



**Difficult Parent/  
Visitor  
Considerations -  
2017**

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4/10/17

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**Parent/Visitor Considerations**

- 1) When dealing with an irate parent, or a parent who says that she is going to pick up a child when she is not authorized to, never hesitate to involve law enforcement.
- 2) Do not underestimate how emotionally involved parents are in their children, especially young children, and particularly when there may be a custody dispute.

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**Parent/Visitor Considerations**

- 3) Remember that the parent has no right to know what disciplinary action the administration takes against a staff member or a student from another family.
- - Do your best to reassure the parent that you take their concern seriously, and appropriate actions will be taken if they are warranted.
- - Remind the parent that you wouldn't share information regarding their child with another parent.

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### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 4) Parents may review portions of security video which is part of their student's record, because it is being used as the basis for student discipline (e.g., bus, hallway, gym, etc.). If the video is not part of their student's record, they have no such right to review the video.

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discipline = record

\* can see it if other students are in the video

w/o video → parents no right to video

### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 5) Try to develop a consistent practice of when you invite parents to meetings with students, and when you do not contact parents to attend a meeting, or during questioning of a student.
- - The only time it is required to attempt to contact a parent is when a student is taken into custody, or when there has been physical restraint or confinement utilized at school.
- - Factor in the age of the student when deciding the extent of parent involvement.

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### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 6) The school does not have to contact parents every time a student visits with a school employee.
- - Similarly, the school does not have to contact one parent every time the other parent contacts their child at school, nor does the school have to give attendance updates every day or perform every action a parent may request.

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### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 7) Consider contacting law enforcement if a parent/visitor violates a no trespass letter or may be charged with disorderly conduct for inappropriate behavior on school property or at school activities.
- 8) Discuss the possibility of staff members contacting law enforcement about harassment charges or obtaining a no contact order if a parent/visitor is threatening or harassing a staff member.

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### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 9) The parent/visitor is a guest at the school and school activities, if s/he acts inappropriately (e.g., verbally berating, cussing out, or threatening staff or students), school individuals may require the individual leave district property. Consider having your attorney draft a letter to the parent/visitor, letting her know that she will be considered trespassing if she comes to school in the future except for permitted purposes (e.g., voting, attending conferences, or events with the approval of the administration), or issue a warning that such trespass letter will be sent on the next occasion of inappropriate behavior.

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### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 10) Do your best to listen to the parent's complaints, even if you are confident they are baseless accusations.
- - Remind your staff to do the same if you are able to set up a meeting between the parent and staff.
- - If necessary, have two staff members present when holding meetings with difficult parents.

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due process

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**Parent/Visitor Considerations**

- 11) If it appears that a parent is going to attend a board meeting to make public accusations about a staff member, you may want to remind the parent that the meetings may be recorded or that there are many witnesses at the meeting (hint, hint).
- Individuals do not have a right to be placed on the board's agenda and the board is not required to provide an opportunity for citizens to speak at meetings (e.g., citizen forum). However, if such an item is on the agenda, then the individual should be permitted to speak within the board's parameters.

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**Parent/Visitor Considerations**

- 12) If a parent is a sex offender, with an offense against a minor, ensure that s/he follows requirements when visiting school (e.g., gaining written permission to visit school or attend school events).
- - If the parent's offense was against someone other than a minor, the same requirements do not apply, but the parent has no right to serve as a volunteer at school events.

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Sex offender :

- minor
- adult

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**Parent/Visitor Considerations**

- 13) Parents may not sign over guardianship of a child by typing a personal letter. Request that a power of attorney is completed or that you receive guardianship paperwork from the court.

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### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 14) Do not concede your position whenever a parent threatens to sue the school if you do not do something they want. Contact an attorney and get an interpretation of whether they have a basis for their threat.

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### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 15) Err on the side of getting written approval from parents when a student may be doing something that may put him or her at risk (e.g., riding home from golf practice with a teammate).

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### Parent/Visitor Considerations

- 16) Ask yourself: "Would I want someone to contact me if I were the parent in this situation?" (e.g., accusations that their child was drinking or using drugs, even in instances where the school will not be disciplining the student).

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**Parent/Visitor Considerations**

- 17) School officials have authority to limit who (if anyone) may capture audio, video, or photographs at school activities.
- Furthermore, if school officials do permit photographers to capture photos at a game (for example), you may determine where the photographer may be located while taking photos.
- Also, consider whether capturing of audio or video may violate copyright laws if recording a play, choir, or band concert.

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**Parent/Visitor Considerations**

- 18) Again, when in doubt, always err on the side of safety, and never hesitate to involve law enforcement!

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safety first - will be upheld in courts

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