

Informational Bulletin for Students and Parents

1. STUDENT RECORD REGULATIONS

The State Department of Education requires each school department to follow established regulations in maintaining student records. The following is a brief summary of those regulations.

A student's records consist of the Student Transcript, which is kept virtually indefinitely, and the Temporary Record, which is destroyed five years after the student leaves the school system. The Student Transcript contains only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits and grade level completed. The Temporary Record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school about the student. This includes such things as standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored extra-curricular activities, evaluations and comments of teachers and counselors and other such information.

The records of all students are covered by the state regulations. The persons who may exercise rights under the regulations are as follows:

- If the student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the ninth grade, the student's parents may exercise these rights.
- If the student is from 14 through 17 years of age or has entered the ninth grade, the student and/or the student's parents may exercise these rights
- If the student is 18 years of age or over, the student alone may exercise these rights.

Students and parents (as specified above) have the right to examine the Student Transcript and the Temporary Record upon request and the right to make additions and to request deletions. They also have the right to receive copies of any part of the record.

Except for authorized school personnel and certain other exceptions named in the State regulations, no individual or agency may have the right of access to the School Transcript or the Temporary Record without the student's or parent's permission.

During the school year, publication may be made of a student's name, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors, awards and post-high school plans. Should the eligible student or parent object to such publication, such student or parent should notify the school promptly.

If you have any questions regarding student records you may contact your school's office.

2. EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ACT - 622

Chapter 622 applies to equal education opportunities for all students of public schools. Every course taught must present fairly the culture, history, and contributions of people from different races, nationalities, sexes, religions and colors. The content and objectives of all courses, the book used, and the materials and teaching methods used should show people from all backgrounds in a variety of positive roles. All courses are open to all students regardless of race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

In the area of co-curricular athletics, all students must have the opportunity to try out for all teams. Schools must insure that activities which are composed solely or predominantly of members of one sex must receive support services, such as practice schedules, facilities, travel, and publicity comparable to similar activities composed of members of the opposite sex.

Occupational information shall include representatives of both sexes and of minority group members in a broad variety of occupational roles. Schools shall not permit materials to be used to recruit students for employment, including training, that contain a preference for individuals of a particular race, color, sex, national origin or religion.

3. TITLE IX

It is the policy of the Abington School Department not to discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities which it operates.

The School Department is required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the implementing regulation not to discriminate on the basis of sex. This requirement not to discriminate extends to employment by the School Department. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX regarding activities relating to insuring non-discrimination in the admission and treatment of students, curriculum and course offerings, student policies, services and employment policies and practices may be directed to:

Dr. Dympna M. Thomas
Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services
One Ralph Hamlin Lane, Abington, MA 02351
Tel. (781) 982-2175

4. SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

"No otherwise qualified handicapped individual... shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity Sullivan at the address and telephone number listed previously receiving Federal financial assistance."

Inquiries regarding compliance should be referred to Dympna Thomas

5. TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

"No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any public entity." 42 U.S.C.s. 12132;28 C.F.R.s. 35.130 (a).

The Department of Education has jurisdiction over compliance by elementary and secondary educational institutions, per 28 C.F.R.s. 35.190 (b) (2).

6. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE UNDER TITLE IX CHAPTER 622, SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.

Any school employee, parent, student or interested party may file a grievance if that person feels discriminated against, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation in any educational program or activity on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, handicap, or disability.

The following four-step structured grievance procedures have been adopted to protect the rights of all persons protected by these regulations. The grievances will be heard at each step as soon as possible.

STEP 1

Parents, Students, and Interested Parties

At the school building level, complaints are to be heard by the building principal. If the parent, student or interested party is not satisfied with the decision of the principal, he/she can continue the grievance procedure to Step 2.

Employees

At the school building level, complaints are to be heard by the employee's immediate superior and building principal. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision of the immediate superior and principal, he/she can continue the grievance procedure to Step 2.

STEP 2

Parents, Students, and Interested Parties

At this level, the grievance is to be heard by Dr. Dympna M. Thomas, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services. If the parent, student or interested party is not satisfied with the decision, he/she can continue the grievance procedure to Step 3.

Employees

At this level, the grievance is to be heard by Dr. Dympna M. Thomas, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision, he/she can continue the grievance procedure to Step 3.

STEP 3

Parents, Students, Employees, and Interested Parties

At the School Committee level, the grievance is to be heard by the Superintendent and the Abington School Committee. If the parent, student, interested party or employee is not satisfied with the decision of the Abington School Committee, he/she can continue the grievance procedure to Step 4.

STEP 4

Parents, Students, Employees, and Interested Parties

At the Office of Civil Rights level, the parent, student, interested party or employee can contact the Boston Regional Office of Civil Rights, Region I RKO General Building, Government Center, Boston, Massachusetts 02114, for appropriate follow-up grievance procedures.

If you have any questions regarding Title IX, Chapter 622 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or wish to peruse the full text of the regulations, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Dympna Thomas' office, Ralph Hamlin Lane, Abington, Massachusetts - telephone (781) 982-2175. Copies of the law can be obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20201.

7. SECTION 37H - EDUCATIONAL REFORM ACT

The Abington Public schools will be in compliance with Section 37 H of the Education Reform Act of 1993 which prohibits the use of tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel.

8. MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE ACT

To the extent practical and as required by law, Abington Public Schools will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Being abandoned in hospitals;
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
- Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.
- Unaccompanied youth.

The superintendent has designated the Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services to be Abington Public Schools' liaison for homeless students and their families.

To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living, or other schools. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families resident in the district.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. Abington Public Schools' liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison will assist in this process. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally.

Abington Public Schools' liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.