FERPA for Volunteers
(Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act)

FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all educational agencies and institutions that receive funds under any program administered by the Department of Education. Under FERPA, a school may not generally disclose personally identifiable information from a minor student's education records to a third party unless the student's parent has provided written consent.

Education records include a range of information about a student that is maintained in schools in any recorded way, such as handwriting, print, computer media, video or audio tape, film, microfilm, and microfiche. Examples are:

- Date and place of birth, parent(s) and/or guardian addresses, and where parents can be contacted in emergencies;
- Grades, test scores, courses taken, academic specializations and activities, and official letters regarding a student's status in school;
- Special education records;
- Disciplinary records;
- Medical and health records that the school creates or collects and maintains;
- Documentation of attendance, schools attended, courses taken, awards conferred, and degrees earned;
- Personal information such as a student's identification code, social security number, picture, or other information that would make it easy to identify or locate a student.

Volunteers may come into contact with protected student information in the course of their volunteer duties. Please be aware of your surroundings before disclosing any information. Be careful about disclosing information or approaching students or families outside of the school setting. Verify that the person to whom you are disclosing the information has a legal right to it.

Ask yourself:
- Is it necessary to disclose this information?
- Is it legal?
- Is it appropriate at this time and place?

If the answer to any of these questions is "no," do not disclose the information. Refer the person who is asking to a staff member during school hours.