SECTION 3: Annual Notification of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days after the day PGCPS receives a request for access.

In accordance with Administrative Procedure 5125 and 5134, parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask a PGCPS school to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

Please see the information under #5 below for exceptions to the prior written consent rule.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by a PGCPS school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

5. FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students’ education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations, including disclosures:

- To other school officials, including teachers, within PGCPS whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- To officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is requested for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer.
- To certain authorized representatives of federal or State government.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction.
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes.
Student Service-Learning

Student Service-Learning is a learning experience for students in grades 6-12 that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning.

Students improve their academic skills by applying what they learn in school to the real world; they then reflect on their experience to reinforce the link between their service and their learning.

Only approved activities may qualify for service-learning credit. Students must complete the student verification form to receive credit.

Talk to your child’s Professional School Counselor or the school-based Service-Learning Coordinator assigned to the school.

Annual Notification of Rights Under FERPA (cont’d)

- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- The school has designated as “directory information” and listed under #6 below.

6. The right to “opt out” of allowing PGCPSS to disclose directory information without prior written consent. PGCPSS has designated the following information as directory information:
   - Student’s name
   - Address
   - Telephone listing
   - Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
   - The most recent school attended
   - Dates of attendance
   - Grade level
   - Honors and awards received
   - Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (Note: A student's social security number, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

If a parent does not want PGCPSS to disclose directory information from a child’s education records without prior written consent, the parent must notify the school principal/designee in writing within five (5) business days of receiving the annual notification. The parent’s opt out shall be honored for one school year. The parent must re-submit the opt-out notice upon receipt of the annual notification in subsequent school years.

SECTION 4: Graduation Requirements

Prince George's County Public Schools' students must satisfy credit, service learning, and assessment requirements to be eligible for graduation. See Administrative Procedure 6150 Educational Requirements and Options in Secondary Schools for detailed information.

SECTION 5: Student Attendance

Student Attendance Policy

School attendance plays a major part in student achievement. Being chronically absent or missing 10% of the school year (about 18 days) for lawful or unlawful reasons can drastically affect a student's academic success.

School achievement begins with regular attendance. Parents/guardians must ensure that all school-age children in their care are in school on time daily. Additionally, school personnel must communicate any attendance problems or concerns to parents/guardians in a timely manner. Parents are required to send a signed written note with reason for absence. If the absence is lawful, the student will receive missed classwork and assignments. Documentation may be requested for absences of three or more consecutive days.

Students Reporting Late to School

It is imperative for students to be on time at the beginning of the school day. The official school attendance documentation is recorded during this time. Schools are required to admit students to school regardless of the time they arrive. (However, students who arrive late to school must report first to the appropriate administrative
office to obtain a late pass before being admitted to any classroom or other area of the school. This pass must be shown to all of the student's teachers as the student reports to each class during the day, as well as to teachers of any missed classes during the next school day. If the student does not obtain and show the pass to all teachers, the tardy will be UNEXCUSED.

Additionally, for the tardiness to be excused, students are required to bring a note from the parent/guardian explaining the reason for the tardiness.

Lawful Absence

Absence from school, including absence for any portion of the day, shall be considered lawful only for the following reasons:

- Death in the immediate family
- Illness of the student. The principal may require a physician's certificate from the parent/guardian of a student reported absent for illness at least three school days.
- Pregnancy and parenting related conditions.
  - Absences due to labor, delivery, recovery, prenatal and post-natal medical appointment.
  - Absences due to an illness or medical appointment of the student's child. After four days of such absences during a school year a physician's note may be required.
  - A parenting student is allowed a minimum of 10 days excused after the birth of a child.
- Absences due to legal appointments related to family law.
- Court Summons
- Hazardous weather conditions that would endanger the health or safety of the student.
- Work approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or the State Department of Education, accepted by the Chief Executive Officer or the school principal, or their designees, as reason for excusing the student.
- Observance of a religious holiday
- State of emergency
- Suspension
- Lack of authorized transportation (This shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.)
- Health Exclusion
- Other emergency or set of circumstances approved by the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee

Pregnant and Parenting Students

In addition to Home and Hospital Teaching, pregnant and parenting students may make up work in ways by retaking a semester, participating in an online course credit recovery program, and continuing at the same pace with six extra weeks to complete the semester.

Unlawful Absence/Truancy

Unlawful absence is defined as the act of a student being absent from school for a day or any portion of a day from an individual class for any reason other than those defined as lawful. Teachers are not required to provide make-up work for students when absences are unlawful. Truancy is defined as unlawfully absent for 8 days or more in a quarter, 15 days in a semester, or 20 days in a school year.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS FOR UNLAWFUL ABSENCES OF STUDENTS

By law, parents/guardians must ensure regular attendance for their school-aged children who are enrolled in the public schools. If a child has excessive unexcused absences, the parent/guardian may be convicted of a misdemeanor and imprisoned or fined by the courts. Additionally, any other adult who persuades or attempts to persuade a student to be unlawfully absent, or who harbors a child who is unlawfully absent, may also be convicted of a misdemeanor and imprisoned and/or fined.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR STUDENTS WHO REGULARLY MISS SCHOOL

- Denial of opportunity to make-up class/homework assignments, tests and/or quizzes (for unlawful absences).
- Referral to Pupil Personnel Services for possible referral to court for violation of the compulsory attendance law or to Juvenile Services for intake services.
- Before and/or after school detention
- Behavioral probation
- Written contract
- In-school suspension or intervention
- Saturday School Program
- Removal of school privileges
- Reduction in grades or loss of credit
- Restriction of extracurricular activities
- Referral to an alternative educational program
- Referral to Attendance Committee
- Referral to Community Program