CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The board recognizes that school staff must exercise a delicate balance regarding the treatment of information that was revealed in confidence. A staff member may, in his/her professional judgment, treat information received from a student as confidential while at other times decide to disclose what was learned to the school administration, law enforcement officers (including child protective services), the county health department, other staff members or the student's parents. The staff member should advise the student regarding the limitations and restrictions regarding confidentiality. The student should be encouraged to reveal confidences to his/her parents. If the staff member intends to disclose the confidence, the student should be informed prior to such action.

The following guidelines are established to assist staff members in making appropriate decisions regarding confidential information and/or communications:

A. Information contained in the student's cumulative record folder is confidential and is only accessible through the custodian of student records. Information secured through the authorization of the records custodian shall remain confidential and be used only for the purpose that its access was granted.

B. While certain professionals may have a legal confidential relationship as in attorney-client communications, school staff members including counselors (except licensed psychologists) do not possess a confidentiality privilege.

C. A staff member is expected to reveal information given by a student when there is a reasonable likelihood that a crime has or will be committed, (e.g., child abuse, sale of drugs, suicidal ideation).

D. A staff member shall exercise professional judgment regarding the sharing of student disclosed information when there is reasonable likelihood that the student's welfare may be endangered.

E. **If district officials determine there is a specific threat to the health or safety of a student or any other individual, it may disclose otherwise confidential student information to appropriate parties, as allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).**

F. A staff member is encouraged to assist the student by offering suggestions regarding the availability of community services to assist a student in dealing with personal matters, (e.g. substance abuse, mental illness, sexually-transmitted diseases, pregnancy). The staff member should encourage the student to discuss such matters with his/her parents. Staff members are encouraged to discuss problems of this nature with the school principal prior to making contact with others.

Cross References:	Board Policy 2140	Guidance and Counseling
	Board Policy 2121	Drug and Alcohol Use/Abuse Program
	Board Policy 3231	Student Records
	Board Policy 4040	Public Access to District Records
	Board Policy 5260	Personnel Records
Legal References:	RCW 26.44.030	Reports — Duty and authority to make — **Duty of receiving agency**

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