
Parental Information Notice 2015 – 2016

The Deer Lakes School District is required by law to annually notify parents about screening and evaluation, Special Education programs, the privacy rights of parents and students, Chapter 15 and other protected handicapped students.

The Deer Lakes School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and/or handicap in its activities, programs or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact the Deer Lakes School District at 19 East Union Road, Cheswick, PA 15024, 724-265-5300 or 1-888-709-4115.

Screening and Evaluation

The Deer Lakes School District uses the following procedures for locating; identifying and evaluating specified needs of school-aged students requiring special programs or services. These procedures, as required by law, are as follows:

The district, as prescribed by Section 1402 of the School Code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity in the following grades: kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11. Visual acuity is screened in every grade. Speech and language skills are screened in kindergarten and on a referral basis. New students are screened annually. Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills and social-emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers on an ongoing basis. Specified needs from all of these screening sources are noted within the child's official file. School records are always open and available to parents, and only to school officials who have a legitimate "need to know" regarding information about the child.

Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization that involves written signed permission by the parents. Communications with parents of exceptional students shall be in English or in the native language of the parents.

Screening information will be used by the Intervention Planning Team within the student's school to meet his or her specific needs or to document the need for further evaluation. The Intervention Planning Team will make adjustments relative to such things as the child's learning style, behavior, physical disabilities and classroom experiences. If a student does not make progress, parents will be asked to give written permission for further individual professional evaluations.

After all the evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report (ER) will be compiled with parent involvement. It will include specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to deal with the child's specified needs. Parents are then invited to participate in a meeting where the results of this multidisciplinary evaluation will be discussed. If the student is eligible, an Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P.) will be developed to provide specialized services to the student.

Deer Lakes School District's I.E.P. Team consists of the parents and the following district staff: a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, the Local Education Agency (LEA) which may

be the Director of Special Education and/or the principal, and other teachers/specialists as needed.

Parents may request that the district initiate a screening or evaluation of their student's specified needs at any time by contacting the building principal in writing. Further information about these procedures may be obtained by calling Mrs. Lindsay McGaughey, Director of Special Education, at 724-265-5300, ext. 2647 or 1-888-709-4115.

Parents are an integral part of the I.E.P. Team and should be physically present at the I.E.P. meeting. The district will notify parents in writing, make documented phone calls and home visits, if necessary, to make parents aware of the I.E.P. conference and the need for parental participation. At the completion of the I.E.P. meeting, parents are presented with 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 to a due process hearing.

Information about early intervention, parent rights, mediation or due process procedures, specific special education services and programs offered by the Deer Lakes School District, and the district's Educational Records Policy are available upon request from the building principal in a child's school.

Privacy Rights of Parents and Students

The Deer Lakes School District and its employees are required by federal law and state and federal rules and regulations to protect the rights of students. The foundation of these rights comes from federal legislation entitled "Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974," also known as the Buckley Amendment. There are state rules and regulations dealing with regular and special education students' rights and privacy. All students are covered by the state regulations contained in Chapter 12 known as Student Rights and Responsibilities.

The basic premise of the above-mentioned laws, rules and regulations is that information about students cannot be disclosed without parental consent. There are different categories of information: Education Records, Personally Identifiable Information and Directory Information. Education Records consist of information directly related to a student, which is maintained by an educational agency. Personally Identifiable Information includes the student's name, the name of the parent or other family members and a personal identifier of a list of personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable.

Education Records and Personally Identifiable Information cannot be disclosed or released without written parental consent or if a student is over eighteen without student consent.

There is certain information that can be released without consent, which is called Directory Information. Directory Information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The school district designates what information is labeled Directory Information.

Disclosure of information means to permit access to or the release, transfer or communication of education records, or the personally identifiable information contained in these records, to any party, by any means, including oral, written or electronically.

However, information in Student Records or Personally Identifiable Information about a student cannot be shared even in conversation without permission. This also applies to other Deer Lakes School District personnel who do not have an educationally relevant reason to possess knowledge of a student.

Written parental consent is necessary for disclosure of personally identifiable information and education records. The consent must: (1) specify the records that may be disclosed; (2) state the purpose of the disclosure (3) identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. The Deer Lakes School District must maintain a written record of disclosure for the parents to inspect in case information has been released. However, student information may be sent to a district in which a student intends to enroll without prior consent.

Chapter 15/Other Protected Handicapped Students

A protected handicapped student is a student who is school age with a physical disability or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to any aspect of the school program.

In compliance with state and federal laws, the Deer Lakes School District will provide to each protected and 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 or obtain the benefits of the school program and extra curricular activities as is reasonably appropriate for the student's abilities. 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 protected handicapped students, contact Mrs. Lindsay McGaughey, Director of Special Education, at 724-265-5300, ext. 2647 or 1-888-709-4115.

Services for School Age Exceptional Students

Numerous services are available to meet the needs of eligible students. Deer Lakes School District offers the following services within the district: Learning Support, Emotional Support, Autistic Support, Life Skills Support, Speech/Language Support and Gifted Support. The following services are contracted: Vision, Hearing, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy.

The district also works with the following organizations as deemed appropriate: Western PA School for Blind Children, Western PA School for the Deaf, PACE, Pressley Ridge Schools, Watson Institute, The Children's Institute, Wesley Highlands, Holy Family Institute, Longmore Academy, St. Stephen's, Wesley Academy, and Adelphoi Village.

Services for Students in Nonpublic School

Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multi-disciplinary team evaluation of their child through a written request to Mrs. Lindsay McGaughey, Director of Special Education.

For more information, please contact:

Mrs. Lindsay McGaughey,
Director of Special Education
Deer Lakes School District
19 East Union Road,
Cheswick, PA 15024
(724) 265-5300, Ext. 2647 or
1-888-709-4115