
Highlands School District Annual Notice of Student Services

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Special Education Services

Free & Appropriate Public Education

Highlands School District provides a free and appropriate public education for all students including students requiring special education services. This includes provision of education and related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to afford each qualified student with a disability equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits from educational programs and extracurricular activities without discrimination, to the same extent as each student without a disability, consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

Public Outreach & Awareness System (Child Find)

Highlands uses a public outreach awareness system to locate and identify children thought to be eligible for special education within the school district's jurisdiction. The district provides details of where to find out more information about the district's special education and early intervention programs through announcements on The school district website, student handbooks and printed in the district calendar which is mailed to families and available in various public locations throughout the community.

This public awareness effort includes information regarding potential signs of developmental delays and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities. The process includes notification to parents throughout the school district of child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children in accordance with this chapter.

Indicators & Risk Factors

Some indications that your child may be a student at risk for developmental, academic, adaptive, and/or physical, sensory, mental or emotional disabilities may include:

- Consistent problems in getting along with others;
- Difficulty communicating;
- Difficulty performing tasks that require reading, mathematics and/or writing;
- Difficulty seeing or hearing, which interferes with the ability to communicate;
- Health problems that affect educational performance, including attention problems;
- Lack of interest or ability in age-appropriate activities;
- Resistance to change; or
- An emotional disturbance over a long period of time which affects your child's ability to learn.

If you have questions about your child's development or disability, you may speak with your child's physician/healthcare provider, Highlands School District, or the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

Services for Preschool Age Children with Disabilities

Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act (http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/early_intervention/8710), entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Early Intervention supports and services are designed to meet the developmental needs of children with a disability as well as the needs of the family related to enhancing the child's development in one or more of the following areas:

- Physical development, including vision and hearing
- Cognitive development
- Communication development
- Social or emotional development
- Adaptive development

Young children experiencing developmental delays, or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to children from birth through two years of age. Contact the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, 2801 Custer Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15227 or call 412-885-6000.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from ages three through five and demonstrates a delay of 25% or more in one or more developmental areas (communication, adaptive, cognitive, fine motor, gross motor or personal/social) on a standardized assessment. Contact Allegheny Intermediate Unit Preschool Early Intervention at 412-394-5904.

Screening, Evaluation & Placement Procedures

The Highlands School District employs the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specific needs of school age students requiring special programs and services. The district, as prescribed, routinely conducts screenings of children's hearing acuity (grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11), visual acuity (grades kindergarten-12) and speech and language skills (kindergarten and teacher referral).

The classroom teachers assess gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills and social emotional skills on an ongoing basis and needs from all of these screening sources and are noted within the child's official file. Screening activities includes a review of group-based data such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, and ability and achievement test scores. The district has repeated assessments of achievement and/or behavior, formal monitoring of student progress and ongoing researched based interventions as needed. Identified needs from these screening sources, as well as information obtained from parents/guardians and outside agencies, are assessed, noted within student records, and discussed with parents/guardians. These school records are available to parents, and to school staff who work with the child on a direct or indirect basis. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which requires written signed permission by the parents/guardians.

If a parent/guardian or the school team feels more comprehensive assessment of a student is necessary, an evaluation may be recommended. Parental consent is required before a comprehensive evaluation may take place. Evaluations may include review of the student's records, classroom observations, gathering of parent/guardian and teacher input, individually administered assessments of achievement and ability, and other assessments as deem necessary. Parents/guardians of students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education services, may request a multidisciplinary evaluation of their child through a written request to the building principal or school counselor. Highlands School District shall make the permission to evaluate form readily available for that purpose. If a request is made orally to any professional employee or administrator of the school entity, that individual shall provide a copy of the permission to evaluate form to the parents within 10-calendar days of the oral request.

Independent Educational Evaluations

Parents/guardians have the right to an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense if there is a disagreement with an evaluation obtained by a District (34 CFR 300. 502). However, the district may initiate a due process hearing to show that its evaluation is appropriate. If the final decision is that the evaluation is appropriate, parents/guardians still have the right to an IEE, but not at public expense.

Working Together

After all the assessments are complete, an Evaluation Report that includes specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to deal with the child's specific needs is prepared and shared with parents/guardians. When a student qualifies for special education services, copies of the evaluation report shall be disseminated to the parents at least 10 school days prior to the meeting of the IEP team, unless this requirement is waived by a parent in writing. In accordance with state regulations, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting, with parent/guardian involvement, may be scheduled to develop an appropriate

IEP for the student. Parent/guardians are then notified of the proposed placement and services with the Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP). Parents may disagree with the recommended program and may suggest alternatives. Either the parent or the school district may choose to use a mediation or due process hearing as an impartial method to determine the most appropriate program for the child.

