

Confidentiality in Counseling

The main purpose of confidentiality is to offer students an environment in which they will be able to deal with what concerns them without fear of disclosure. Therefore, it will be the professional responsibility of school counselors to respect fully the right of privacy of those with whom they enter counseling relationships.

Confidentiality must not be abridged by the counselor except:

1. Where there is a clear and present danger to the student or to other persons;
2. To consult with other professionally competent persons when this is in the student's interests;
3. When the student waives this privilege in writing;
4. At the earliest time possible, as determined by the counselor, parents will be informed that their student is in counseling. When students are referred to an outside agency, the laws dealing with that agency's rights will then be enacted.

Records of the counseling relationship, including interview notes, test data, correspondence, tape recordings and other documents, are to be considered professional information for use in counseling and they are not part of the public or official records of the institution in which the counselor is employed. Revelation to others of counseling materials should occur only upon the student's consent.

Counselors are not to discuss confidential matters over the telephone. Counselors should insist a request for information be made in writing on official stationery.

The school counselor shall be provided with adequate physical facilities that guarantee the confidentiality of the counseling relationship.

When a counselor is in doubt about what information to release in a judicial proceeding, the counselor should request, through the superintendent, a conference with the district's attorney to explain the dilemma and receive advice on how to proceed.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99 (2000).
Protection of Pupil Rights, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98 (2000).