



Guidelines for Agency Access

Any outside agency wishing to obtain access to a student on school grounds needs to adhere to the following requirements as it pertains to the specific situation. Five different scenarios have been outlined below.

Florida Department of Children and Families Child Protective Investigations

- DCF Child Protective Investigator (CPI) should show their identification badge upon visiting a school/site. If you need to verify those credentials, call the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE and provide worker name and identification number. Additionally, an employee listing will be provided each month to Security and Emergency Management. DCF employee badges cannot be copied under any circumstances. The DCF CPI should sign in as a “VISITOR” by entering First name, Last name, and Date of Birth. **These individuals are exempt from providing a Driver’s License or Government Issued Identification.** A visitor badge should not be printed.
- The DCF Child Protective Investigations Division Authorized Agent list is maintained in the HCPS Security TEAMS and in the Child Welfare section of the Student Services SharePoint. The list is used to verify the identity of Child Protective Investigators (CPI) that may come to a school to conduct an investigation, transport a student, or request information regarding a student.
- DCF CPIs are authorized to conduct investigations and must be allowed to conduct an investigation of a student (alleged victim) without prior approval.
- Once the credentials of the CPI are verified schools can provide the CPI student enrollment and medical information pursuant to Fla. Stat. 395.3025, for the purpose of investigations of or services for cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children.
- The CPI has final authority in allowing instructional staff presence during a student interview. A school instructional staff member who is known by the child may be present during the interview of a child protective or criminal investigation when the interview is conducted at school under the following conditions:
 - CPI believes the presence of the staff member could enhance the success of the interview.
 - The child requests or consents to the staff member's presence during the interview and the CPI does not feel such would impact the investigation. Also, any information received during the interview or from any other source regarding the alleged abuse or neglect must be kept confidential except as provided by court order.
- The CPI will not have a court order or parent permission during a child abuse investigation unless the student had previously been taken into protective custody and placed in shelter care.
- The CPI is authorized to remove a student from school for a medical exam or parental visit. DCF Child Protective Investigations may send a Family Support Worker (FSW) to transport a

student to a medical appointment during the investigation phase. The CPI should notify the school prior to the appointment and the FSW should provide employment identification upon arrival.

- The CPI is authorized to remove a student from school to place him/her into protective custody. Investigators should notify the parent or guardian prior to or immediately after removing the student from school. They should also provide their business card for the school to share with a parent/guardian, if questioned about the whereabouts of the student.
- **Please remember that DCF and Law Enforcement has authority over any district rules pertaining to students. District employees should not interfere with DCF or Law Enforcement. This includes but is not limited to conducting an investigation with the child at the school location and removing a child from campus without prior parental consent.**

Foster Care (Children's Network of Hillsborough)

Children's Network of Hillsborough is the community-based care agency that is responsible for foster care children or children residing in out-of-home care. Foster care students are in the temporary custody of Children's Network of Hillsborough and residing in a licensed foster home/residential group home or facility.

- Children's Network of Hillsborough staff visiting a foster child on school campus is approved at the discretion of the principal. The Children's Network of Hillsborough should contact the principal or designee for approval and determine the best time to see the student at school. It is strongly recommended agency visits be limited to after school hours or non-instructional time. ***Principals have the authority to approve or deny school visits.***
- The school administrator may request an instructional staff member to sit in during an agency visit. *Exception- Child Protection Investigators and law enforcement have final authority in allowing an instructional staff member to be present during a student interview as a result of a child abuse investigation.*
- Children's Network of Hillsborough staff must make prior arrangements with the principal or designee to take a foster child off campus for medical appointments or parent visitation. Children's Network of Hillsborough foster care/group home parents should also notify the school about Children's Network of Hillsborough's need to take a student off campus to alleviate any delays in a student being released.
- Children's Network of Hillsborough staff must present identification and a copy of the court order or document on Children's Network of Hillsborough letterhead pertaining to their jurisdiction over the student prior to visiting school or the school staff releasing the student.
- Children's Network of Hillsborough is authorized to complete **Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessments** on all children entering out-of-home care and who are Medicaid eligible. Contracted providers should prearrange school visits, provide identification and an agency letter identifying the provider with an expiration date. A provider attempting to gain access to the school/site will present a valid driver's license and should report to the main office to sign in and be cleared through the district's visitor and volunteer management system. The provider will receive a printed identification badge that is worn while on campus. The visitor is required to report to the main office to sign out. The provider will

request consultation with the classroom teacher or administrator. Cumulative folder and school records cannot be reviewed or released without court order or parent permission signed by parent or foster parent. Records must be reviewed in the presence of a designated school staff member. Children’s Network of Hillsborough case manager or other agency staff cannot sign for records. Classroom observations and direct student contact may be requested and permitted at the **discretion of the principal**. Principals do not have a legal obligation to allow observations or student contact; therefore, they can approve or deny access to the classroom and direct student contact.

