

## NOTES FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

Recently I was involved in crisis response training along with other members of our school staff. Privacy, confidentiality, and sharing of information were part of the discussion. Do you know about your right to privacy of your child's education record within the school? Public schools primarily fall under the guidelines of FERPA. This is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act which schools have been expected to comply with since 1974. A description of these rights is in your school handbook.

As the nurse I deal daily with confidential health information. I am only allowed to share information with your child's teachers on a "need to know" basis which can be a very unclear standard. There can be many benefits to a teacher having the full picture of a student including health issues like allergies. Do not assume that I have shared a health concern. Please call me to discuss concerns that might affect your child during the school day.

If a child is taking new medication for attention concerns, this may be a time to evaluate a student's behavior without telling the teachers. For my assessment and treatment purposes, it is still important for me to know in case your child suffers an adverse reaction. If you are unsure whether or not to tell the teachers something, we can discuss that together.

Beyond specific health concerns are the day to day home and family occurrences which may be helpful for school personnel to know in dealing with your child. Things such as the death of a pet, illness of a family member, no sleep because of an untoward event are all things that may affect students' behavior and attentiveness at school. Remember that your child's teachers are professionals and are very capable of dealing with confidential information in a sensitive manner to benefit and support your child. Open lines of communication between home and school can help us all surround students with the comfort, safety and support they need to allow them to be successful academically and socially.