

CONFIDENTIALITY SCENARIOS

Directions: Several situations related to confidentiality that require a decision to be made are presented below. Read each of the situations and apply your school's policies in order to make a decision for each scenario. Then discuss your response with other team members.

Student to student

Sue is a new paraprofessional at Smith High School. She is 20 years old. Sue went to Smith High School as a student, so she knows many of the teachers and several of the students. Her primary responsibilities are related to supporting two students with moderate intellectual disabilities in several inclusive classrooms.

Sue is trying to figure out how to support the two students in their history class. She is very frustrated and has decided to solicit input from several other students in the class. She meets with the student's classmates during her lunch break and describes to the students without disabilities what she believes are the challenges and the learning priorities of the students with disabilities. The students without disabilities generate a wide variety of strategies that may potentially be supportive of the students with disabilities. At the end of the lunch break, Sue feels excited and very positive with the outcome of this informal lunch chat. As a matter of fact, she has decided to have lunch with these students once a week to solicit their ideas and feedback related to the educational program of the student with disabilities.

Discussion: Has Sue broken any rules about confidentiality? If so, which ones? How? What could she have done differently?

Key: In most schools this would represent a breach in confidentiality. Sue should have brought her questions and concerns to her team. It is inappropriate to discuss issues related to a student—with and without disabilities—with any other student. It is also inappropriate for Sue to establish ongoing meetings with students.

Faculty lounge talk

Brian is a paraprofessional who supports a student with severe disabilities in an inclusive third-grade classroom. He has been a paraprofessional in the school for about 5 years and is widely known and respected by other paraprofessionals as well as many faculty members.

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CONFIDENTIALITY SCENARIOS *(continued)*

Brian walks into the faculty lunchroom and sits down with several paraprofessionals and teachers. As he tunes into the discussion, he notices that the topic of conversation has to do with the student he supports. He hears several comments made about the student's family. As Brian is becoming increasingly uncomfortable, one of the teachers turns to him and asks, "Brian, is that true about Mrs. Smith?"

Discussion: How should Brian respond? What is Brian's responsibility in the specific situation? What is Brian's responsibility with his team afterward?

Key: Brian should respond. His response should explain that it would be a breach of confidentiality to respond to their inquiry. For example, he might say, "I'm not comfortable discussing the student's family life" or "It is my understanding that it would be a breach of confidentiality to discuss this type of information in this context." Brian should document the entire situation and discuss the incident with his team during the next scheduled meeting.

Community helpers

Pat is a paraprofessional who supports several students who have challenging behavior at the middle school. She has been a paraprofessional for many years. Pat is widely known in her community for her volunteer work at the local youth center.

One of the students that Pat supports attends the youth center regularly. One afternoon Pat notices that the student is beginning to have some difficulty managing some of his behaviors. Pat has learned several behavioral management techniques to support this student during school.

Discussion: What should Pat do? Should she intervene at the youth center with the behavioral management techniques that she learned at school? If so, when another volunteer asks her what she did and why she did it, should Pat describe the behavior management strategy?

Key: This situation is a bit more challenging. It is still inappropriate for Pat to discuss the specifics of the student's program with community members. As a volunteer who has responsibilities at the community center, Pat should approach the student's parents and voice her concerns. It is important to remember that Pat would do the same thing if the student did not have disabilities.