



## FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### REQUIRED ANNUAL NOTICES AUGUST 2020

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. 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

#### **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.

To provide positive examples for student behavior, demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers.

This policy applies to all "at school" activities in the district, including activities on school property, in a school vehicle, and those occurring off school property, if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school's control, or where an employee is engaged in school business. "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.

Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

Any student who believes s/he has been or is the victim of bullying, hazing, or other aggressive behavior should immediately report the situation to the principal or assistant principal. The student may also report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the assistant superintendent for human resources.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be aggressive behavior directed toward a student. Reports shall be made to those identified above. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Complaints against the superintendent should be filed with the board president.

Retaliation or false allegations against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying or aggressive behavior (as a witness or otherwise), or is the target of the bullying or aggressive behavior being investigated, is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of board policy, independent of whether a complaint of bullying is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying/aggressive behavior.

Making intentionally false reports about bullying/aggressive behavior for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally making false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

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  
6590 Cascade Road 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  
3787 Leonard NE Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
616-493-8660  
scastro@fhps.net

Christine Annese, Section 504 Coordinator (non-student)  
6590 Cascade Road 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  
6590 Cascade Road 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.

### **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” upon written notification to the district within 10 days after receipt of this public notice. Notification should be sent to the school principal.

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 RECRUITERS**

Two federal laws require local school districts to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – student addresses, telephone listings, and birth dates – unless parents have advised the district that they do not want their child's information disclosed without their prior written request.

**If you do not want Forest Hills Public Schools to disclose name, address, telephone and birth date to military recruiters, you must notify the principal in writing by September 11, 2020.**

Male students age eighteen (18) or older are required to register for the selective service within 30 days of their 18<sup>th</sup> 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**

**NOTE: During Phases 1-5 of the Forest Hills Public Schools Return to Learn Plan, visitors will not be allowed in the buildings.**

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 or the 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, 6590 Cascade Road SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

### **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.

This policy shall also encompass such actions 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.

### **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 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  
6590 Cascade Road 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 board of education respects the privacy rights of parents and their children. Parents/guardians may inspect any survey created by a third party before that survey is administered or distributed to their student. All survey inspection requests must be made in writing to the building principal before the survey's scheduled administration date.

The District must obtain written consent from a student's parent/guardian before the student is required to participate in a survey, analysis, or evaluation funded, in whole or in part, by the U.S. Department of Education that would reveal sensitive information. For all other surveys, analyses, or evaluations that would reveal sensitive information about a student, the District will provide prior notice to the student's parent/guardian and an opportunity for the parent/guardian to opt their student out.

Employees may not request or disclose the identity of a student who completes a survey, evaluation, or analysis containing sensitive information.

“Sensitive information” includes:

- political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent/guardian;
- mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
- sexual behavior or attitudes;
- illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- critical appraisals of other persons with whom the student has close family relationships;
- legally recognized privileges or analogous relationships, such as those with lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent/guardian; or
- income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participating in a program or for receiving financial assistance under that program).

The superintendent shall ensure that procedures are established whereby parents may inspect any materials used in conjunction with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation.

#### **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, 493-8780, with any questions.

#### **PESTICIDE APPLICATION ADVISORY TO ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Forest Hills Public Schools has adopted an Integrated Pest Management program. Inherent with this are the district’s efforts to reduce pesticide use as much as possible. While it may occasionally be necessary to apply a pesticide, this program does not rely on routine pesticide applications to resolve problems. We use various techniques such as habitat alteration, sanitation, mechanical means, exclusion, etc. to prevent pest from becoming a problem.

As required by Michigan law, you will receive advanced notice of non-emergency application of a pesticide (insecticide, fungicide, or herbicide), other than bait or gel formulation, which is made to the school, school grounds, or buildings. This advance notice of a pesticide application will be given 48 hours before the application by the following two methods:

1. Posting at the primary entrances to your child’s school. The entrances that will be posted are the main entrance and those that have a sidewalk that leads directly to a parking lot.
2. Posting in the common area located by the main office of the school.

Please note that notification is not given for use of sanitizers, germicides, disinfectants or anti-microbial cleaners. In certain emergencies, such as an infestation of stinging insects, pesticides may be applied without prior notice to prevent injury to students, but parents will be promptly notified following any such application, via the two posting methods identified (above).

You may review the school's Integrated Pest Management program and records of any pesticide application upon request by contacting:

Stephen King  
Director of Operations  
(616) 493-8780  
[sking@fhps.net](mailto:sking@fhps.net)

Parents or guardians of children attending the school are also entitled to receive the advance notice of a pesticide application, other than a bait or gel formulation, by first class United States mail postmarked at least three days before the application, if they so request. If you would like to be notified by mail, please contact the FHPS Operations Department at the following number (616) 493-8780. Please leave your name, mailing address and what school(s) your child or children attend and they will put your name on the list for advance notification by US Mail.