

Pursuant to District Policy 639 – Parental Rights in Education, district staff are responsible for communicating with parents/guardians regarding known changes in a student’s mental, emotional or physical health or well-being. All district staff shall follow the procedures set forth herein to ensure that such communication occurs consistently and in a timely manner.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

“Emotional health” shall mean a person’s ability to cope with and be aware of their own emotions, both positive and negative.

“Known changes” shall mean those changes in a student’s mental, emotional or physical health or well-being that are directly communicated to or observed by a district staff member that are consistent (unchanging) and enduring (persistent, occurring over time) in the way that the student behaves or feels.

“Mental health” shall mean the state of health of somebody’s mind.

“Physical health” shall mean the condition of a person’s body and the extent to which it is free from illness or is able to resist illness.

“School counselor” shall mean and include licensed social workers, licensed school counselors, school psychologists, nurses and any other licensed professional employed by the district in their professional capacity.

“Well-being” shall mean a person’s sense of feeling healthy and happy.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

Any district staff member who is or becomes aware of any known change in a student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being shall notify the building principal and/or school counselor [or include other designee] of the school the student attends. The building principal and/or school counselor [or include other designee] shall notify the student’s parent/guardian of the known changes, including date(s) the changes became known to district staff, the nature of the known changes, and other information relevant to the changes. For example, some common changes school staff may be concerned about or that may become known include:

- Depression;
- Anxiety;
- Behavioral problems including aggression, withdrawal, or disruptive behavior;
- Changes in academic performance including a sudden drop in grades, difficulty concentrating, or missing school;

- Changes in physical health including appetite, sleep patterns, or energy levels; or
- Changes in social interactions including withdrawing from friends and family or engaging in risky behaviors.

However, any indication that a student may harm themselves or someone else is sufficient to signify a known change in well-being that must be communicated to the student’s parent/guardian. All attempts to notify a student’s parent/guardian of known changes shall be documented.

Parents who request from school staff information about their student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being are entitled to such information if it has been disclosed to school staff, except where disclosure is prohibited by law or court order.

In addition to communication of known changes, the building principal and/or school counselor [or include other designee] shall notify a student’s parent/guardian if a student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being is being monitored by school staff. The notification shall include what type of monitoring is taking place and the reasons for such monitoring.

School staff who are concerned a student may be suicidal shall follow the district’s suicide prevention policy and procedures (Policies 566 and 566P).

**SCHOOL NOTIFICATION AND STUDENT DISCUSSION**

School staff should always prioritize a student engaging with their parent/guardian regarding changes in the student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being. Where appropriate, school staff should offer to facilitate such discussions if the student is hesitant. If a student refuses to discuss changes in well-being with their parent/guardian, school staff must make the student aware that the school has an obligation to inform the parent/guardian.

All known information about the student, including the severity of the change in well-being and whether the student or someone else is in danger, should be considered when determining how much time the student shall be allowed to initiate a discussion with their parent/guardian before the building principal and/or school counselor [or include other designee] initiates notification.

**EXCEPTIONS TO DISCLOSURE TO PARENTS**

Nothing in these procedures or Policy 639 shall require school counselors to disclose confidential information obtained from a student if doing so would constitute a violation of their professional code of ethics. In addition, district staff are not required to notify a student’s parent/guardian of known changes in the student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being where prohibited from doing so by court order or by state or federal confidentiality laws, including but not limited to Idaho Code §16-2428 or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232g.



**LEGAL REFERENCE:**

Idaho Code Sections

33-506 – Organization and Government of Board of Trustees

33-6001 – Parental Rights

**CROSS-REFERENCE:**

Parental Rights in Education – 639

Student Suicide Prevention – 566

Student Suicide Prevention Procedures – 566P

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