



**REQUIRED ANNUAL NOTICES
AUGUST 2024**

Dear Forest Hills Families,

Public school districts are required to send to the parents/guardians of our students a vast array of annual notices. These notices are the products of various laws, rules, orders, and rulings of the state and federal government. Updated and unabbreviated policies are located on the district website. Should you have questions about anything you read here, please do not hesitate to contact us at **(616) 493-8800**, and we will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Forest Hills Public Schools

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

All types of bullying, including cyberbullying, without regard to subject matter or motivating animus are prohibited.

Bullying, including cyberbullying, a student at school is prohibited. Bullying is any written, verbal, or physical act, or electronic communication that is intended to or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more students directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- a. substantially interfering with a student's educational opportunities, benefits, or programs;
- b. adversely affecting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the District's educational programs or activities by placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress;
- c. having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a student's physical or mental health; or
- d. causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the District's orderly operations.

Retaliation or false accusations against the target of bullying, anyone reporting bullying, a witness, or another person with reliable information about an act of bullying, are prohibited.

If a student, staff member, or other person suspects there has been a bullying incident, the person must promptly report the incident to the building principal or designee, or to the Responsible School Official(s), as defined below.

A report may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing (including electronic transmissions). If a bullying incident is reported to a staff member who is not the building principal, designee, or a Responsible School Official, the staff member must promptly report the incident to the building principal, designee, or a Responsible School Official.

To encourage reporting of suspected bullying or related activities, each building principal, after consulting the Responsible School Official(s), will create, publicize, and implement a system for anonymous reports. The system must emphasize that the District's ability to investigate anonymous reports may be limited.

Complaints that the building principal has bullied a student must be reported to the Superintendent. Complaints that the Superintendent has bullied a student must be reported to the Board President.

All bullying complaints will be promptly investigated. The building principal or designee will conduct the investigation, unless the building principal or Superintendent is the subject of the investigation. If the building principal is the subject of the investigation, the Superintendent or designee will conduct the investigation. If the Superintendent is the subject of the investigation, the Board President will designate a neutral party to conduct the investigation.

A description of each reported incident, along with all investigation materials and conclusions reached, will be documented and retained.

If the investigator determines that a bullying incident has occurred, the District will promptly notify the victim's and perpetrator's parent/guardian in writing.

"At school" means in a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event whether it is held on school premises. "At school" also includes any conduct using a telecommunications access device or telecommunications service provider that occurs off school premises if the device or provider is owned by or under the control of the District.

The district may utilize restorative practices that emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and school community in the correction of bullying behavior.

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE OFFICER (EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY)

It is the policy of this district to provide an equal education opportunity for all students. Any person who believes that s/he has been discriminated against on the basis of his/her race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity or sexual orientation), national origin, disability, or any other legally protected class that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment or unreasonably interfering with the student's ability to benefit from the District's education programs or activities while at school or a school activity should immediately contact the school district's compliance officer listed below.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of sex-based discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, you may file a complaint with:

Christine Annese, Title IX Coordinator
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Forest Hills Public Schools
620 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 493-8800
cannese@fhps.net

If you or someone you know has been the victim of disability-based discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, you may file a complaint with:

Sarah Castro, Student Section 504 and Special Education Coordinator
640 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 493-8660
scastro@fhps.net

Christine Annese, Section 504 Coordinator (non-student)
620 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 493-8800
cannese@fhps.net

If you or someone you know has been the victim of any other type of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, including unlawful conduct based on race, color, or national origin, you may file a complaint with:

Christine Annese, Civil Rights Coordinator
620 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 493-8800
cannese@fhps.net

A complaint of unlawful discrimination, including unlawful harassment or retaliation, may be made verbally or in writing.

Complaints will be investigated. Any student making a complaint or participating in a school investigation will be protected from any threat or retaliation. The compliance officer can provide additional information concerning equal access to educational opportunity.

