



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Chancellor's Directive

## School Visitors, School Records Release, and Barring Notice Procedures

### Responsible Office(s):

Office of the General Counsel  
Office of School Operations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kaye H.", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

February 19, 2013

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Signature

Date

Rescinds: Superintendent's Directive 260.1 (issued 10/29/84)

## School Visitors, School Records Release, and Barring Notice Procedures

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Schools are public institutions and they should be open to visits from parents and other interested parties to the extent that visits do not compromise student or staff safety, and do not disrupt the education process or school's operation. As such, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) will continue to be open to the public as long as visitors do not disrupt school instruction, operation or activities, or compromise the safety and security of students and staff. This directive delineates the procedures for school visits and the circumstances under which those visits may be limited or prohibited.

The school principal has primary responsibility for regulating access of visitors in the school building and for ensuring that visitor conduct is monitored and supervised while in the building. This directive delineates the procedures for visitor access to school buildings. The principal has the authority to deny access to any individual seeking to enter the school if the principal determines that the visitor's presence poses a danger to or disrupt school activities, school instruction or students and staff. The procedures principals must follow to deny access are specified in this directive. Visitors who are granted access to the school and who subsequently pose a threat or disruption to the school environment, may be subject to removal, barring, or arrest and prosecution.

The school building includes the exterior grounds of the school, including the playground and any other buildings that may be on the DCPS property.

This Directive rescinds Superintendent's Directive Number 260. 1, *Procedures For School Visitors*, issued on October 29, 1984, and further rescinds any other document subsequently issued by DCPS regarding procedures for school visitors and the issuance of barring notices.

### General Procedures

#### A. Security Procedures for All School Visitors

- The main entrance of the school building shall be used for all exits and entries to the school except in cases of fire or emergency. Anyone found to be violating this rule should be immediately reported to the principal or the school security officer.
- The following sign shall be posted at the main entrance to all school buildings:

**ALL VISITORS**  
**Upon entering this building you must report immediately to the administrative office and receive permission to be on the premises. Only those individuals who have school related business will be granted permission to remain. Any unauthorized entrant is in violation of Section 22-3102 of the D.C. Code and will be criminally prosecuted.**

- All visitors must report to the security desk or station to identify themselves and receive a visitor's badge, prior to having access to the building. Proper identification must be presented in order to receive a badge. Proper identification includes a driver's license or other government issued personal identification card, passport, or a current employee identification card from a local or federal government agency or private entity.
- All visitors must sign the school security visitor's log. The log shall have appropriate columns so that visitors can provide their name, agency/office, purpose of visit or person they are visiting, times of entry and departure, and badge number if applicable.
- Visitors must follow the instructions provided to them at the security station. As directed by the principal, school security may limit the areas and time during which the visitor may access the building. The scope and duration of the visit will be tied to the purpose of the visit.
- Visitors must wear or display their visitor's badge at all times while on school premises.
- Upon exiting the building, the visitor shall return the visitor's badge to the security station.
- All visitors must sign out on the visitor's log prior to exiting the building.
- All staff members shall relay concerns regarding the presence or conduct of visitors to school security or the principal immediately so that further appropriate action may be taken.

#### **B. Parents and Legal/Court-Appointed Guardians**

Parents and guardians - including educational surrogate parents appointed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) or the Family Court - should be given the widest possible latitude regarding access to the school for the purposes of meeting with their child's teacher or other school staff, or observing their child's class. Parents and guardians of prospective students should also be given an opportunity to visit the school and to observe proposed classes upon request. However, a parent or guardian's presence in the school must never cause a disruption to the functioning of the school or the instructional program of their child or any other student or in any way compromise the safety or security of the school, its students or staff. A parent or guardian's school visit must also not cause any disruption to the school environment or operations.

Relatives or caretakers, who are not the child's guardian, will be allowed to visit the school if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian or if they have received permission in advance from the child's parent or guardian and the school principal. If a relative or caretaker appears on the emergency contact list for a student, the relative or caretaker may be allowed access to the school to drop the student off or pick the student up.

In the event that a court order, decree or agreement delineates the rights of parents, guardians and/or other relatives with respect to a child, the access that the school may provide to the child must be consistent with that order, decree or agreement. Applicable court orders, decrees or agreements supercede all other provisions of this directive. School staff should contact the DCPS Office of the General Counsel for guidance on interpreting the terms of a court order, decree or agreement.