Services for School Age Exceptional Children

All students in the Highlands School District have access to the following services which address students' needs throughout their district enrollment: school counseling, psychological services, health services, home and school visitor services, and social work services to support students in addressing academic, behavioral, health, personal, career and social development issues. The provision of special education services is governed by Chapter 14 of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Highlands School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to an exceptional student according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school age, need specially designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for mentally, gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Other Health Impairment
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Visual Impairment including blindness

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include: annual development of an IEP, multidisciplinary reevaluation, supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular class or in a special education resource program, and placement in a part-time or full-time special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location of the delivery of such services are determined by the parents/guardians and staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and level of intensity of the specified intervention. Related services are supportive services that are required for a child to benefit from special education. Related services help children with disabilities benefit from their special education by providing extra help and support in needed areas, such as speaking or moving. Related services can include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Assistive Technology
- Counseling services
- Hearing support and audiology services/programs
- Parent counseling and training
- Psychological services
- Physical and occupational therapy
- School health services
- Social work services in schools
- Speech and language services
- Vision, orientation & Mobility Support Services/ Program
- Transportation

Prior to the initiation of the services parents/guardians are presented a “Notice of Recommended Educational Placement” (NOREP) with which they may agree or disagree. If parents/guardians disagree with the program being recommended, they have the right to request a pre-hearing conference, mediation, and/or due process hearing. For additional information about special education services and programs, contact, Dr. Amber H. Dean, Student Service Director, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone at 724-226-2400, extension 5651

Admissions of Service Animals to Schools

A student or an employee with a disability may submit a request to bring a service animal to school for educational or employment purposes. However, there is no automatic right to be accompanied by a service animal in the school setting. Parents/guardians of students with disabilities who believe the student needs to bring a service animal to school in order to receive a free and appropriate public education, shall notify the building principal or IEP team. The appropriate team shall evaluate the request to use the service animal in school, gather necessary information and determine whether the student requires the service animal during the school day or at school activities. Any service animal accompanying a student with a disability to school or school activities shall be handled and cared for in a manner detailed in the student’s IEP or Section 504 Service Agreement. Please reference Highlands School Board Policy 718 for more information.

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools

Public special education is accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools by permitting the nonpublic school student to enroll on a part-time dual enrollment basis in a special education program operated in a public school. Special education programs are accessible to nonpublic school students through dual enrollment following the multidisciplinary team evaluation and the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Parents/guardians of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary evaluation of their child through a written request to. For additional information about special education services and programs, contact, Dr. Amber H. Dean, Student Service Director, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone at 724-226-2400, extension 5651

Protected Handicapped Students: Chapter 15 (Section 504 Service Agreements)

Highlands School District will provide each “protected handicapped student” without discrimination or cost to the student or family those related services, aides, or accommodations, which are needed to provide an equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student’s abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in, or access to, any aspect of the school program. Services and protections for protected handicapped students are different from those applicable to all eligible students enrolled in special education programs. Additional information about the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students are available to “Protected Handicapped Students,” by contacting Dr. Amber H. Dean, Districtwide Coordinator of 504 Service Agreements 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone at 724-226-2400, extension 5651.

Gifted Education Services

Determining Gifted Eligibility

Mentally gifted is defined as “outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program.” A child may be eligible for gifted education if he/she:

- Is a year or more above grade achievement level for the normal age group in one or more subjects.
- Demonstrates an observed or measured rate of mastering new academic content or skills that reflect gifted ability.
- Demonstrates achievement, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas.
- Shows early and measured use of high-level thinking skills, academic creativity, leadership skills, intense academic interest areas, communication skills, foreign language aptitude, or technology expertise.
- Has documented, observed, validated, or assessed evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.

Screening and Evaluation

The term mentally gifted includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher and other factors that indicate gifted ability. Gifted ability cannot be based on an IQ score alone. If the IQ score is lower than 130, a child may be admitted to gifted programs through multiple criteria and/or other conditions that strongly indicate gifted ability. The other factors to be considered may include: achievement test scores that are a year or more above level; observed or measured acquisition/retention rates that reflect gifted ability, achievement, performance, of expertise in one or more academic areas that demonstrates a high level of accomplishment; higher level thinking skills and documented evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.

The Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE)

A gifted multidisciplinary evaluation is a process to gather the information that will be used to find out if a child qualifies for gifted education and, if so, the types of programs and services needed. Part of this process includes an evaluation by a certified school psychologist. A child may be referred for the first GMDE in several ways:

- Parents may request the school to give their child a GMDE at any time, but there is a limit of one request per year.
- A child’s teacher may also ask to have a child evaluated.

