

## **POLICY**

### **Procedural Safeguards**

The Superintendent of Heritage Academy shall establish and maintain procedures to ensure that children with disabilities and their parents are guaranteed procedural safeguards with respect to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). 20 U.S.C. 1415(a)–(b).

These procedures shall include:

1. An opportunity for the parents to review all education records and to participate in meetings relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of FAPE to the child. 34 CFR 300.501.
2. An opportunity for the parents to obtain an independent educational evaluation of the child. 34 CFR 300.502.
3. Assignment of an individual to act as a surrogate for the parent when no parent can be identified, Heritage Academy cannot locate the parents, or the child is a ward of the state. 34 CFR 300.519.
4. Prior written notice to the parents whenever Heritage Academy proposes to initiate or change, or refuses to initiate or change, the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of FAPE to the child. 34 CFR 300.503.
5. Procedures to allow parties to resolve disputes through a mediation process. 34 CFR 300.506.
6. An opportunity for any party to file a due process complaint on any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of FAPE to the child. 34 CFR 300.507.
7. Procedures that require either party, or the attorney representing a party, to provide to the other party a due process complaint (which shall remain confidential). 34 CFR 300.508.

### **Consent**

Consent means that:

1. The parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in his or her native language, or other mode of communication;
2. The parent understands and agrees in writing to the activity for which his or her consent is sought, and the consent describes that activity and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom; and
3. The parent understands that the granting of consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time. A revocation of consent is not retroactive.

If the parent revokes consent in writing for his or her child's receipt of services after the child is initially provided special education and related services, Heritage Academy is not required to amend the child's education records to remove any references to the child's receipt of services because of the revocation of consent.

34 CFR 300.9

### **Language of Notices**

The procedural safeguards and prior notices described below must be written in language understandable to the general public. The notice must be provided in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. 34 CFR 300.503(c), 300.504(d).

### **Electronic Delivery of Notices**

A parent of a child with a disability may elect to receive required notices by electronic mail, if Heritage Academy makes that option available. 34 CFR 300.505.

### **Notice of Procedural Safeguards**

Heritage Academy shall provide a copy of the procedural safeguards to parents only once per year, except that a copy also shall be given to the parents:

1. Upon initial referral or parental request for evaluation;
2. Upon receipt of the first state complaint and upon receipt of the first due process complaint in a school year;
3. On the date of a decision to make a disciplinary removal that is a change in placement; and
4. Upon request by a parent.

Heritage Academy may also place a current copy of the procedural safeguards notice on its Internet Web site.

### **Contents of Notice**

The notice shall include a full explanation of the procedural safeguards relating to:

1. Independent educational evaluations;
2. Prior written notice;
3. Parental consent;
4. Access to educational records;
5. Opportunity to present and resolve complaints through the due process complaint and state complaint procedures, including:
  - a. The time period in which to file a complaint,
  - b. The opportunity for Heritage Academy to resolve the complaint; and

- c. The difference between the due process complaint and the state complaint procedures, including the jurisdiction of each procedure, what issues may be raised, filing and decisional timelines, and relevant procedures.
6. The availability of mediation;
7. The child's placement during pendency of any due process proceedings;
8. Procedures for children who are subject to placement in an interim alternative educational setting;
9. Requirements for unilateral placement by parents of children in private schools at public expense;
10. Hearings on due process complaints, including requirements for disclosure of evaluation results and recommendations;
11. Civil actions, including the time period in which to file such actions; and
12. Attorneys' fees.

20 U.S.C. 1415(a)–(b), (d); 34 CFR 300.504(c).

### **Prior Notice and Consent**

Heritage Academy shall provide prior written notice to the parents within a reasonable time before the School proposes to initiate or change, or refuses to initiate or change, the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a child or the provision of a FAPE to the child. 34 CFR 300.503(a).

“Reasonable time” is defined as at least five school days, unless the parents agree otherwise. 19 TAC 89.1015.

### **Contents of Notice**

The notice must include:

1. A description of the action proposed or refused by Heritage Academy;
2. An explanation of why Heritage Academy proposes or refuses to take the action;
3. A description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report Heritage Academy used as a basis for the proposed or refused action;
4. A statement that the parents have protection under the procedural safeguards and, if this notice is not an initial referral for evaluation, the means by which a copy of the procedural safeguards can be obtained;
5. Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the IDEA rules;
6. A description of other options the ARD committee considered and the reasons why those options were rejected; and
7. A description of other factors relevant to Heritage Academy' proposal or refusal.

34 CFR 300.503(b)

### **Consent to Initial Evaluation**

Before Heritage Academy conducts an initial evaluation, it shall provide prior written notice, including a description of any evaluation Heritage Academy proposes to conduct, and obtain informed consent for the evaluation from the parents. 20 U.S.C. 1414(a)(1)(D), (E); 34 CFR 300.304(a).

### **Consent to Services**

Heritage Academy shall seek informed consent from the parent before providing special education and related services to a child. 20 U.S.C. 1414(a)(1)(D).

