

CHILD CUSTODY

The Centennial School Board recognizes the need to deal with child custody issues in a manner that is least disruptive to the school-age child and to all parties involved.

The Superintendent is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Policy: 7.9

Adopted.....11/10/87

Amended:03/10/92

.....12/10/96

.....09/12/00

.....08/21/07

CHILD CUSTODY

- I. Explanation of Commonly Used Terms – In the absence of a court orders to the contrary, it is assumed that each parent has equal access to their minor child or children. Where courts enter orders associated with custody, certain terms are commonly used:
 - A. “Custody” means the legal right to keep, control, guard, care for and preserve a child and includes the terms “legal custody,” “physical custody,” and “shared custody” and “partial custody”.
 - B. “Legal Custody” means the legal right to make major decisions affecting the best interests of a minor child, and including but not limited to medical, religious and educational decisions.
 - C. “Physical Custody” means actual physical possession and control of the child.
 - D. “Shared Custody” means shared legal and shared physical custody or both of a child in such a way as to assure the child a frequent and continuing contact, including physical access, to both parents.
 - E. “Partial Custody” means the right to take possession of a child away from the custodial person for a certain period of time.
 - F. “Visitation” means the right to visit a child, but does not include the right to remove the child from the custodial parent’s control.

- II. Child Custody Status
 - A. Either parent is considered to have custody unless the principal is informed to the contrary by means of a true and correct copy of a court order.
 - B. When registering a child the parent shall indicate the child’s custody status on the Pupil Registration and Identity Card. The parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be required to produce a true and correct copy of all applicable court orders related to the custody issue.
 - C. The principal shall review child custody status for enrolled students when such a question is brought to his/her attention by the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) or school staff.
 - D. When applicable, the principal shall alert staff on a need-to-know basis as to the potential child custody issues, which may be reflected in court orders and may have an impact upon the school.

- III. Parent Rights:
 - A. Each parent may inspect and copy all school records of the child. Each parent shall be provided access to the residence address of the child, and of the other parent and any other information which the court deems necessary. Information associated with a child may not be released under the following circumstances:

1. The Court, in a written decision, directs that information related to the school records of the child, the residence address of the child and of the other parent are not to be released.
2. The Court, in a written decision, directs that the address of a shelter for battered spouses and their dependent children and otherwise confidential information of a domestic violence counselor not be disclosed.

B. Student Records:

1. In furtherance of Sections III A., all records/reports normally provided to parents shall be provided to the parent who has custody of the child and with whom the child resides.
2. Subject to the provisions of Section III A, upon the written request of a parent not residing with the child, the principal shall furnish, at no cost, copies of:
 - a. report cards;
 - b. calendar of school activities;
 - c. progress reports;
 - d. disciplinary letters;
 - e. other communications specific to the child.

C. School Activities: In the absence of a court order to the contrary, both parents may participate in appropriate school activities with the understanding that they conduct themselves in a reasonable manner. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. home and school/parent association activities;
2. teacher-parent conferences;
3. disciplinary conferences;
4. awards programs;
5. IEP/special education placement conferences.

D. Visitation, Partial Custody with, or Release of Student

1. A parent who has visitation and/or partial custody but with whom the child does not reside shall not be permitted on school property.
2. A student may not be released to a parent with whom the child does not reside for any reason unless there is:
 - a. written authorization from the custodial parent or
 - b. a certified written court order specifying conditions of release.

IV. Residency Issues

- A. Students shall be enrolled as resident students when residing in the District with a parent who has been granted physical custody.
- B. When residency status becomes an issue, the matter shall be referred to the District's solicitor.

V. Issues of Conflict: If the school becomes a setting for conflict between parents, the principal shall:

- A. Make a reasonable effort to protect the emotional and physical welfare of the child, short of physical force.
- B. When necessary, notify the police and request their assistance.
- C. Notify the parent having legal custody and/or physical custody if a parent with partial custody or visitation acts in a manner which seems contrary to court orders or standard procedures. When notification of such acts occur, a copy of the written notification shall be retained in the file and memorandum of the conversation, if not in writing, shall be retained in the file.

VI. Out-of-State Orders: The Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act requires that the District recognize a proper custody decree and/or order from other states and/or counties within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

VII. Emancipated Minors and/or Students Eighteen Years of Age or Older

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary set forth in this Policy, the law defines a child as an unemancipated person under eighteen (18) years of age. Accordingly, under those circumstances where the student is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or emancipated, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Policy, the School District and its officials shall respect the rights of any individual eighteen (18) years of age or older or any individual who is emancipated. Any provision in the School District's policies that are inconsistent with the rights of individuals eighteen (18) years of age or older or with the rights of an emancipated minor shall not be applied to said individuals.

Questions concerning whether a child who is less than eighteen (18) years of age is emancipated shall be referred to the solicitor.

Administrative Procedures: 7.9

Approved: ...11/10/89

Amended:03/10/92

.....12/10/96

.....09/12/00

.....08/21/07