



COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Important Information Regarding School Volunteers and the Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

As of July 1, 2012, Georgia law requires school volunteers to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS).

What do I need to know?

A report is to be made immediately and in no case, later than 24 hours from the time there is a reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused.

What if the child is in imminent danger?

Call 911

As a mandated reporter, what are the next steps I must take when I suspect abuse?

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, make an immediate direct report to the Department of Family Children Services (DFCS) by calling 770-319-3700 or, after hours or on weekends/holidays, call 1-855-422-4453.

After making this call, notify the Principal or staff member in charge of the program or facility as soon as possible that the report was made.

Remember

Suspicion of abuse is all that is necessary to file a report.

If you are not sure whether a report should be made, you should contact DFCS.

The law protects you if you make a report in good faith.

Not making a required report is a criminal offense.

Your information can be given anonymously and will be kept confidential

For more information, please contact one of the following:

CCSD Department of School Social Work: 678-581-6811

CCSD Department of Professional Counseling: 770-514-3832

CCSD Department of Public Safety: 678-594-8620

Georgia's Mandated Reporter Law

Georgia law § 19-7-5(a) mandates reports of suspected child abuse by school employees. Mandatory reporting of abuse is intended "to cause the protective services of the state to be brought to bear on the situation." and the law "shall be liberally construed so as to carry out the[se] purposes."

All District employees and volunteers are mandatory reporters under the law.

When does the report have to be made?

An oral report of suspected abuse should be made immediately, "but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused, by telephone or otherwise and followed by a report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services . . . or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney." O.C.G.A. 19-7-5(e).

In addition to professional repercussions, such as termination of employment, a person required to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a criminal misdemeanor. (O.C.G.A. 19-7-5(h)).

Volunteer Name: _____ Date: _____

Volunteer Signature: _____



Dear Prospective Pope High

School Office Volunteer:

Thank you for volunteering to help at Pope High School. The Pope administration is thankful for your valuable service, which is essential to providing not only the best possible academic environment for Pope's students, but timely, accurate and responsive customer service to all of our stakeholders. In agreeing to volunteer at Pope, there are a few guidelines that you must agree to comply with. Please sign below signifying that you understand the information contained in this letter. You may turn this in to the school clerk.

Confidentiality

All school employees and school volunteers must abide by a Federal law called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This law requires that all information relating to students must be kept confidential. This includes grades, discipline, attendance or any information specific to a student. This law precludes school employees and or volunteer from discussing any student information with any person who is not a school employee and/or does not have a need to know. While you are not a school employee, we are going to ask that you abide by the spirit of the law. In short, anything you are privy to about a student cannot be discussed with anybody, anytime, anywhere. Not only is it the right thing to do, you may be subjecting yourself to possible civil litigation if it is determined that you were the source of privileged, confidential information.

Attendance

We ask that you be punctual, as we depend on you in the morning for our early morning procedures. If you work the afternoon shift, someone is waiting to continue their day elsewhere and we want them to be able to get there on time as well. If you have an emergency please call the office your volunteer in and let us know. If you cannot work, please find a replacement.

Office Atmosphere

Please remember that Pope High school is a place of business. It is important that your actions, comments and demeanor support a work place atmosphere. For example, we ask you do not conduct personal business, make inappropriate comments to students, faculty or staff, or allow your children and their friends to congregate in an office while you are volunteering. We also ask that all cell phones be turned off and that you refrain from making any personal calls on school telephones. Also, we ask that you plan your meals before or after your volunteer hours and if you need to eat please do so away from the desk area to maintain the professional atmosphere.

If there is an issue or area about Pope High School that you are unhappy with, we hope that you will immediately bring this to our attention and allow us to discuss it with you. It is not appropriate to vent or complain about any school personnel or policy while volunteering in a school office. Again, this takes away from the professional atmosphere we are attempting to foster.

Many Cobb County Schools have a hard time finding dedicated and capable volunteers who want to be involved in the education of their children. We know how special you are and are very glad that you are donating your time, energies and talents. It is our sincere belief that we are a better school for it.

Thank You

Volunteer Name Date

Volunteer Signature

Home Number Cell Number. Email Address

Introduction

You have volunteered for a **Cobb County School District school** to perform services that require you to access and use personally identifiable information (PII) from students' education records. Your access and use of the PII is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

FERPA requires the school or school district to maintain "direct control" over your use and maintenance of students' education records and to use reasonable methods to ensure that you obtain access to only those education records in which you have an educational interest.

If you have any questions about information in this document, they should be directed to Dr. Ehsan Kattoula.



What should I do to protect student PII from education records under FERPA?

It's important that you take the following steps to protect student privacy:

- *Do not disclose the PII to another party (except back to the School or District). The PII must not be shared with unauthorized users, and it must be protected from inadvertent disclosure due to careless handling.*
- *Do not use the PII for other purposes. The PII has been provided only for you to perform the volunteer service for which the school provided you the information. It should not be used for other purposes.*
- *Do not keep the PII after you complete your volunteer service. Destroy or return the PII to the school or district after completion of the service that you provided.*

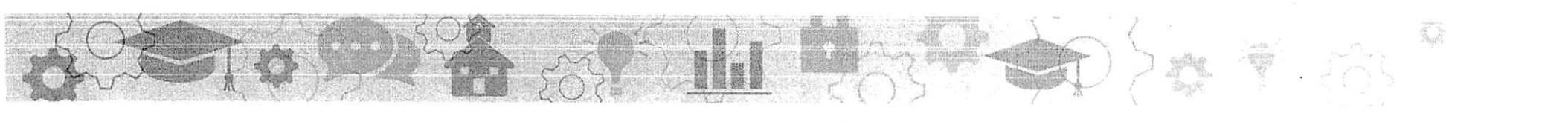
The undersigned acknowledges that he or she has read, understands, and will uphold all responsibilities as outlined in *Acknowledgement of Volunteer Responsibilities under FERPA*.

(Print name)

(Name of school or school district)

(Signature)

(Date)



What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects personally identifiable information (PII) in students' education records from unauthorized disclosure. It affords parents the right to have access to their children's education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right for parents and eligible students to have some control over the disclosure of PII from education records.

FERPA includes provisions allowing students' PII from education records to be disclosed without the prior written consent of parents, if the disclosure meets the criteria for one of the permitted consent exceptions.

The school official exception allows educational agencies to share PII from education records without consent with contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom an agency or institution has outsourced institutional services or functions, as long as certain additional requirements are met.

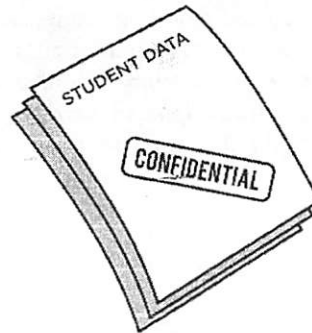
The FERPA statute is codified at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

What are my responsibilities under FERPA?

<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training/school-volunteers-and-ferpa>

Who can I contact for more information?

Dr. Ehsan Kattoula
Accountability, Research & Grants
770-420-4918



Acknowledgement of Volunteer Responsibilities under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

This document is intended for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools to give to their volunteers to inform them about their responsibilities to protect students' personally identifiable information from education records acquired under FERPA's school official exception. For more information about FERPA, please visit <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov>.

