

SHALER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

ANNUAL NOTICE TO PARENTS

School Records

Pupil records are an inherent part of a student's formal education in the public school setting. They are used to collect, maintain and disseminate pertinent information.

The school district has adopted a policy and administrative regulations in accordance with both the regulations of the State Board of Education on Pupil Records, adopted July 12, 1974, amended July 15, 1977, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Parents and eligible students are accorded the following rights:

- To inspect, review and be given a copy of the records.
- To obtain a copy of the district's policy and regulations upon written request to: Supervisor of School Guidance Counseling, Shaler Area School District, 1800 Mt. Royal Boulevard.
- To file complaints with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office (FERPA), Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 330 Independence Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20201.
- To be informed of the transfer of records to officials of another school or school system upon notification of the child's enrollment.
- To challenge the contents of the records.
- To refuse individual consent where it is required for release of information from the record.
- To be informed of data collected and maintained by representational consent.

Should you wish to examine the record, you may arrange to do so by making an appointment with your child's principal or counselor.

For specific information regarding matters pertaining to school records, parents or eligible students may contact the principal of the building in which the student is enrolled.

Disclosure of Personal Information

The policy and administrative regulations for the collection, maintenance and dissemination of student records provide that the school district may disclose personally identifiable information designed by the district as directory information.

Directory Information Categories

- Student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth
- Awards won and offices held
- Major areas of study
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Post-high school endeavors
- Recognition of achievements in academic and non-academic areas of endeavors
- Recognition of graduating seniors
- Weights and heights of athletes

The parent or eligible student may refuse to permit the designation of any or all of these categories, with respect to that student, by notifying the principal within thirty days of the publication and distribution of this notice.

Handicapped Student Protections

In compliance with state and federal law, the Shaler Area School District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protect handicapped students, contact Mr. William H. Watson at 492-1200.

Child Identification Activities

Shaler Area School District provides a free appropriate public education to exceptional students. To be eligible, the student must be of school age, in need of specially designed instruction and meet eligibility criteria for mentally gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as defined by Pennsylvania state standards: autism/pervasive developmental disorder, blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hearing impairment, physical disability, serious emotional disturbance, mental retardation, multi-handicap, specific learning disability, speech/language impairment, neurological impairment and other health impairment. The Shaler Area School District makes use of the following procedures for locating, identifying and evaluating needs of school-aged students requiring special programs or services. These procedures, as required by state regulations, are as follows:

As prescribed by Section 1402 of the School Code, the district routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity, visual acuity, and speech and language. Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills and social/emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers on an on-going basis. Specified needs from all of these screening sources are noted within the student's personal record. These school records are open and available to parents. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written, signed permission by parents. Parents with concerns regarding their child may contact the building principals at any time to request a screening or evaluation of their child. Communication with parents and exceptional students shall be in English or the native language of the parents.

Screening information will be used by the Student Assistance Team within the student's school to meet his/her specific needs or to document the need for further evaluation.

If it is determined that a child needs additional services, the Student Assistance Team will make adjustments relative to such things as the child's learning style, behavior, physical inabilities and speech problems to assist the student in reaching appropriate academic gains based on his or her rate of learning.

Multidisciplinary evaluations of students thought to be exceptional can be initiated by parents/guardians or school personnel. Parents/guardians are part of a multidisciplinary team (MDT). Permission of the parent/guardian is needed to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. The purpose of a multidisciplinary evaluation is to develop conclusions and recommendations regarding eligibility and programming appropriate for the student. Multidisciplinary evaluations use multiple sources of information in assessing a student, such as district-wide testing results, input from school personnel, Student Assistance Team intervention, classroom observation, parent input and formal psychological and educational testing.

After the evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report will be compiled and will include specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to deal with the child's needs.

Parents are then invited to participate in a meeting where the results of the evaluation are discussed. If the child is determined to be exceptional and in need of specially designed instruction, an IEP is developed. The extent of special education services and the location of the delivery of these services are determined by the IEP team and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and level of intensity of the specified intervention. The district also provides related services that are necessary for an exceptional student to benefit from special education.

Parents are then presented a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) with which they may agree or disagree. If parents disagree with the program being recommended, the issue may be taken to mediation or a due process hearing.

The district provides a continuum of options ranging from supportive intervention in the regular classroom to supplemental intervention in the regular class or in a resource room to a part time or full time special education class in or outside of the regular school. Students receive services in the least restrictive environment as determined by the IEP team. The school district provides Learning Support for students whose primary identified need is in academic learning.

Life Skills Support is provided for students whose focus should be on independent living skill. Additionally, the district provides Hearing Support, Speech/Language Support, Vision Support and Physical Support to meet students' individual needs. Students who are mentally gifted receive Gifted Support.

Based upon students' individual needs, the district provides extended school year services, adaptive physical education for students who cannot benefit from regular physical education with modifications, behavior management programs for students whose behavior interferes with learning, vocational assessment, assistive devices and enrichment/advancement.

Information about parental rights, mediation or due process procedures, specific special education services and programs offered by the district and the district's Educational Records policy is available upon request from the building principal in a child's school.

Preschool and Young Children At-Risk for Developmental Delays

If a child is not learning a skill that other children are learning at the same age, that may be a “warning sign” that the child may be at risk for a developmental delay. Some general “warning signs” of possible delay include the following:

- **Behavioral Warning Signs**
 - Does not pay attention or stay focused on an activity for as long a time as other children of the same age
 - Focuses on unusual objects for long periods of time; enjoys this more than interacting with others
 - Avoids or rarely makes eye contact with others
 - Gets unusually frustrated when trying to do simple tasks that most children of the same age can do
 - Shows aggressive behaviors and acting out and appears to be very stubborn compared with other children
 - Displays violent behaviors on a daily basis
 - Stares into space, rocks body, or talks to self more often than other children of the same age
 - Does not seek love and approval from a caregiver or parent
- **Gross Motor Warning Signs**
 - Has stiff arms and/or legs
 - Has a floppy or limp body posture compared to other children of the same age
 - Uses one side of body more than the other
 - Has a very clumsy manner compared with other children of the same age
- **Vision Warning Signs**
 - Seems to have difficulty following objects or people with her/his eyes
 - Rubs eyes frequently
 - Turns, tilts or holds head in a strained or unusual position when trying to look at an object
 - Seems to have difficulty finding or picking up small objects dropped on the floor (after the age of 12 months)
 - Has difficulty focusing or making eye contact
 - Closes one eye when trying to look at distant objects
 - Eyes appear to be crossed or turned
 - Brings objects too close to eyes to see
 - One or both eyes appear abnormal in size or coloring
- **Hearing Warning Signs**
 - Talks in a very loud or very soft voice
 - Seems to have difficulty responding when called from across the room, even when it is for something interesting
 - Turns body so that the same ear is always turned toward sound
 - Has difficulty understanding what has been said or following directions after once she/he has turned 3 years of age
 - Doesn't startle to loud noises
 - Ears appear small or deformed
 - Fails to develop sounds or words that would be appropriate at her/his age
- **Language Warning Signs**
 - Does not recognize names of familiar people, objects, and body parts
 - Is not saying several single words (by 15 to 18 months)
 - Is not using simple phrases (by 18 to 24 months)
 - Is not using 4- to 5- word sentences (by 36 months)

Act 212, the Early Intervention Services System Act entitles young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities and their families as eligible for early intervention services. Also, at-risk children are eligible for screening and tracking. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers. For information contact Alliance for Infants, 2801 Custer Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15227, 412/885-6000. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool children from ages three through five-years-old. For information, contact Project DART, 475 E. Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120, 412/394-5739.