The Gifted Written Report (GWR)

A multidisciplinary team reviews all materials and prepares a GWR that recommends whether a child is gifted and needs specially designed instruction. As a member of the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT), a parent may present written information for consideration. The GWR must include the reasons for the recommendations and list the names and positions of everyone who was part of the team. The entire GMDT process must be completed within 60 calendar days, excluding summer vacation, from the date the school district receives the parent’s written permission on the Permission to Evaluate form.

The Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP)

If the GIEP team decides the student is gifted and in need of gifted education, the team develops the GIEP at the meeting. The GIEP is based on the unique needs of the gifted student and enables the gifted student to participate in acceleration or enrichment programs, or both, as appropriate, and to receive services according to the student’s intellectual and academic abilities and needs

Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA)

Upon completion of the GIEP, the parent will receive a NORA and a Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Children. The NORA will indicate the educational placement for the student and requires parent approval before the school district will begin implementation. The Notice of Parental Rights for Gifted Children describes your rights and the procedures that safeguard your rights. For additional information about Gifted Education, contact, Dr. Amber H. Dean, Student Service Director, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone at 724-226-2400, extension 5651

Parent Rights

At all times, a parent has certain rights with all gifted education services received by their child:

- The right to be notified about a child's program and progress, and any changes that take place;
- The right to approve or reject programs and testing; and
- The right to privacy.

Other Services**Education for Homeless Youth**

Federal guidelines, as set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, require that the local school identify children who are experiencing homelessness. The federal mandate, and the intention of the Pine-Richland School District is to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to free appropriate public education on an equal basis with other children. Children who are experiencing homelessness, including those living with others in emergency situations, may qualify for assistance with transportation, school lunch and/or tutoring, so that they can remain in their school of origin. If you believe your child may qualify for these services, please contact the principal of your child's school, you may also contact Dr. Cathleen Cubelic, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone 724-226-2400, extension 5611

English as a Second Language Instruction

When registering children in Highlands School District, all parents/guardians will be required to fill out a Home Language Questionnaire. Based upon the responses for this questionnaire, those children who qualify will be referred for an "English Language Learner Assessment." The results of this assessment will determine if a student requires English as a Second Language instruction. Parents/guardians may opt their children out of English language learner assessment or ESL instructions if found to be eligible. For additional information about English as a Second Language Instruction, contact, Dr. Amber H. Dean, Student Service Director, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone at 724-226-2400, extension 5651

Federal Programs/ Title I

According to the Title 1 Part A, Highlands School District will provide the Pennsylvania Department of Education's written complaint procedures and information on the professional qualification of student's teachers and paraprofessionals upon request. To request this information, please contact Dr. Cathy Russo, Coordinator of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Federal Programs, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone at 724-226-2400, extension 5655

Free and Reduced Lunch

Through the National Lunch Program, Highlands School District offers both free and meal plans for all students. Registration forms and information are available at the central district office (724-226-2400) or via the school district website.

Homebound Instruction

The Highlands School District shall provide, pursuant to law and regulations, homebound instruction to students confined to home or hospital for physical disability, illness, injury, urgent reasons, or when such

confinement is recommended for psychological or psychiatric reasons. The period of homebound instruction for an individual shall not exceed three (3) months. Application for homebound instruction shall certify the nature of the illness or disability, state the probable duration of the confinement. For additional information about homebound services, please contact, Dr. Amber H. Dean, Student Service Director, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone at 724-226-2400, extension 5651

Notice of Rights Regarding Education Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("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 after the day the Highlands School District receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records 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, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend their child's or their education record should write the school principal and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. 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 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 provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from 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. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth in the school's or school district's annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically 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 or

school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school or school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request or the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student.]

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Highlands School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§ 99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the parent or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf, if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))

- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10))
- Information the school has designated as “directory information” if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student’s case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

Special Notice Regarding Directory Information

Aforementioned, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that the district, with certain exceptions to obtain the written consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the student’s education records. However, the district may disclose certain "directory information" without such prior written consent unless the parent/guardian or eligible student has notified the district that they do not want directory information to be disclosed.

Directory information refers to information which would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, and includes the following: name; address; telephone number; e-mail address; date and place of birth; major field of study; grade level; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; degrees and awards received; and the most previous educational agency or institution attended. **[In addition, photographs and/or video footage of students may be used in articles appearing in media outlets, on the district website and/or in connection with television coverage of school events.]**

If you do not want the district to disclose such directory information without your prior written consent, you must notify the district’s Administrative Office in writing. Such notices should be delivered no later than September 30th of the current school year.

Highlands School District Nondiscrimination Statement

Highlands School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, ancestry, disability, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and participants who have an inquiry, complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for disabled persons, should contact. Dr. Cathleen Cubelic, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone 724-226-2400, extension 5611

Discrimination Policy & Steps to File a Complaint

The Highlands School District Board of School Directors declares it to be the policy of this district to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, or handicap/disability. The Highlands School District Board of School Directors shall provide to all students, without discrimination, course offerings, counseling, assistance, employment, career information and assessments, athletics, and extracurricular activities.