Any person who believes that he or she has been the victim of unlawful discrimination may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights listed below:

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
1350 Euclid Avenue; Suite 325
Cleveland, OH 44115
Telephone: (216) 522-4970
Facsimile: (216) 522-2573
[Email: OCR.Cleveland@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Cleveland@ed.gov)

THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ASSISTANCE ACT

Federal Legislation requires school districts to address problems that homeless children and youth face in enrolling, attending and succeeding in school. Anyone who lacks a “fixed”, “regular” and “adequate” nighttime residence may qualify as homeless. Protections are in place so that children and youth facing homelessness have exposure to the same achievement standards of all students. Districts are required to abide by the laws, regulations, practices and policies to avoid any barriers to the education of children. If you believe a member of your household fits homeless eligibility criteria, please contact us immediately to obtain the necessary paperwork.

Tamasha James, Homeless Liaison
Forest Hills Public Schools
620 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 493-8800
tjames@fhps.net

THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

IDEA is a United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to children with disabilities. It requires school districts to identify all children with disabilities from birth through 25 years of age. By identifying children with disabilities, the school district can provide them with the support and services they need to succeed in school. This also includes children attending private school, being homeschooled or children who are wards of the state. It is very important that we identify children who may need service as research clearly indicates that children do better when they attend school.

SECTION 504 OF THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES REHABILITATION ACT

This is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. This law ensures that children with disabilities have equal access to an appropriate education. Unlike the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 does not require the school to provide an individualized educational program (IEP) that is designed to meet the child’s unique needs and provides the child with educational benefit. Under Section 504, fewer procedural safeguards are available to children with disabilities and their parents than under IDEA. Section 504 is a consideration if a student requires additional support to have equal access to educational opportunities.

STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The board designates as “student directory information” the following: a student’s name; address; telephone number; photographs or videos depicting a student’s participation in school-related activities; date and place of birth; major field of study; grade level; enrollment status; dates of attendance; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of athletic team members; degrees, honors, and awards received; and the most recent educational agency or institution attended. The Board further designates District-assigned student email addresses as directory information for the limited purposes of: (1) facilitating the student’s participation in and access to online learning platforms and application; and (2) inclusion in internal school and District email address books. Directory information will not be released for purposes of solicitation.

Parents, guardians, and adult students may refuse to allow the district to disclose any or all such “directory information” by returning the Directory Information and Opt-Out form to the district within 10 days after receipt of this public notice. Notification should be sent to the office of the school building in which the student attends.

The district must provide United States Armed Forces recruiters at least the same access to the high school campus and to student directory information as is provided to other entities offering educational or employment opportunities for the purpose of informing students of educational and career opportunities available in the armed forces of the United States and the service academies of the Armed Forces of the United States.

FEDERAL LAW REQUIRES RELEASE TO MILITARY AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION RECRUITERS

Federal law requires the District to release a secondary school student's name, address, and telephone number to U.S. Military recruiters and institutions of higher education recruiters upon their request.

If you do not want Forest Hills Public Schools to disclose name, address, and telephone number to military and/or higher education recruiters, you must notify the school office in writing by completing the Directory Information and Opt-Out Form by September 6, 2024.

Male students age eighteen (18) or older are required to register for the selective service within 30 days of their 18th birthday.

"Armed Forces of the United States" means the Armed Forces of the United States and their reserve components and the United States Coast Guard.

SCHOOL VISITORS

The board of education welcomes and encourages visits to school by parents, other adult residents of the community and interested educators. In order for the educational program to continue undisturbed when visitors are present and to prevent the intrusion of disruptive persons into the schools, it is necessary to establish visitor guidelines. During the times when school is in session, all visitors are required to report to the main school office to check in prior to visiting any other location in the school.

The superintendent, assistant superintendent, or principal has the authority to prohibit the entry of any person to a school of this district or to expel any person when there is reason to believe the presence of such person would be detrimental to the good order of the school. If such an individual refuses to leave the school grounds or creates a disturbance, the administrator in charge is authorized to request from the local law enforcement agency whatever assistance is required to remove the individual.

Parents/Guardians, who are registered sex offenders and wish to participate in their child's school activities, may be allowed on campus at the discretion and under the direction of the principal. Conditions may be imposed, including but not limited to the following: must have prior permission, must check in, must have approved escort in building or at event, must leave premises immediately upon conclusion of business, and may not visit while school is in session.