- **Guardian Ad Litem and Attorney Ad Litem** are court appointed to specific students in foster care. Guardian Ad Litem or Attorney Ad Litem visiting a foster child on school campus must present identification and a copy of the court order document. These individuals are appointed to advocate on behalf of the foster child. They are entitled to view educational records and be present during meetings regarding the student. These individuals attempting to gain access to the school/site will present a valid driver’s license and should report to the main office to sign in and be cleared through the district’s visitor and volunteer management system. They will receive a printed identification badge that is worn while on campus. The visitor is required to report to the main office to sign out.

Contracted Vendor Agency Access

As part of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public Safety Act (SB 7026) and the Mental Health Plan developed by HCPS, the District works in collaboration with core partners that contract with our managing entity Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN). These agencies have been made aware of the credentialing process that must be followed in order to access any school campus. Site based staff members should still verify that the individual seeking to obtain access has the appropriate credentials (see below) and signs in as a contractor/vendor through the district’s visitor and volunteer management system.

In advance of the services provided outside the scope of the Mental Health Plan, a representative from Student Services will contact site administration to determine interest. Once all parties agree to accept services, the agencies are required to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that is presented to the School Board for approval. Once approval has been obtained, follow-up notifications and details will be sent to each site administrator. If an outside agency, other than the ones listed above, approaches the school seeking to provide services, please refer them to Student Services at 813-273-7136.

All agreements have specific stipulations as to the forms required to obtain parent permission for services (***no student should be served by any agency unless a completed permission slip is on file***). Student Services will provide these specifications to you when notification of approval is sent out, however, this information is always included in the MOA.

Please adhere to the following guidelines as they pertain to the staff of these agencies.

- Please read the Memorandum of Agreement, specifically Article 1, as this section will outline what both parties have agreed upon.
- Agency staff are required to be cleared through the Jessica Lunsford Act (s. 1021.461 or s.

1012.56) and present a “yellow” badge or a HCPS AHCA badge. Please be sure to check the badge for the expiration date.

- Agency Staff should also present appropriate identification or documentation to indicate they are employed with that respective agency in addition to signing in as a contractor/vendor through the district’s visitor and volunteer management system.
- All School Board policies must be followed, including those regarding visitors on a school campus and the district use of facilities.

Agency Access for Individual Students

If an agency representative arrives at your school site to meet with an individual student, please refer to the following guidelines prior to permitting contact. This scenario usually occurs when a parent/guardian wants their student to be seen by a private therapist or “case manager.”

Principals have the authority to approve or deny these visits.

- If there is no option for the student to receive services after school hours and prior to any contact with the student by an agency representative, a meeting with administration and the parent/guardian should occur to determine the best possible day/time for services/therapy so instructional time is not impacted.
- Careful consideration should be placed on the potential ‘state of mind’ of the student following a visit (will the student be agitated, upset, and unable to re-focus on schoolwork).
- At this time, the parent/guardian should provide the name of the therapist, the agency they represent and sign providing consent for services on the school campus by completing the *Agency Access for Individual Students* form.
- Parent/guardian should also complete the HCPS Record Release Form for the agency.
- The provider must satisfy the requirements of the Jessica Lunsford Act (s. 1012.461 or s. 1012.56) and hold both the Statewide badge and the Hillsborough County District Yellow Badge or HCPS/AHCA badge in order to have access to any campus.
- The agency representative must sign in as a contractor/vendor through the district’s visitor and volunteer management system.
- All collaborative activity must adhere to the requirements and provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to ensure the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. This means that a private location should be provided for the sessions. In addition, school personnel may not share information or records with outside personnel regarding a student without the informed written consent of the student’s parent/guardian.
- The agency representative should adhere to the schedule determined by site administration and the parent/guardian and as well as the details outlined in the completed HCPS record release form.

Procedures for Collaborating with Private Instructional Personnel (PIP)

See Section S07 and S08 of the Principal Packet

NOTE: PRINCIPALS HAVE THE FINAL AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE WHO HAS ACCESS TO THEIR CAMPUS AND STUDENTS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT.