

Parent and Guardian Handbook

Introduction

The parent and guardian handbook provides notice about many of the rights of parents, guardians, and students under district, state, and federal laws, rules and regulations. It is important that you read this booklet to become aware of your rights as parents/guardians of a student in the Greater Johnstown School District.

Part I: School and District Contacts

School and District Addresses and Phone Numbers

East Side Elementary School
220 Messenger Street
Johnstown, PA 15902
(814) 533-5550

West Side Elementary School
196 Westgate Drive
Johnstown, PA 15905
(814) 533-5540

Greater Johnstown Middle School
280 Decker Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15906
(814) 533-5570

Greater Johnstown High School
222 Central Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15902
(814) 533-5601

Greater Johnstown School District
Director of Education's Office
1091 Broad Street
Johnstown, PA 15906
(814) 533-5677

Greater Johnstown School District
Superintendent's Office
1091 Broad Street
Johnstown, PA 15906
(814) 533-5650

If you have any questions or concerns about your child the following approach is recommended to receive help:

- If the concern or question is about a classroom incident or about academic progress contact the teacher of that class by calling the school that your child attends.
- If the question or concern is about a matter that is outside the classroom or in case the matter was not resolved by your discussion with the classroom teacher, call the principal of the school that your child attends.
- If the matter is not resolved contact the Director of Education's office at 533-5677.
- You may also address the school board during the public comments section of the school board meetings. The school board normally meets at 7:30 the first Tuesday of every month. To make sure of the schedule of the next board meeting call the Superintendent's office.

Part II: Parent/Guardian Rights

Parents and Guardians have the right to:

- be heard in a respectful manner
- a prompt response to their inquires and questions
- be made aware of the rules and regulations that apply to students
- expect proper due process in matters involving the Student Code of Conduct
- expect state, federal and school policies implemented properly
- request a process of appeal for decisions made at the school level

Part III: Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians have the responsibility to:

- build a good working relationship between themselves and their child, his or her teachers, and the school
- relate to school personnel with the same respect that they expect from school
- work with their child to develop an appreciation for the value of an education and the importance of the hard work necessary to become successful
- listen to school personnel as well as your child before making a decision
- cooperate jointly with the school to resolve any problems
- set realistic standards of behavior and requirements to learn for their child

Part IV: Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct outlines the rules of behavior expectations for all students in the Greater Johnstown School District. The rights and procedures for students and parents and guardians are outlined in detail. Any questions about these rules and regulations or the rights and due processes that are required should be referred to the Code of Conduct.

Part V: Bullying/Cyberbullying

Bullying means an intentional electronic (including cyberbullying), written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following: substantial interference with a student's education, creation of a threatening environment, and/or substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Part VI: Bus Transportation

1. Transportation to and from school is a privilege, not a right.
2. Transportation rules for riding a school bus
 - a. Sit (facing forward)
 - b. Ride (keep hands/feet to yourself)
 - c. Obey rule a & b
3. Once the bus is in motion, no student should be out of his/her seat.
4. Students are responsible to follow the direction(s) of the bus driver and/or bus matron.
5. Any transportation questions may be directed to the transportation coordinator, David Taylor at 533-5570 ext. 1210.

Part VII: School Wide Title I Program

Title I, Part A applies to the East Side and West Side Elementary Schools. These schools provide school-wide Title I services to all students who meet the criteria that requires services be provided to students with academic need who are economically disadvantaged. Economically disadvantaged students are identified by federal guidelines based on the free and reduced lunch program. Identifying students with academic needs is done through assessment of the students. For further information, please refer to the Title I parent handbook available at your child's elementary school or on the District's web page.

A. Services for Homeless Children

Under the NCLB Act of 2001, the term "homeless children and youths" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Children and youths who are identified as homeless are automatically eligible for some programs and services. If you feel your child (ren) might fit this

definition or know of a child in this situation, contact the Director of Education at 533-5677. The Director of Education is the Homeless Liaison and can determine eligibility and coordinate services.

Part VIII: Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights regarding your child(s) participation in surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
 3. Sex behaviors or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as lawyers, doctors, or ministers.
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents;
 8. Income, other than that required by law to determine program eligibility.

- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
 3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use of:
 1. Protected information surveys of students;
 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes;
 3. Instrumental material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or emancipated minor under State law.