The District shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with requirements of federal and state law requirements. The Highlands School District Board of School Directors directs that complaints of discrimination shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action be taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the District's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith charges of discrimination. In order to maintain a program of nondiscrimination practices that is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, the Highland's Board of School Directors designates the Assistant Superintendent as the district's Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer shall publish and disseminate this policy and complaint procedure at least annually to students, parents/guardians, employees, and the public. Nondiscrimination statements shall include the position, office address, and telephone number of the Compliance Officer. Dr. Cathleen Cubelic, 1500 Pacific Avenue, Natrona Heights, PA 15065 or via phone 724-226-2400, extension 5611

Compliance Officer Responsibilities:

The Compliance Officer is responsible to monitor the implementation of nondiscrimination procedures in the following student areas:

1. **Curriculum and Materials:** Review of curriculum guides, textbooks, and supplemental materials for discriminatory bias;
2. **Training:** Provision of training for students and staff to identify and alleviate problems of discrimination;
3. **Student Access:** Review of programs, activities, and practices to ensure that all students have equal access and are not segregated except when permissible by law/regulation;
4. **District Support:** Assurance that like aspects of the school program receive like support as to staffing and compensation, facilities, equipment, and related matters; and
5. **Student Evaluation:** Review of tests, procedures, guidance, and counseling materials for stereotyping and discrimination.

The building principal or designee shall be responsible to complete the following duties when receiving a complaint of discrimination:

1. Inform the student or third party of the right to file a complaint and the complaint procedure.
2. Inform the complainant that he or she may be accompanied by a parent/guardian during all steps of the complaint procedure.
3. Notify the complainant and the accused of the progress at appropriate stages of the procedure.
4. Refer the complainant to the Compliance Officer if the building principal is the subject of the complaint.

Compliance Officer Responsibilities:

The Compliance Officer is responsible to monitor the implementation of nondiscrimination procedures in the following employee areas:

1. Development of position qualifications, job descriptions, and essential job functions;
2. Recruitment materials and practices;
3. Procedures for screening, interviewing, and hiring;
4. Promotions; and
5. Disciplinary actions, up to and including termination.

The Complaint Procedures are as follows:

1. **Reporting:** A student or third party who believes he or she has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report the incident to the building principal. A school employee who suspects or is notified that a student has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to the building principal. If the building principal is the subject of the complaint, the student or third party shall report the incident directly to the Compliance Officer. The complainant or reporting employee is encouraged to use the report form available from the building principal, but oral complaints shall be accepted.
2. **Investigation:** Upon receiving a complaint of discrimination, the building principal shall immediately notify the Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer shall authorize the building principal to investigate the complaint, unless the building principal is the subject of the complaint or is unable to conduct the investigation. The investigation may consist of individual interviews with the complainant, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation. The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded.
3. **Investigative Report:** The investigator shall prepare a written report within fifteen (15) days, unless additional time to complete the investigation is required. The report shall include a summary of the investigation, a determination of whether the complaint has been substantiated as factual or whether it

is a violation of this policy, and a recommended disposition of the complaint. Findings of the investigation shall be provided to the complainant, the accused, and the Compliance Officer.

4. **District Action:** If the investigation results in finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, the district shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases and will not recur. Disciplinary actions shall be consistent with Student Codes of Conduct, Pine-Richland School District's policies and district procedures, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and state and federal laws.

The appeal procedures are as follows:

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with a finding of no violation of the policy or with the corrective action recommended in the investigation report, he or she may submit a written appeal to the Compliance Officer within fifteen (15) days.
2. The Compliance Officer shall review the investigation and the investigation report and may also conduct a reasonable investigation.
3. The Compliance Officer shall prepare a written response to the appeal within fifteen (15) days. Copies of the response shall be provided to the complainant, the accused, and the building principal who conducted the initial investigation.

Right To Know Act

Procedures for Submitting Request

1. Requests for access to public records of Pine-Richland School District must be submitted on the Highlands School District's Right-To-Know Request Form, a copy which may be downloaded from our district's website: <https://www.goldenrams.com/Page/358>
2. Each request must include the following information:
 - a. Identification or description of the requested record, in sufficient detail.
 - b. Medium in which the record is requested.
 - c. Name and address of the person to receive district's response.
3. Request forms may be submitted in person at the Highlands School District's Administrative Offices, or via fax, mail or e-mail. Request forms must be submitted to the attention of HSD's Open Records Office, as follows:

HSD Open Records Officer
1500 Pacific Avenue
Natrona Heights, PA 15065