



Student Privacy

By law we have the obligation to protect student information and their privacy.

Douglas County School District Board Policy [JRA/JRC Student Education Records](#) and [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) outline these privacy protections, restricting the release of student records.

Educators are restricted from releasing certain student records; specifically those that contain personally identifiable information, such as report cards, schoolwork and images of students.

Protecting Children

Student safety is the Douglas County School District's number one priority and must be considered above all other factors.

In some unfortunate cases, we care for children whose circumstances require a heightened level of protection. We must prevent the release of information or photos related to these students because it may compromise their safety.

We encourage principals and teachers to know, if possible, which students are in this type of situation and work with the student's parent or guardian do everything possible to protect their privacy.

We respect the privacy of our students

Additionally, DCSD empowers families to make informed choices about their privacy options and respects those decisions.

Photos, Video & Recordings

Photos or video of students engaged in a school-related activity are protected by FERPA, when they are taken by a school, the district or someone acting on its behalf.

If a student takes the photo or video, however, FERPA does NOT apply. There may, however still be other privacy concerns.



Media Consent in Douglas County

Over the past several years, we have revamped our media consent form in order to better protect students, make it easier for our parents to understand and to address the new realities of our more connected, digital classrooms.

Our goal is to empower schools to celebrate our student's achievements and utilize innovative technology in their classrooms, while also providing parents with an ability to thoughtfully consider their privacy options. Media consent only affects the posting or broadcast of personally identifiable information about their student, including photos or videos, not the utilization of websites or tools.

Our media consent is an opt-out process. Unless a parent indicates otherwise, schools or the District may:

- Publish basic student information (see below)
- Publish personally identifiable information digitally and/or on social media online as part of the student's lessons
- Allow students to participate in interviews, photography, audio or video recording by our schools, District or news media.

THE STRUCTURE

Our media consent process consists of three options for parents:

Media Blackout: All information, including basics

Instructional Media: Digital and/or social media online during lessons

Media Coverage: Interviews, photographs by our schools, District or news media.

These items are represented in Infinite Campus enrollments section as:

Basic Student Information (Media Blackout = No)

Instructional Media

Media Coverage

The system takes a layered-approach. Media blackout is the most restrictive option and media coverage being the least restrictive. If a parent chooses Media Blackout, they automatically have chosen Instructional Media and Media Coverage. If they choose Instructional Media, they have also chosen Media Coverage.

MEDIA BLACKOUT

All information, including the basics

DCSD created the Media Black option to protect endangered students, as well as students who have the most serious of privacy concerns. It restricts the use of a student's personally identifiable information, including the basics.

If a parent selects this option, the student will **NOT** be:

- Included in the yearbook portrait section (this includes their name and school photo), official class (group) photos, or any type of celebratory post by a school, for instance a list of students who received an award.
- Be allowed to participate in activities that would share their personal information publically during a lesson
- Participate in interviews, photographs, videos taken by the school, district or media



Basic Information

If a parent does not select Media Blackout, they are permitting the use of the student's Basic Information. This information, which is defined as "directory information" by FERPA and is generally the type of info included in yearbooks, newsletters, playbills, team rosters or honor rolls. It includes a student's name; school photograph; dates of attendance; grade level; activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees, honors and awards received; and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA

Digital and/or social media online during lessons

With digital native students and the integration of technology into our classrooms, our teachers now have amazing opportunities to connect our students to the world outside of our classrooms. We believe that the tools available on the Internet, including social media, may provide valuable opportunities for students to share their work and to connect with the greater world. With simple precautions and proper supervision, these avenues can be highly rewarding, authentic opportunities for our students to learn and grow.

These authentic learning experiences, however, present some new challenges when it comes to the sharing of content that identifies our students during our lessons because of privacy and safety concerns.

It is important for teachers to have clear guidance about whether a parent is comfortable with the posting of personally identifiable-information in the context of a lesson.

In other words, under the supervision of a teacher, is it okay for a student's video broadcast or podcast to be posted on the Internet for the world to see? May a student or teacher post photos or video of an experiment they conducted on Facebook or YouTube, or keep people updated about the progress of their community service project through Twitter?

Secured vs. Unsecured

Everyday our teachers utilize tools like Google Apps, Edmodo and Prezi that allow them to safely and securely upload photos, videos and schoolwork by students. In these secured environments, a teacher controls access to personally identifiable information and therefore this usage is allowed under FERPA. No one outside of the learning environment, with the exception of perhaps a parent or guardian can see the photos, video or school work.

In an unsecured environment, the photos, video or schoolwork are posted in a place where anyone on the Internet can see them. The teacher must ensure that those featured have the proper media consent releases.

Again, a parent's decision on media consent does not restrict what websites a teacher can present, what apps students may use, etc. It only limits the ability for personally identifiable information to be posted or broadcast.