The Greater Johnstown School District has developed and is revising policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. (Board Policy #235 entitled Student Rights/Surveys) The Greater Johnstown School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The Greater Johnstown School District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The Greater

Johnstown School District will make the notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Part IX: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress provides the U.S. Department of Education with information about the achievement of elementary and secondary students. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires states and selected school districts to participate in this testing. If your child is selected to participate in the NAEP testing you will be informed before the assessment is given. **Student participation is voluntary.** If you wish to review the NAEP test you will have access to all assessment information, questions, and test booklets in a secure setting at the local school. Contact your school principal to schedule the test review if wish to do so after being informed that your child has been selected to be tested.

Part X: Persistently Dangerous School

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act requires that all children who attend a persistently dangerous school or becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school have the opportunity to transfer to another school building **within** the district that is not a persistently dangerous school.

No school at the present time in the Greater Johnstown School District is considered a persistently dangerous school. The only schools in the district that a student could transfer from or to are the elementary schools. If your child is a victim of a violent criminal offense as defined by Pennsylvania State Statutes, that has occurred in school and you want to transfer him or her to the other elementary school, notify the school principal of the building your child attends in writing of your request. You must make this request within 30 calendar days after the incident is reported to school authorities. If you have any questions about this subject, please contact the building principal where your child attends school or the Director of Education at 533-5677.

Part XI: Adequate Yearly Progress

The No Child Left Behind Law major purpose is to require that all students become advance or proficient in Reading and Mathematics by the year 2014. The law also requires that schools make regular progress towards these goals. This is referred to as Annual Yearly Progress (AYP).

Under the law the district must keep track of the achievement of students in the following groups:

1. All students as a whole;
2. African-American students;
3. Asian and Pacific Islander students;

4. Hispanic students;
5. Native American students;
6. Caucasian students;
7. Economically disadvantaged students;
8. Students with limited English proficiency; and
9. Students with disabilities.

In addition to keeping track of student academic progress schools are required to keep track of attendance, and whether the school meets the goal of having 95% of its students take the state required tests, and for secondary schools graduation rates.

In some cases students in a school that is not making adequate progress may have the right to transfer to another school within the school district. The school for which the transfer is being requested must be making adequate progress.

If a school has not made adequate yearly progress for two years in a row and receives Title I money students may be entitled to supplemental educational services. Parents are then notified of what supplemental services they are entitled to by the first day of school in the third school year and how they can apply for such services.

For individual students who are not making adequate progress parents should consult with their child's teacher about recommendations to improve the student's learning. At this time parents or guardians should inquire about the variety of support programs and activities that are available to help their child.

Each elementary school has a response to intervention, and at the middle school and high school levels there are student assistance teams and student support teams to provide support and accommodations for your child. In addition the school counselor(s) are available to provide support and recommendations.

For students who have received assistance and a variety of accommodations implemented by the teacher(s) and the student still is experiencing great difficulty the student may be referred for special education assessment. After the assessment occurs a meeting will be held with teachers and you the parent/guardian to discuss the recommendations being made by the school psychologist. It is at this meeting a decision will be made about whether or not your child is eligible for special education services. If he or she is found to be eligible for services an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed to provide supportive services.

If you have any questions about the help available for your child, contact your child counselor and/ or the building principal.

Part XII: Confidentiality of Student Records

A. Confidentiality

Each school district protects that confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding its exceptional, thought to be exceptional, and protected handicapped students (if not protected the IDEA'97 or Pennsylvania's special education regulations) in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and other applicable federal and state laws, policies, and regulations.

Education records means those records that are directly related to the student, including computer media and videotape, which are maintained by an educational agency or by a party acting for the agency. Educational agency, for purposes of this notice, means the local school district and/or the

Intermediate Unit 8. For all students, the educational agency maintains education records that include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Personally identifiable information – confidential information that includes, but is not limited to, the student’s name, name of parents and other family members, the address of the student or student’s family, and personal information or personal characteristics which would make the student’s identity easily traceable.
- ◆ Directory information – information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

Some directory information may be released. Parents and or guardians may opt out of disclosing directory information. See more information about privacy of records in a later section of this handbook. Directory information must be disclosed to military recruiters by federal law. Parents and/or guardians must opt out of the release of directory information in order to not have this information released to military recruiters.

B. Notification of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

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

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official 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 the School to amend a record should write the School principal [or appropriate school official], 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 advise them 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 consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

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.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District 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, D.C. 20202-5920

5. Notice of important rights. Concerning the maintenance, access to, and amendment and disclosure of education records by the Greater Johnstown School District.

