



Protecting Student Privacy

Fast Facts for Educational Assistants

As an educational assistant, you may have access to a great deal of personal information about students and their families. The information you have access to is protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act). If you are ever unsure if you can collect, release, or disclose information, always ask first.

Who has access to information?*

- The legal parent or guardian
- The student, if the student is 18 or over, or is an independent student
- An individual with written consent from the legal parent or guardian
- A police officer or social worker conducting an investigation
- An individual with a court order
- A staff member who needs the information to do his or her job

*While these individuals have a right to information, you should always refer them to the office. There are processes in place for information requests.

When parents register their children, they are informed of what personal information the District collects and how it will be used (see http://epsb.ca/media/epsb/schools/registerforschool/EPsB_CollectionUseOfPersonalInfo.pdf).

Top Tips for Protecting Privacy

- Only use personal information for its intended purpose.
- Only access information if it is required to do your job.
- If information—paper or electronic—is lost or stolen, it must be reported to the principal right away.
- Know the regulation for transporting information (<http://epsb.ca/ourdistrict/policy/c/cna-ar/>).
- Ensure conversations about students/parents happen behind closed doors, not in public places.
- Do not discuss events in a way that could identify an individual, even if names are not used.
- Always remember that you are responsible for your actions.

Keeping and Managing Records

All formal and informal records (written, video, audio) can be accessed during a FOIP request. It is important to keep appropriate records and be prepared to justify anything you write. Remember, embarrassment is not an exception under the FOIP Act.

- Write all records as though the parent or interested party is going to read it.
- Record professional observations, not opinions.
- Keep all records organized and easy to access.
- Use passwords to protect electronic records.
- Collect and use only the personal information needed to perform your duties.

If there is a FOIP Request

- You must provide all records in your possession to the FOIP Coordinator ASAP.
- Emails, drafts, Post-it Notes, official and casual notes, PowerSchool contact notes, etc., may be requested.
- You must also provide any records you have at home. (*Keeping records at home should not be normal practice.*)

Access to Information Questions and Answers

Q: A parent or parent volunteer expresses concern about another student. Can I provide them with information?

A: No. They do not have the right to any information about another student. They may contact the office to discuss their concerns with the principal.

Q: I have access to PowerSchool. If my family member asks me to, can I check my nephew's marks?

A: You may only access this information if it is necessary to do your job. Refer your family member to their school office where they will be provided with the information they need. Remember that under the FOIP Act there are fines up to \$10,000 for unauthorized access to personal information.

Q: A bus driver notices a regular student is away and asks where the student is. Can I tell them?

A: No. While the driver may have good intentions, they do not have the right to any information about a student.

Test your FOIP skills in an [interactive online training program](#)

Contacts

FOIP office: 780-429-8357

<http://districtrecords.epps.ca/>