Below are some examples of secured & unsecured environments:



Secured*	Unsecured
Google Sites Skype Adobe Connect Edmodo KidBlog Voice Thread	Facebook Twitter Pinterest Livestream iTunes Store

*Dependent on proper settings and permissions

MEDIA COVERAGE

Interviews, photographs or recordings by our schools, District or news media

Our final category restricts a school, District or the news media from capturing personally identifiable images, video or recordings (audio or otherwise) of our students during the school day or academic activities. This includes the inclusion of a student in promotional materials or news stories, whether they are to be included on the school/district website, newsletter or published in the newspaper or broadcast on television.

As outlined in the media consent form, there is no expectation of privacy during school assemblies or other large school gatherings, sporting events, off campus field trips or extracurricular activities. Privacy cannot be guaranteed in public locations.

Media Consent: Frequently Asked Questions

Can a parent change their mind?

Yes. At any time, a parent may change their selection. Annually, the option will be presented during Express Check In, but they may also submit a request to their school registrar at any time.

Parents may also provide permission for a specific project, while leaving their overall preferences intact. For instance, if a parent wants their child to take part in a specific interview, they may provide written or verbal confirmation of this choice to the school. Written confirmation is best, because it provides a record of the agreement.

Does media consent permit the use of student or family contact information in a school directory?

No. Douglas County School District does not release the phone numbers or emails of our students. Schools may only do so by asking for written permission from parents. The process is entirely done at the school level; separately from the media consent process.

Does media consent apply to photographs of large groups?

Yes. Regardless of the number of students featured in a photo, a release is required if the student is identifiable.

Questions?

If you have any other questions, you can always contact the Community Relations Department for guidance at 303-387-0033.



MEDIA CONSENT GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS & ADMINISTRATORS

A little preparation can make this process a lot easier, especially because media requests are often facilitated very quickly, with little notice.

Be Prepared

Principals are encouraged to be keenly aware of endangered students and to have preparations in place to ensure those students are protected.

Consider Media Consent during lesson planning process

If a lesson or classroom activity involves the use of unsecured digital or social media, the teacher should check to see if parents have approved “Instructional Media.” Additionally, they will need to consider alternative options, which still provide the same educational value, for students who do not have releases.

Check students, when a photographer comes to a school/classroom

School personnel or a teacher must check media consent to determine which students may be featured. They may run an ad hoc report or check for flags in the class roster.

Media consent flags show up in class rosters.



When they hover over flag, a description appears.



Best practice is to do this before photography commences. It may be difficult after photos or video are taken to determine which students have releases.

Please Note: It is the responsibility of school administrators and teachers, not the photographer or news agency to protect our students' safety and privacy.

Do not ostracize students

A student may or may not be aware of their media consent status, since it is a parent decision. For this reason, we ask that administrators and teachers use discretion in handling these situations.

At no time should a student be singled out in front of a class, because of media consent. Instead, we encourage the teacher or administrator to speak to the photographer discreetly, setting ground rules on which students may not be photographed or interviewed.

Preserve the learning environment

Outside of safety, our next highest priority must be preserving the learning environment for all students. In most cases photography does not significantly interfere with the classroom environment and the photographer can avoid protected students. Students may only be moved from a classroom, if it will not impact their learning.

Questions?

If you have any other questions, you can always contact the Community Relations Department for guidance at 303-387-0033.



MEDIA CONSENT GUIDANCE FOR STUDENT-JOURNALISTS

The Douglas County School District celebrates student-journalism. It is the type of authentic learning that we want our students to be engaged in as part of World Class Education. Whether they are reporting for their school's newspaper, television broadcast, website or yearbook, our journalism students are analyzing situations, asking critical questions, balancing differing opinions and working collaboratively to present the information in a thoughtful, creative and fair way. These are the 21st Century Skills that we hope every DCSD student will gain.

Media Consent & Student-Journalists

The primary purpose of the media consent rules is to govern the way that our employees manage our students' personally identifiable information. The focus is on school or district-managed publications, however there are impacts for student journalism organizations.

Media Blackout

The Media Blackout opt out was created to protect students who are endangered or have serious privacy concerns. We ask student-journalism programs to honor this, much like most journalism organizations recognize the moral obligation of keeping a child victim's name private.

Additionally, when a parent selects this option, the school may not release data from the student's record-- like the student's name, school photo or other Directory Information. These items are part of the student's record and are therefore protected by FERPA. This means that a student may not be featured in the portrait section, if they are on blackout, unless the parent has provided explicit permission (in writing or via the submittal of a senior photo, for instance).

Photography, Video or other Recordings

While FERPA does not apply when a student takes a photo or video, this must be balanced with the expectation of privacy provided within academic environments under the same law. For this reason, we encourage student journalists to follow the same protocol that District staff and all other media follow when they enter a classroom: obtain clearance from administration/teacher. The administrator/teacher will ensure students featured are cleared for "media coverage." These rules only apply when students are engaged in learning activities, whether in classroom or elsewhere in the school. As explained earlier, there is no expectation of privacy during assemblies and extra-curricular activities.

Student-journalists are also afforded far-greater latitude than their professional counterparts. Student-conducted interviews in common spaces, like hallways or commons do not require a check of media consent. Again, we always encourage safeguards to avoid the publication or broadcast of a media blackout student.

Questions?

If you have any other questions, you can always contact the Community Relations Department for guidance at 303-387-0033.