Print below is the full text of the Education Records Policy of the Education Records Policy of the Greater Johnstown School District. This policy contains information of importance to students attending public schools and public school-sponsored programs. Several provisions of this policy warrant careful attention:

Designation of certain records containing personally identifiable information as “directory information.” In Section 3.1 of this policy, the GJSD designates certain kinds of information to any interested person, including armed forces recruiters who request it, without seeking consent from the parents/guardians of the student or the student, unless a parent/guardian or student (eighteen (18) years of age or older) notifies the Special Education Office in writing within ten (10) days of the first day of each school term, that any or none of this information is to be released. Your written notice must identify the specific types of directory information that you do not want the GJSD to disclose without consent. If you fail to notify us in writing by the first day of the school term, we may release directory information upon request and without consent.

Disclosure of records personally identifiable information to other schools and institutions. Section 6.8a of this policy allows the GJSD to disclose personally identifiable information concerning a student to an educational agency or institution at which the student seeks to enroll, intends to enroll, or is enrolled, or from which the student receives services, when that agency or institution requests such records.

Access to records by school officials with a “legitimate educational interest.” Section 6.6 of this policy allows school officials with a legitimate educational interest to have access to personally identifiable information without parent/guardian or student consent. In Section 3.8 of this policy,

the district designates those persons who have a “legitimate educational interest” that would allow such access to education records.

Amendment of education records. Section 5 of this policy describes how a parent/guardian or a student who has attained the age of eighteen (1*) can request that records be amended. This section also describes in detail the right of the parent/guardian or eligible student to request a hearing to challenge a decision by the GJSD not to amend records that the parent/guardian or student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s right to privacy.

Part XIII: Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs

The Greater Johnstown School District is required by the IDEA ‘04 to provide a free appropriate public education to all children with disabilities who need special education and related services. School age children who need special education and related services are identified as children with disabilities. These students have been identified as being in need of specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities:

- | | |
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| *Autism | *Emotional disturbance |
| *Deafness | *Hearing impairment |
| *Specific learning disability | *Mental retardation |
| *Multiple Disabilities | *Other health impairment |
| *Speech and language impairment | *Visual impairment including blindness |
| *Deaf-blindness | *Traumatic Brain Injury |
| *Developmental Delay | |
| *Orthopedic Impairment due to chronic or acute health problems | |

Mentally Gifted Students also may be identified as exceptional if they need specially designed instruction and are determined to be mentally gifted. These students are no longer considered to be special education students under state law. The state has passed legislation that has specific requirements relating to gifted students

Early Intervention Under IDEA ‘04, a child between 3 years of age and the school district’s age of beginners who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or mental disabilities listed above may be identified as an "eligible young child." Eligible young children are afforded the same rights as school age children including screening, evaluation and an appropriate program and services.

Screening The Greater Johnstown School District has established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate students and young children suspected of being exceptional. These procedures include screening activities which include but are not limited to: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards); hearing screening (at a minimum of kindergarten, special upgraded classes, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grades); vision screening (every grade level); motor screening; and speech and language screening. In schools which have a Pre-Referral, Child-Study, Early Intervening or Instructional Support Team, the above screening activities may lead to consideration by the teams to move the next level of screening activities.

Evaluation When screening indicates that a student may be a child with a disability, the school district will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. Evaluation means procedures used in the determination of whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs.

Parents who think their child is exceptional may request that the school district conduct an evaluation. This request should be made in writing to the contact person at the bottom of this notice. If a parent makes an oral request for an evaluation, the school district shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose. Pre-Referral, Child-Study, Early Intervening, or Instructional Support Team activities do not serve as a barrier to the right of a

parent to request, (at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of instructional support activities) an evaluation.

Parents also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. The school district must provide to parents, on request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained. Under certain circumstances, such an independent educational evaluation may be obtained at public expense.

Educational Placement The IEP team develops a written education plan called an IEP. The IEP is based on the results of the evaluation. An IEP describes a student's current educational levels, goals, objectives and the individualized programs and services that the student will receive. IEP's are reviewed on an annual basis. The IEP team will make decisions about the type of services, the level of intervention, and the location of intervention.

Placement must be made in the least restrictive environment in which the student's needs can be met with special education and related services. All students with disabilities must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may qualify as "protected handicapped" students in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and therefore be protected by other federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination. The school district must ensure that "protected handicapped" students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

Mode of Communication The content of this notice has been written in straightforward, simple language. Detailed printed information about special education services and programs and school district policies are available upon request.