Non-staff access to students and classes must be limited and only in accordance with a schedule, which has been determined by the principal after consultation with the teacher whose classroom is being visited. Classroom visitations must be non-obtrusive to the educative process and learning environment and should not occur on an excessive basis.

HANDICAPPED ACCESS

Forest Hills Public Schools will make reasonable accommodations for any disabled person wanting to participate in events. Service animals used by persons requiring this type of assistance shall be permitted in all district facilities and at all school events. Certain restrictions may be applied when necessary due to allergies, health, safety, disability other issues of those attending the event. The goal shall be to provide all attendees with the same access and participation provided to other members of the public.

TITLE I PROGRAM INFORMATION

Parents/Guardians in Title I schools may request the following information about of their child's teacher: state licensure requirements for the grade level and content areas taught; the current licensing status of your child's teacher; and baccalaureate/graduate certification/degree. Parents may also request the qualifications of an instructional paraprofessional who serves your child in a Title I program. This information may be requested from the Human

Resources Department by calling (616) 493-8800 or sending a letter of request to the Human Resources Department, 620 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

TITLE I PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY (Board Policy 5401)

The District encourages parent/guardian involvement in their student's education (Board Policy 5401). Title I funding is used to offer support services to students who need extra time and instruction to master grade level curriculum. Title I schools are identified through a state formula each year. Families with students in identified Title I buildings will receive communication directly from the school.

PERSONAL CURRICULUM

What is a personal curriculum?

The personal curriculum (PC) is a process to modify specific Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) high school credit requirements and/or content expectations based on a student's unique learning needs and post-secondary goals. It is designed to serve students who want to accelerate or go beyond the MMC requirements and students who need to individualize MMC requirements to earn a high school diploma.

Who may request a personal curriculum?

- The parent/guardian of a student for whom a personal curriculum is sought
- The student, if the student is of the age of majority
- An emancipated minor
- A teacher who is currently teaching the student (who currently teaches in, or whose expertise is in, a subject area proposed to be modified by the PC, or who is determined by the principal to have qualifications otherwise relevant to developing a PC)
- A school counselor or school employee is qualified to act in a counseling role.

If the request for a PC is made by the student's parent/legal guardian or, if the student is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor, by the student, the school district shall develop a PC for the student under the parameters outlined in 380.1278b(5).

When may a personal curriculum be requested?

If the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the personal curriculum request may be submitted before 9th grade. If the student does not have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the personal curriculum request may be requested after the student has completed 9th grade.

DRUG PREVENTION

The board of education recognizes that the misuse of drugs is a serious problem with legal, physical, and social implications for the entire school community. As the educational institution of this community, the schools should strive to prevent drug abuse and help drug abusers by educational, rather than punitive, means.

For purposes of this policy, "drugs" shall mean: all dangerous controlled substances as so designated and prohibited by Michigan statute; all chemicals which release toxic vapors; all alcoholic beverages; any prescription or patent drug, except those for which permission to use in school has been granted pursuant to board policy; "look-alikes," performance-enhancing drugs as determined annually by the Department of Community Health, and any other illegal substances so designated and prohibited by law.

The board prohibits the use, possession, concealment, or distribution of any drug at any time on district property or at any district-related event.

PERMANENT EXPULSION POLICY

State law requires the permanent expulsion of any student who physically assaults a school employee, or who commits an act of rape or arson on school property, at a school event, or on school transportation. Students also may be expelled for assault, drug violations or other disciplinary reasons.

DANGEROUS WEAPONS, FALSE ALARMS AND BOMB THREATS

The board of education will not tolerate the possession of weapons by anyone while on school property or at a district-related event. In implementing this policy, the district will comply with M.C.L. 380.1313 which prohibits students from possessing a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to, a firearm, dagger, dirk, stiletto, knife, pocket knife opened by a mechanical device, iron bar, brass knuckles, or other devices capable of inflicting bodily harm while in attendance at school or a school activity, or on a school bus.

Students may also be expelled for actions such as false fire alarms, bomb threats, or intentional calls to falsely report a dangerous condition.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The board of education charges school authorities with the responsibility of safeguarding the students in their care. In the discharge of that responsibility, school authorities may search school property such as lockers used by students or the person or property, including vehicles, of a student in accordance with Policy 5103.

