

BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Thank you for taking time to assist us at the Belmont Public Schools. We appreciate your interest and effort in helping us continue to provide the most supportive environment possible in which to have students learn.

In order to provide such an environment, many schools have found it beneficial to remind people of the importance of **confidentiality** when working with the school. This is especially important when the people involved live in the community.

There will be times when you'll see student behaviors, both academic and social, that are perfectly normal. These should **NOT** be discussed outside of the classroom environment. Other times you might see behaviors that should be called to the attention of the classroom teacher. All matters of discipline should be addressed by the teacher or the office.

In all cases, please remember that what you see here needs to stay at the school. If you feel a need to comment on any behavioral or curriculum issues, please talk first to the classroom teacher as she/he will most likely be able to address your concerns. There often is information you are not aware of that impacts a situation.

We're sure you'll agree with us that honoring student confidentiality is an important part of safeguarding a positive school experience.

We would like you to indicate your commitment to the above policy by signing this form. It will be kept on file in the Superintendent's office.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

CONFIDENTIALITY IN A PUBLIC EDUCATION SETTING

What is the definition of confidentiality?

Confidentiality is the obligation not to disclose willingly any personal information obtained by any means about another person. Confidentiality is based on four basic principles:

1. Respect for an individual's right to privacy.
2. Respect for human relationships in which personal information is shared.
3. Appreciation of the importance of confidentiality to both individuals and society.
4. Expectations that those who pledge to safeguard confidential information will do so.

Are there laws requiring confidentiality in schools?

YES

Confidentiality is guaranteed to all students through the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (1974). This law applies to all schools in the United States that receive federal funding and covers students from age 3 to any person enrolled in college. This law is reinforced by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1991), which protects parents and their children with disabilities ages 3-21.

Who is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of student records and information?

Any member of a Public School District with access or knowledge about students has the responsibility to ensure trust and protection of confidentiality, from Bus Driver to Superintendent to Volunteer.

Exactly what information is confidential?

Information including, but not limited to: test scores, personal problems of both students and co-workers, counseling data, student records, student progress, student scheduling, disciplinary actions, etc., should not be shared. In short, information that you learn about a co-worker, child of the child's family as a result of working in the school is confidential.

Can personal information ever be shared with anyone?

Information may be shared with co-workers/teachers who directly effect the advancement of the education of the child or with agencies concerned with the child's welfare. This would also include supervising staff and administration. Information should be shared in private spaces while it is unlikely staff will be overheard by other children or adults. Teachers have the professional responsibility to act in the best interest of the student when making decisions to divulge confidential information.

When in doubt, an employee/volunteer should:

- Remember that confidentiality resides with the student
- Advise the administration
- Know the pertinent laws and expectations
- Be accountable for all decisions regarding the student
- Above all, act professionally