The school district will arrange for an interpreter for parents with limited English proficiency. If a parent is deaf or blind or has no written language, the school district will arrange for communication of this notice in the mode normally used by the parent (e.g., sign language, Braille, or oral communication).

SPECIAL EDUCATION CONTACT

Amie Lumadue
Special Education Supervisor
Greater Johnstown School District
1091 Broad Street
Johnstown, PA 15906
814-533-5664

The Greater Johnstown School District will not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Part XIV: Students with Limited Ability in English

The Civil Rights Law of 1964, Title VI requires that school districts identify limited English proficient students. The Greater Johnstown School District has the responsibility under federal law to serve students who are limited English proficient and need English instructional services. Given this responsibility, the school district has the right to ask for the information it needs to identify English Language Learners (ELL).

The Home Language Survey will be given to, parents and or guardians of all students entering the district. Screening tests are given to students whose native language was not English. If the result of the screening test indicates a need for English as a Second Language service, then additional assessments are given to find how much service your child might need.

Students who need assistance with English are referred to as English Language Learners (ELL). In Greater Johnstown School District, students who qualify for services will receive instruction in a program called English As a Second Language (ESL).

English as a Second Language is taught by a teacher for part of the school day to help your child learn to speak, read and write English. The rest of your child's classes are the regular classes taken by other students. English Language Learners are to be considered regular students who have a need for additional help. Students in the ESL program are monitored for their academic and social progress. Even after the child exits from the program, he or she will be monitored for at least one academic year to ensure his or her continued academic success.

Parents are entitled to have school documents translated if they have a need. Parents and or guardians also have the right to have a translator present if those services are needed.

If you have any questions about English as A Second Language services contact the Superintendent's office at 533-5650.

Part XV: Additional Items

A. Registration

Any children between the ages of 4 and 21 is entitled to enroll in the Greater Johnstown School District schools if they have a legal residence in the district and have completed the required immunization shots. The most recent list of required shots may be obtained from your local school... Call the Director of Education's Office at 533-5677 if you have any questions about registration.

B. School Nurse

Each school has a school nurse. If your child has a health issue or concern, call your local school and ask to speak to the nurse. All medicine prescribed for a student during the school day **must** be registered with the nurse.

C. Guardianship

If there is a restriction on which parent or guardian may see a child, or see the student's records, the school must be notified in writing with an accompanying copy of the court order.

D. Visits to the School

ALL VISITORS to the Greater Johnstown School District's schools are required to sign in at the main office of the building you are visiting.

E. Student Assistance Team

The middle school and high school have student assistance teams to help students in the identification, prevention and intervention of drug, alcohol, and emotional problems.

F. Mode of Communication

The content of the notice has been written in straightforward, simple language. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the school district or Intermediate Unit 8 and request an explanation.

The school district will arrange for an interpreter for parents with limited English proficiency. If a parent is deaf or blind or has no written language, the school district will arrange for communication of this notice in the mode normally used by the parent (e.g., sign language, Braille, or oral communication).

Part XVI: School Handbooks

Each school has a school handbook that describes the procedures for its building. The district also publishes a Student Code of Conduct Handbook for students and parents to go over in order that the rules and regulations with possible consequences are understood. The district's due process procedures are also outlined in the Code of Conduct. A school wide Title I Supplement is included in each elementary level Parent/Guardian Handbook. In addition the district has a School Board Policy manual that contains the rules and regulations that govern the operations of the school district as determined by the school board. Copies of the district's policy manual can be viewed at each school building in the principal's office or at the district's main office.

Part XVII: Acceptable Use of Internet and Computing Resources Policy

(Attachment A)

Part XVIII: School Volunteers Policy

(Attachment B)

Part XIX: Gaskin

(Attachment C)

Part XX: HIPAA – Notice of Privacy Practices

(Attachment D)

Part XXI: Guidelines for the Collection, Maintenance and Dissemination of Pupil Records

(Attachment E)

Part XXII: Use of Audio and Video Cameras on District School Buses

(Attachment F)

Part XXIII: Electronic Devices

(Attachment G)

Part XXIV: Bullying/Cyberbullying

(Attachment H)

Final Comments

The staff of the Greater Johnstown School District is firmly committed to the success of your child. We want to work with you to ensure that your child's experiences in our schools are positive and rewarding. We urge you to call us if you have any concerns that might affect the success of your son or daughter.