

SWEETWATER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER ONE
HEAD START
CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT & PROCEDURE
(Reference Policy KBA)

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Confidentiality is defined by this program as:

**Preserving information that was received in confidence from
a family member and disclosing information only to professionals
for the benefit of the family.**

Confidentiality is based upon the basic rights of the parents and children; it is an ethical obligation of all Sweetwater County School District Number One Head Start staff and is necessary for effective services delivery. Staff members will use caution in obtaining personal information to reduce the likelihood of gathering more information than is necessary. Parents will be given a copy and explanation of this confidentiality statement at the annual Parent Orientation. Parents will be informed of the specific use of information gathered.

Information in relation to child abuse, neglect, homicide, or suicide WILL NOT be held in confidence. Such information will be reported in accordance with Wyoming State Law and Sweetwater County School District Number One policy.

INTRA-AGENCY SHARING OF INFORMATION

In order to provide adequate assistance to a family, Head Start staff may share information within the limits of the professional relationship.

CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Sweetwater County School District Number One Head Start shall release information to other agencies only with a signed release form from the appropriate parent or guardian, to a specific person or agency, for a specific stated purpose. The release form will include a list of information furnished and will be signed and dated by the person supplying the information. A copy of the release form will then be filed in the child's/family's file.

RELEASE/EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

All Head Start parents will be asked to sign the form Authorization for Referral and/or Release/Exchange of Confidential Information for release to a specific agency for a specific purpose. This will allow Head Start to request necessary medical, psychological, educational or other information from another agency. A copy of the signed form will be placed in the appropriate section of the child's/family's central file.

The exchange of confidential information over the telephone may be allowed. Staff will ask for a code word. In all instances sound judgment and due caution will be used by the staff person releasing the information to avoid sharing it with unauthorized individuals.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING CONFIDENTIALITY

Any employee who violates the confidentiality of a child or family may be subject to reprimand, suspension, and/or dismissal. Any volunteer who releases information without authorization will no longer be allowed to work with Sweetwater County School District Number One Head Start.

Furthermore, persons who violate the confidentiality of a child or family may be subject to prosecution.

ACCESS TO FILES

An Authorized Access list of current employees having access to personally identifiable data is maintained and conspicuously posted on file cabinets containing the child/family records. Any individual who views a child/family file must sign, date, and note the purpose of access on the Access Form located inside each file.

Parents/guardians may inspect and review their own child's file or that of their family within 5 working days of receipt of a written request. An appointment may be scheduled, whereby parents/guardians may have records explained and interpreted. Upon written request, a copy of their records will be made within 15 working days of the request. Parents/guardians will be required to sign the file access sheets.

People from outside Sweetwater County School District Number One Head Start will be allowed access to a child's/family's records with a properly signed authorization ONLY. Access will be allowed in the presence and supervision of a Head Start staff member. Authorizations are filed in the appropriate section of the central file. The exception is as follows: review by personnel from Head Start funding sources and governmental agencies will be granted access, without signed authorization, as required for on-site visits and inspections. These individuals will complete the Access Form located inside the file they are inspecting.

SAFEGUARDS

Each Sweetwater County School District Number One Head Start site shall protect data during collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. Records will be stored in locked file cabinets, located in classrooms and office areas, when not in use.

The staff person handling the collection, storage, disclosure or destruction of confidential data will assume responsibility for assuring confidentiality.

Persons collecting or using identifiable data shall receive training or instruction in state and federal regulations concerning confidentiality. This training or instruction will be provided by the program director.

LIST OF TYPES AND LOCATION OF INFORMATION

Sweetwater County School District Number One Head Start will provide, upon request by parents/guardians, a list of the types and locations of education records collected, maintained, or used by our agency.

PARENTAL REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT OF RECORDS

A parent/guardian may request that their child's record be amended if it is, in their view, misleading or inaccurate.

Head Start may grant or deny the request. If the request is denied, Head Start will notify the parent/guardian of the decision and explain the parents hearing rights.

HEARING RIGHTS

The region (Region VIII) must provide an opportunity for a hearing to challenge data and to determine accuracy. The Region VIII Office may be reached at:

999 18th Street

South Terrace, Suite 499

Denver, CO 80202

Phone: (303) 844-3100

Fax: (303) 844-1188

Email: region8@acf.hhs.gov

If as a result of the hearing the data is determined to be accurate, the region shall inform the parent/guardian of the right to place a statement in the records outlining the reasons for their disagreement with the decision.

Any such statement must be maintained by Head Start as a part of the records as long as the contested portion remains in the records.

Disclosure by Head Start of the child's record must include the statement.

DESTRUCTION OF DATA

By Federal Regulation, files must be kept for a period of three years. At the end of three years files may be destroyed by shredding.

REVIEW AND REVISION OF STATEMENT & PROCEDURE

Parents, staff and Policy Council will review this statement and procedure on a regular basis and revise as necessary.

The staff/volunteers sign and date the statement below signifying that they have received a copy of and understand these confidentiality expectations.

Employee/Volunteer Signature

Date

Policy Council Approved November 23, 2013
Revised November 18, 2013
Policy Council Approved March 28, 2006
Revised March 2006