LOCKER SEARCHES

Lockers are district property and may be made available for student use. Lockers are assigned to students on a temporary basis, and district administration may revoke a student's locker assignment at any time. The district retains ownership of lockers notwithstanding student use.

Students have no expectation of privacy in their lockers. The building principal or designee may inspect lockers without any particularized suspicion or reasonable cause and without advance notice. Upon the request of the building principal or designee, law enforcement may assist with searching lockers.

During a locker search, student privacy rights will be respected for any items that are not illegal or against Board Policy.

USE OF DETECTION DOGS

The District may use detection dogs, without a warrant or consent, to sniff property in an effort to locate illegal drugs or contraband according to the protocol outlined in Board Policy 3107. Detection dogs will not be used to search a person unless the search is otherwise authorized by law or Policy.

The District will inform students and personnel over the public address system when a detection dog is being used and may direct students and personnel to remain in place or relocate.

A detection dog alerting on a person's property constitutes reasonable suspicion to search the property. Anything found during a search that violates Policy, school rules, school handbook, or state or federal law may be seized and used as evidence in a disciplinary proceeding. Any illegal drugs, dangerous weapons, and other illegal items found during a search will be tagged and identified by a District administrator and turned over to law enforcement.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS IN SCHOOLS AND ON SCHOOL SITES

For the safety and security of all students, staff, family members, and volunteers, video surveillance cameras are used in all schools, school buses, and all school sites. Personal information and activities recorded are collected and may be disclosed for disciplinary and/or law enforcement purposes.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Forest Hills Public Schools is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, or sexual orientation), marital status, disability, or other legally prohibited characteristic in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities.

Any questions concerning compliance issues with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, including athletic issues, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, or inquiries related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap, should be directed to:

Christine Annese
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Forest Hills Public Schools
620 Forest Hill Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 493-8800

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) requires that the District notify you and obtain your consent, or allow you to opt your students out of, participating in any school survey analysis, or evaluation that involves one or more of the following 8 subjects (protected information surveys”):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom the student has close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relations, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

The notification and opt-out requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of a student's personal information for marketing purposes (“marketing surveys”) and certain physical exams and screenings.

You have the right to review a protected information or marketing survey before it is given to your student to determine whether you want your student to participate. If you want to review materials that will be used in a protected information or marketing survey please submit your request to the building principal. The building principal will let you know where and when you may review those materials.

If the District schedules a protected information or marketing survey after the school year starts, the District will notify you within a reasonable amount of time and give an opportunity to consent or opt your student out. The District also will give you an opportunity to review the newly scheduled surveys or instructional materials upon request.

NOTIFICATION OF ASBESTOS PLAN

As required in 1989, our school district conducts an asbestos survey of all buildings. Based on these findings, a comprehensive management plan was drafted. This plan details the response actions the district would take regarding any asbestos materials found in our buildings.

Every three years, we conduct a full inspection of any remaining asbestos containing material. This inspection is required under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act.

This plan is available for inspection at our Operations Department without cost or restriction during normal business hours. If you want a personal copy, it will be mailed to you upon request. Please contact the Operations Department, (616) 493-8780, with any questions.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

ADVISORY TO ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS

As part of its integrated pest management program, the District annually notifies its students' parents/guardians that they will be given at least 48 hours' advance notice before the non-emergency application of a pesticide on school grounds (other than application pursuant to a bait or gel formulation).

Notice will be provided by posting at the school's entrances and by posting in a public, common area of the school, other than the entrances. In addition to this notice, and upon request only, parents/guardians are entitled to receive notice by first-class mail postmarked three days before an application. Requests for this additional notice must be in writing and directed to the director of operations.

Pesticides may be applied without advance notice in an emergency. The District will promptly notify parents/guardians as set forth herein after any emergency application.

The District's integrated pest management program and pesticide application records are available for review. The person responsible for the school's pesticide application procedures is:

Name: Cory Anderson, Director of Operations
Phone: (616) 493-8780
Email: coanderson@fhps.net

Please contact the director of operations if you have any questions regarding pesticide application.