information;
    j. any safety risk to students and school staff; and
    k. compliance with the Bethany Board of Education (Board's) Guidelines for Independent Educational Evaluations, if applicable.
6. The responsible administrator or designee has the discretion to limit, or refuse, requests for visits and/or observations of student programs in light of the above criteria. When a requested observation is refused, the responsible administrator will provide the parent/guardian with the reason for the decision and will work to develop alternative ways for the parent/guardian to obtain the information the parent/guardian seeks.
7. If the responsible administrator or designee approves a request to visit the school and/or observe a student program, arrangements must be made in advance to ensure that the visit will not disrupt educational programs. The length and scope of any visit shall be determined by the responsible administrator or designee in accordance with these regulations and accompanying Board policy. The responsible administrator shall determine a reasonable amount of time for observations of individual students or student programs.

8. Upon arrival, all visitors must comply with any and all applicable building security procedures, including but not limited to utilizing security buzzers for access, complying with requests for photo identification, reporting directly to and signing in and out at the visitors' reception area of the school office, prominently displaying visitors' badges or other identification required for visitors to the school, limiting access to those areas of the buildings and grounds for which the visitors have authorized access, and complying with directives of school officials at all times.
9. The District has an obligation to maintain the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. All visitors and observers must restrict their visits and observations to the purpose identified in the request to visit or observe and are strictly prohibited from observing or collecting information on other students within the school. If the visitor/observer views, accesses, or otherwise obtains personally identifiable student information concerning another student, the visitor/observer must notify the building Principal or responsible administrator as soon as possible.
10. All visitors and observers permitted inside the school building or on school grounds must comply with all school health and safety protocols in place at the time, including any health screening protocols.
11. A refusal to comply with any of the Board's policy provisions and/or regulations concerning visitors shall constitute grounds for denial of the visitor's privileges, as determined appropriate by the building principal or designee. Such refusal may also result in a referral to law enforcement personnel, as determined appropriate by the building principal or designee.

Expectations During Observations

The Board's expectations for observations of students and programs are as follows:

1. The length of the observation shall range between 30-60 minutes which is considered to be a reasonable time to address the purpose of the observation and desired outcomes.
2. A staff member will accompany a parent/observer for the entire duration of the observation.
3. Those observing will be seated in an area that will not disrupt instruction.
4. Staff members involved in a classroom observation will welcome observers to the class but will not interact with observers before, during, or immediately after the observation period.
5. If further discussion is needed upon the completion of an observation, a follow-up meeting can be scheduled with Administration upon request.
6. Those observing shall respect student confidentiality and shall not share any impressions of other students with anyone. Observers will be asked to sign a statement acknowledging that they will maintain student confidentiality.
7. Video and/or audio recording during an observation is prohibited.
8. School safety procedures shall be adhered to at all times.
9. Staff reserves the right to terminate an observation if at any time the staff believes that the presence of an observer is interfering with the delivery of instruction or if an observer fails to follow these guidelines.

Statement of Confidentiality

The visitor or observer may see, hear, or be exposed to confidential information about students, including but not limited to, information about:

- Students' grades, test scores, or academic performance;
- Discipline and classroom behavior; and
- Disabilities and/or related accommodations.

The student's confidentiality must be respected at all times when observing a classroom, program, or student. All visitors or observers must agree to maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained while conducting an observation. The visitor or observer must agree to not access, use, or disclose any confidential information of any student other than that which they are authorized to observe. Violation of a student's confidentiality agreement will result in forfeiture of further observation opportunities.

Regulation approved: January 7, 2016
Regulation revised: December 12, 2018
Regulation revised: November 1, 2019
Regulation revised: August 12, 2020
Regulation revised: October 1, 2021

Source: Shipman

It is recommended that each visitor/observer must complete the agreement below which must be kept on file at the school.

[Must be on the responsible administrator's letterhead]

Guidelines for Student Observation and Confidentiality Agreement

In accordance with Policy and Administrative Regulation #1250, the Bethany Board of Education (Board) desires to work collaboratively with parents/guardians in the Bethany Public School District (District) and supporting educational programs and services outside the District. This includes, but is not limited to, conferencing, student observations, and planning meetings. In order to promote a safe and productive educational environment for all students and staff, the Board requires all visitors to receive prior approval before being permitted to visit the school. The Board's expectations for observations of students and programs are as follows:

Expectations During Observations

1. The length of the observation shall range between 30-60 minutes which is considered to be a reasonable time to address the purpose of the observation and desired outcomes.
2. A staff member will accompany a parent/observer for the duration of the observation.
3. Those observing will be seated in an area that will not disrupt instruction.
4. Staff members involved in a classroom observation will welcome observers to the class but will not interact with observers before, during, or immediately after the observation period.
5. If further discussion is needed upon the completion of an observation, a follow-up meeting can be scheduled with Administration upon request.
6. Those observing shall respect student confidentiality and shall not share any impressions of other students with anyone. Observers will be asked to sign a statement acknowledging that they will maintain student confidentiality.
7. Video and/or audio recording during an observation is prohibited.
8. School safety procedures shall be adhered to at all times.
9. Staff reserves the right to terminate an observation if at any time the staff believes that the presence of an observer is interfering with the delivery of instruction or if an observer fails to follow these guidelines.

Statement of Confidentiality

I understand that, as an observer, I may see, hear, or be exposed to confidential information about students, including but not limited to, information about:

- Students' grades, test scores, or academic performance;
- Discipline and classroom behavior; and
- Disabilities and/or related accommodations.

I understand that student confidentiality must be respected at all times when observing a classroom, program, or student. I acknowledge that is it my responsibility to respect the privacy and confidentiality of this information. I agree to maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained while conducting an observation. I will not access, use, or disclose any confidential information of any student other than that which I am authorized to observe. Violation of this confidentiality agreement forfeits further observation opportunities.

Printed Name of Observer _____

Signature of Observer _____

Date _____