## C. Professionals Visiting Schools

### 1. IEP Meetings

Visitors may be allowed entry to the school for the purpose of meeting with school staff regarding a student who is receiving special education services pursuant to the *Individuals With Disabilities Improvement in Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)*. Such visitors may include: educational advocates, attorneys, guardian *ad litem* attorneys, and evaluators. However, these visitors should only remain in the building for the purpose and duration of their scheduled IEP meeting, and should not be allowed to roam the school or to observe any students in class unless the circumstances described below apply (2. *Classroom Observations for Students with Special Needs*). The following guidelines shall apply to visitors in the school for special education matters:

- All Security procedures in Section A, above, must be adhered to.
- Upon arrival to the school, the evaluator, educational advocate or outside observer must report to the principal or a designee.
- Individuals who have been barred from a school but who need to participate in an IEP meeting may participate by phone. See Section G.3 below, for further information.

### 2. Classroom Observations for Students with Special Needs

Classroom observations can be conducted by parents as stated in section B above. Professionals completing evaluations of a student at the school will be allowed to observe the child in the classroom. These professional evaluators must present a signed authorization letter (See Appendix A). Third party persons (including attorneys and educational advocates) who are not evaluators or parents shall not be allowed to observe classrooms while children are in the classroom.

- All Security procedures in Section A, above, must be adhered to.
- All classroom observations must be scheduled prior to the day of arrival at the school.
- Prior to the in-class observations, any observer must complete and provide to the principal the *Confidentiality Agreement* (See Appendix B).
- The evaluator will be limited to two hours. An extension of time is at the discretion of DCPS and must be requested in advance of the scheduled observation.
- The evaluator must act in such a manner that allows the regular school program to continue during the observation by refraining from engaging the attention of the teacher or student(s) through conversation or other means.
- The evaluator may be accompanied by DCPS personnel at the discretion of DCPS.
- In all instances of professionals visiting the school for special education matters, an appointment should be made with the relevant school staff person or an IEP meeting should be previously arranged and notice issued to all relevant attendees.

- In all instances of professionals visiting the school for special education matters, an appointment should be made with the relevant school staff person or an IEP meeting should be previously arranged and notice issued to all relevant attendees.
- School staff persons are under no obligation or requirement to meet with an attorney, educational advocate, or observer or to allow them access to the school, if prior arrangements have not been made and agreed upon.
- Professionals visiting the school for special education matters shall have no direct interaction with students, including the student who is the subject of the observation.

### 3. Guardian *ad litem* attorneys and Social Workers

### 4. Guardian *ad litem* attorneys and Social Workers

Guardian *ad litem* attorneys and social workers may observe a class if they present a court order which indicates that they be permitted to do so. All guardian *ad litem* attorneys and social workers must provide a valid court document demonstrating their relationship as a guardian *ad litem* or social worker for a particular child. The court document should be signed by a judge, indicate the student's name, and be dated within one calendar year of the visit.

### 5. Release of Student Records

DCPS cannot provide access to confidential student records without the expressed authorization granted by the parent/guardian or via court order. At no time should school staff discuss a student or the contents of their student records without written consent from parents or a valid court order. The principal should call the DCPS Office of the General Counsel with any questions.

- For private attorneys/third parties, the school should receive an authorization letter, signed within one year of the date of the records request.
- For Guardian *ad litem* and social workers, the school should receive a court order.

## D. Local, State and Federal Police Officers/Investigators and Investigators from the DC Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

Schools should make every effort to cooperate with law enforcement and permit them access to the school but must also ensure that there are no disruptions to the school environment or to class instruction unless absolutely necessary.

- Police officers and government investigators must show their badge and identification at the security station. They must then be directed to the main office to speak with a principal or a designee.
- If the police have come to the school to handle an emergency situation, they shall be given complete authority to resolve the situation and all school staff must provide any necessary support.
- If the police have come to question a student regarding a criminal matter, the police must first obtain consent from the student's parent, if the student is under 18. The principal or a designee can contact

the student's parent to receive consent for the police to talk to the student or to allow the parent time to come to school to participate in the interview.

- If the police wish to receive documents, the principal or a designee must contact the DCPS Office of the General Counsel to receive clearance to release any educational records or other student data.
- If the police have come to the school to investigate a matter and wish to speak with school staff, the principal and all school staff should cooperate and answer any questions, as long as no undue disruptions are caused to the school environment or to class instruction.

