

Wilkinsburg School District

Parental Information Annual Notice

Right to Know // Child Find

The Wilkinsburg School District is required by law to annually notify parents about the screening and evaluation processes, special education programs, privacy rights of parents and students, and Chapter 15 / Other Protected Handicapped Students. The Wilkinsburg School District uses the following procedures for locating, identifying and evaluating specified needs of school-aged children requiring special education programs or services:

SCREENING AND EVALUATION:

The Wilkinsburg School District, as prescribed by section 1402 of the School Code, routinely conducts screenings of children's vision and height/weight each year and in every grade. Hearing screening are conducted every year in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11. Dental exams are completed at school entry (either K or 1st) and in grades 3 & 7. Physical examinations are required of students at school entry and in grades 6 & 11. Parents can use their doctor to meet this requirement for a physical examination or a doctor will complete the exam at school. Also, Scoliosis screenings are completed in grades 6 & 7.

Speech and language skills are screened in kindergarten and on a referral basis. A student's 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 the screening sources are noted within a child's official file. These school records are always open and available to parents and only to school officials who have legitimate "need to know" inquiry about a child. Information from the records is released to other persons and agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written or signed permission by parents.

Parents with concerns regarding their child may contact building principals at any time to request a screening or evaluation. In addition, a staff member or parent may make a referral to the Child Study Team (CST) operating in each elementary school. The CST utilizes a data oriented, team problem solving approach (with parent participation) to meet each student's specific needs or to document the need for further evaluation. If it is determined that a child needs additional interventions, the CST will make adjustments or accommodations relative to such things as the child's learning and behavioral characteristics, physical limitations, positive behavior support needs, in order to be successful in the regular education program and classroom. If a student does not make reasonable progress or it is determined the child needs additional assistance, parents will be asked to give written permission/consent for further individual and professional evaluation. Also, parent does retain the right to request a professional and comprehensive evaluation conducted by the school district by signing a Permission to Evaluate form or by notifying the district in writing of such a request.

After all of the evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report [ER] will be written with parent involvement and include specific recommendation for the types of intervention necessary to address the child's specific needs. Parents are then invited to participate in a meeting where the results of the multidisciplinary evaluation will be reviewed and discussed. If the student is eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Program [IEP] will be developed for specialized services for the student. Parents are an integral part of the IEP Team and the planning process. All efforts will be made to include the parental information and input into the IEP and to participate in the IEP team meeting(s). Parents will then be presented with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement [NOREP], which they may approve or disapprove. If parents disapprove of the recommended program and services, the parents may request mediation, a prehearing conference or a due process hearing.

Information about early intervention services, parent rights, mediation, or due process procedures, specific special education services and programs offered by the district, and the district educational records policy are available upon request from the building principal in a child's school. Parents may request that the district

initiate a screening or evaluation of their child's specified needs at any time by contacting the building principal. Communication with parents and exceptional students shall be in English or the native language or mode of communication of the parents.

Further information about these procedures and any questions can be obtained by contacting the Special Education Department at 412/871/2114.

Student Records:

Wilkinsburg School District and its employees are required by federal law, rules and regulations to protect the rights of students. These rights are guaranteed by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 [FERPA]. In addition, there are state rules and regulations addressing the rights and privacy of regular and special education students. All students are covered by the state regulations contained in Chapter 12 known as Students' Rights and Responsibilities. The basic premise of the above-mentioned laws, rules and regulations is that information about students cannot be disclosed without written parental consent. The school district protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding exceptional and protected handicapped students in accord with state and federal laws and the district's student records policy.

Certain information can be released without consent, which is called Directory Information. Directory Information means information contained in an educational record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed such as the student's name, address, date of birth, dates of attendance, participation in school clubs or sporting activities etc. Directory information is released according to the district records policy.

Educational Records and Personally Identifiable Information and other confidential information such as psychological or psychiatric records and other information regarding students' special needs may be released only with a written parental request. In addition, parents have the right to review, inspect or obtain a copy of your child's records. Records are also open to school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in a child. You may make a written request for copies of your child's records at a fee not to exceed duplicating costs.

Services for School-Age Exceptional Children:

The District provides a free, appropriate public education to special education students as set forth in the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEIA], the Chapter 14 regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and Chapter 16 Pa. Regulations governing gifted education. Child find activities and procedures extend to all school age children residing in the district including children attending private schools and home-schooled children. To qualify as a special education student, the child 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 Chapter 14: autism/pervasive developmental disorder, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech and language impairment, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment, including blindness. To identify a student who may be eligible for special education services, various screening activities are conducted on an ongoing basis and through referrals to the Child Study Program at the elementary level and the Student Assistance Program [SAP] at the secondary level.

When screening results suggest a student might have a disability, the school district seeks written parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. Parents who suspect their child may be a student with a disability may request an evaluation any time through a written request directed to the school principal. The letter should indicate the parents' reason(s) for requesting a multidisciplinary evaluation.

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include the annual development of an Individualized Education Program [IEP], biennial & triennial multidisciplinary re-evaluations, supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in a regular class or in a special education class in a regular school, or placement in a part-time or full-time special education class inside or outside of the regular school. The extent

of the special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the parents and staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the students identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the level of intensity of the specified intervention.

In addition, the school district provides to each protected exceptional student without discrimination or cost to the student or family related services such as transportation, speech/language services, physical therapy, and occupational therapy that are required to enable the student to derive reasonable educational benefits.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students (Chapter 15):

In compliance with state and federal law, the Wilkesburg 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" under Chapter 15 are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled or seeking enrollment in special education programs.

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools:

Parents of a nonpublic school students who suspect that the child is in need of auxiliary services or an evaluation should contact the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Nonpublic Schools Program at 412/394/5964 or the Wilkesburg School District Special Education Department at 412/ 871/2114.

Services for Preschool Age Children:

Act 212, The Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services. At risk children are eligible for screening and tracking. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, birth through age two. Contact Allegheny County Assistance Office, 300 Liberty Avenue, Suite 301A, Pittsburgh, Pa. or by calling 412/565/2146.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from age 3 until eligible for kindergarten. For information on children within this age range contact project DART, 475 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, Pa. 15120 or by calling 412/394/5736.

Parents may obtain additional information regarding special education services and programs, questions on obtaining an evaluation or requesting community services or issues of parental rights by contacting the Special Education Department at 412/871/2114.