

Policies

Westerly Public School School Bus Video Camera Policy

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard student privacy while providing for their safety and security.

2. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The School Committee recognizes the use of bus cameras on school buses as an important tool in the management of the security and safety of students and staff and as an educational tool to enhance the performance of all bus staff. Student data privacy must be maintained in accordance with all federal and state statutes.

3. SCHOOL BUSES

- a) Westerly Public Schools utilize digital video recording equipment in all school buses for the security and safety of students and staff, as an educational tool to enhance the performance of all bus staff and for the purpose of monitoring the behavior of students. Video recordings are used to support the bus driver's referral reports and enforce the consequences of the School Bus Safety Policy.
- b) Publication in the Westerly Public Schools student handbook listed under Bus Transportation & Safety shall serve as notification to students, parents/guardians and staff that digital video surveillance exists on all school busses and that those video recordings may be used in student disciplinary proceedings. This notification includes a copy of the district's policy on bus conduct. In addition, a prominent notice is placed in each bus stating, "This bus is equipped with a video monitoring system. Your conversations and/or actions may be recorded."
- c) Video recordings will only be viewed by the Westerly Public Schools Superintendent (and/or designee), Transportation Coordinator (and/or designee), the principal of the school building (and/or designee), District bus dispatcher, bus staff, and/or other appropriate law enforcement agencies. Whenever a parent or guardian disputes or challenges a bus discipline report, and the parent's child was video recorded, it will be the responsibility of the school principal (and/or designee) to review the recording.

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- d) The video recording will be used by the building principal to assist in determining whether or not the incident actually occurred and if so, the severity of the incident.
- e) Neither the parent nor guardian of the student that has been video recorded, nor the student will be allowed to view the video recording in accordance with data privacy laws, unless the student is the only subject of the recording or the building principal has obtained written permission from the parents / guardians of all other students on the video recording for them to be viewed. Upon written request the school district will provide a written summary of the recorded incident(s) of a student pictured on a video to the student's parents/guardians.
- f) The Transportation Department will be responsible for the security of all bus digital video equipment and for the handling of video files. If there is a request by a building principal to view a recording, the Transportation Department will remove the digital hard drive from its recorder for safeguard until a meeting can be arranged. Digital files retained as part of an individual student's disciplinary record shall be maintained in accordance with law and School Committee policy governing the access, review, and release of student records.

Adopted: June 20, 2012