### **Consent to Reevaluation**

Heritage Academy shall obtain informed parental consent before conducting any reevaluation of a child with a disability, except that such informed parental consent need not be obtained if Heritage Academy can demonstrate that it has taken reasonable measures to obtain such consent and the parent has failed to respond. 20 U.S.C. 1414(c)(3).

### **Psychological Examinations and Tests**

On request of a child's parent, before obtaining the parent's consent for the administration of any psychological examination or test to the child as part of the evaluation of the child's need for special education, Heritage Academy shall provide to the child's parent:

1. The name and type of the examination or test; and
2. An explanation of how the examination or test will be used to develop an appropriate IEP for the child.

If Heritage Academy determines that an additional examination or test is required for the evaluation of a child's need for special education, Heritage Academy shall provide the information above to the parent regarding the additional examination or test and shall obtain additional consent for the examination of test. Education Code 29.0041(a), (b).

### **Dispute Resolution**

The possible options for resolving disputes that arise between a parent and Heritage Academy relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of or the provision of FAPE to a student with a disability include, but are not limited to:

1. ARD committee meetings, including IEP facilitation if offered by Heritage Academy, under 19 Administrative Code 89.1196;
2. Meetings or conferences with the student's teachers;
3. Meetings or conferences, subject to Heritage Academy policies, with the principal, special education director, Superintendent, or Board;

4. Requesting state IEP facilitation in accordance with 19 Administrative Code 89.1197;
5. Requesting mediation through TEA in accordance with 19 Administrative Code 89.1193;
6. Filing a complaint with TEA in accordance with 19 Administrative Code 89.1195; or
7. Requesting a due process hearing through TEA in accordance with 19 Administrative Code 89.1151–.1191.

19 TAC 89.1150

### **Complaint Procedures**

Whenever a due process complaint has been received by Heritage Academy, the parent shall have an opportunity for an impartial due process hearing, which shall be conducted by TEA.

#### **Time Limit**

A due process complaint must set forth an alleged violation that occurred not more than one year before the date the parent or Heritage Academy knew or should have known about the alleged action that forms the basis of the complaint. 20 U.S.C. 1415(f)(1)(A); 19 TAC 89.1151(c).

#### **Exception**

This timeline shall not apply if the parent was prevented from requesting a hearing due to:

1. A specific misrepresentation by Heritage Academy that it had resolved the problem forming the basis of the complaint; or
2. Heritage Academy's withholding of information from the parent that Heritage Academy was required by the IDEA to provide.

20 U.S.C. 1415(f)(3)(D); 34 CFR 300.511(f).

#### **“Stay Put”**

During the pendency of any proceeding conducted under IDEA part B (except proceedings to challenge a disciplinary change of placement or manifestation determination), the child shall remain in the then-current educational placement unless Heritage Academy and the parent agree otherwise. If the child is applying for initial admission to a public school, the child shall, with the consent of the parents, be placed in the public school program until all proceedings have been completed. 20 U.S.C. 1415(j); 34 CFR 300.518, 300.533.

#### **Exception**

When a due process hearing has been requested by a parent or Heritage Academy concerning a disciplinary change of placement or manifestation determination, the child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the child's assignment to the alternative setting, or the 45-day timeline, if applicable, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and Heritage Academy agree otherwise. 20 U.S.C. 1415(k)(3)(A), 1415(k)(4)(A); 34 CFR 300.533.

### **Resolution Process**

Within 15 days of receiving notice of a parent's due process complaint, and before initiating a due process hearing, Heritage Academy shall convene a meeting with the parent and the relevant member or members of the ARD committee. The purpose of the meeting is for the parent to discuss the due process complaint and the facts that form the basis of the due process complaint, so that Heritage Academy has the opportunity to resolve the dispute.

The meeting need not be held if the parent and Heritage Academy agree in writing to waive the meeting, or the parent and Heritage Academy agree to use the mediation process.

If Heritage Academy has not resolved the due process complaint to the satisfaction of the parent within 30 days of the receipt of the complaint, the due process hearing may occur. If Heritage Academy is unable to obtain the participation of the parent in the resolution meeting after reasonable efforts have been made, Heritage Academy may, at the conclusion of the 30-day period, request that a hearing officer dismiss the parent's due process complaint. 34 CFR 300.510.

### **Transfer of Rights to Adult Students**

When a student reaches the age of 18, Heritage Academy shall notify the student and the parents of the transfer of parental rights. This notice is separate and distinct from the requirement that, beginning at least one year before the student reaches the age of 18, the student's IEP include a statement regarding transfer of parental rights.

A student with a disability who is 18 years of age or older or whose disabilities of minority have been removed for general purposes under Chapter 31, Family Code, shall have the same right to make educational decisions as a student without a disability. All other rights accorded to parents under Chapter 29, Subchapter A of the Education Code or 20 U.S.C. 1415 transfer to the student. 34 CFR 300.520; Education Code 29.017(a)–(b); 19 TAC 89.1049(c).