**E. Attorneys from United States Attorney's Office (USAO), or the Office of the Attorney General of the District of Columbia (OAG), Public Defender Service, and private attorneys**

- All attorneys must show their badge and identification at the security station. They must then be directed to the main office to speak with a principal or a designee.
- If an attorney from OAG or USAO has come to question a student regarding a matter, the attorney must first obtain consent from the student's parent, if the student is under 18. The principal or a designee can contact the student's parent to receive consent for the attorney to talk to the student or to allow the parent time to come to school to participate in the interview, but is not required to do so.
- If any attorney wishes to receive documents, the principal or a designee must contact the DCPS Office of the General Counsel to receive clearance to release any educational records or other student data.
- If an attorney from OAG or USAO has come to the school to investigate a matter and wishes to speak with school staff, the principal and all school staff should cooperate and answer any questions, as long as no undue disruptions are caused to the school environment or to class instruction.
- If any attorney (or an attorney's investigator or process server) wants to serve a subpoena on DCPS or a DCPS employee, the attorney shall be instructed to serve the subpoena on the DCPS Office of the General Counsel.
- For attorneys from the Public Defender Service (PDS), and Private Attorneys (and their investigators and process servers), the following shall apply:
  - Under no circumstances should these types of attorneys have any direct interaction with students.
  - School staff may cooperate with these attorneys in the investigation of a matter, but are not required to do so unless a valid subpoena has been issued against a particular staff person. School staff must ensure that any cooperation causes no disruptions to the school environment or to class instruction.
  - School staff should contact the DCPS Office of the General Counsel for guidance before cooperating with PDS and/or private attorneys in any matter.

**F. Barring Notices and Procedures**

Pursuant to 5 DCMR §E-501.3, principals are granted authority by the Chancellor to grant or deny a person's request to enter a school building or to be present on school premises in certain instances and

after following the procedures set forth below. The privilege to enter the school building or premises may be revoked for the following reasons:

- A person has posed a disruption to school activities, school events, or classroom instruction.
- A person has attempted to pose a disruption to school activities, school events, or classroom instruction.
- A person poses, has posed or attempted to pose a threat to any student or staff or otherwise compromise student or staff safety; or
- A person has endangered or intentionally caused destruction to school property.

A principal may revoke a person's privilege to enter the school building or premises by issuing a Barring Notice. Violation of the terms of a Barring Notice or a verbal order to leave the school premises may result in the person being subject to arrest and prosecution.

Effective immediately, all principals must be trained relative to the implementation of this directive in order to issue a barring notice. In the event that circumstances warrant a barring notice, but the principal has not received the requisite training, a request to issue a barring notice should be made to the Chancellor who will determine and issue, if warranted, the barring notice.

### **1. Procedures for Issuing a Barring Notice**

- To initiate the issuance of a Barring Notice, the principal or designee must submit a written request to the Instructional Superintendent.
- The request must specify the reasons for the Barring Notice
- Requests that are approved by the Instructional Superintendent, are then submitted to the Chief of Schools for approval.
- The DCPS Office of the General Counsel must then review and approve the Barring Notice. The Barring Notice may be served in person or by mail.
- The Office of School Security or its designee shall be responsible for serving the Barring Notice in person and enforcing the Barring Notice, in conjunction with MPD when deemed appropriate.

### **2. Scope and Duration of the Barring Notice**

- The Barring Notice shall indicate from which school the individual has been barred.
- A principal may only issue a Barring Notice for the school that the principal is responsible for; Barring Notices may not be issued that prevent entry into all DCPS buildings and facilities. Only the Chancellor may bar an individual from entering all DCPS buildings and facilities.
- Barring Notices will include an expiration date.
- If a Barring Notice is issued to a parent/guardian, the duration of the notice shall not exceed the current school year.
- For all other individuals, the duration may be longer, but the Barring Notice shall be subject to periodic review upon request of the barred individual to determine if circumstances have changed that will allow the person to be admitted onto the school premises.

### 3. Factors to Consider When Issuing a Barring Notice

- When determining whether or not an individual should be barred from a school, a principal should give wider latitude to parents/guardians than to other individuals who do not have a child enrolled in the school.
- If a parent or guardian is barred, school staff must still ensure that the parent/guardian has access to their child's education records and data. Parent-teacher conferences may be held by conference call and communication may also occur through email.
- A principal must also examine the behavior that led to the consideration of issuing a Barring Notice. The more extreme and outrageous the behavior, the more warranted the barring Notice.
- The principal must be able to articulate facts that substantiate the need to issue the Barring Notice. The conduct of the individual being barred must be consistent with one of the four reasons stated at the beginning of Section G, above.
- For individuals who have previously received Barring Notices from a DCPS school, a new Barring Notice may have a wider scope and longer duration, when warranted by the circumstances, to account for the fact that the individual has previously been barred.

### 4. Review Process

- An individual who has received a Barring Notice may request that the Chancellor review the Notice.
- The Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee will review the Barring Notice and may affirm, modify or rescind the Barring Notice within 15 school days of receiving the request for review. The review may relate to the reasons giving rise to the Barring Notice, as well as the scope and duration of the Notice.
- The individual may request that the Chancellor's decision be reviewed by the Deputy Mayor for Education or a designee.
- The Deputy Mayor for Education or a designee may approve, modify or reverse the Chancellor's decision.