Guidelines for Protecting Confidential Student Health Information

This is a brief document prepared by the National Task Force on Confidential Student Health Information and published in 2000. It was developed as a project of the American School Health Association in Collaboration with the National Association of School Nurses and the National Association of State School Nurse Consultants.

Section I of the document discusses ethical responsibilities and legal obligations.

Section II recommends 8 guidelines and discusses each in detail. The eight are:

I. Distinguish student health information from other types of school records.

II. Extend to school health records the same protections granted medical records by federal and state law.

III. Establish uniform standards for collecting and recording student health information.

IV. Establish district policies and standard procedures for protecting confidentiality during the creation, storage, transfer, and destruction of student health records.

V. Require written, informed consent from the parent and, when appropriate, the student, to release medical and psychiatric diagnoses to other school personnel.

VI. Limit the disclosure of confidential health information within the school to information necessary to benefit students’ health or education.

VII. Establish policies and standard procedures for requesting needed health information from outside sources and for releasing confidential health information, with parental consent, to outside agencies and individuals.

VIII. Provide regular, periodic training for all new school staff, contracted service providers, substitute teachers, and school volunteers concerning the district’s policies and procedures for protecting confidentiality.

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