



Guidelines for Decorum in Meetings and Other Interactions

New Horizons Regional Education Centers (NHREC) is committed to addressing the educational needs of all students. These guidelines address questions and concerns that have been presented by adult students, parents/legal guardians and school personnel regarding meetings and other communications. These guidelines are intended to facilitate productive and collegial interactions between school personnel and adult students, and parents/legal guardians.

Meeting Scheduling:

1. **Polite and timely communication is expected at all times.** School personnel and agents of the school division will communicate with students and their parents/legal guardians and representatives in an open, timely and polite manner. Parents/legal guardians, students, and representatives should communicate in an open, timely, and polite manner with school personnel.
2. **Meetings and telephone conferences will be scheduled during regular business hours.** School personnel will make reasonable efforts to schedule meetings or telephone conferences with parents/legal guardians/adult students for times that are mutually agreeable to all parties. Meetings will take place in the building where most parties work unless otherwise agreed to by all parties. Meetings and telephone conferences will take place during regular school hours unless exceptional circumstances prevent such scheduling. School personnel will make note of the content and outcome of such meetings.

Note: In the case of a student with a disability, written notification of IEP meetings must be sent to the parent/legal guardian/adult student prior to the meeting occurring. Furthermore, if the parent/legal guardian/adult student does not respond to the request for a meeting after receiving written advance notice, or if the parties can not find a mutually agreeable time, the meeting or telephone conference may go forward without the parent/legal guardian/adult student in order to meet applicable deadlines. Attempts by NHREC to arrange a mutually agreed upon time and place shall be documented to include detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and results of those calls, copies of correspondence sent to parents/legal guardians/adult students and any responses received and detailed records of visits made to the parent's(s)/legal guardian's(s)/adult student's home or place of business and the results of those visits.

3. **Meetings and telephone conferences will occur during allotted time.** In order to maximize and fairly allocate the limited time available to school personnel to attend to school duties and other students, every effort will be made

to conduct meetings within the scheduled time period. At the beginning of any meeting or telephone conference, school personnel will set forth the allocated time for such meeting or telephone conferences. Parties will respect the fact that other participants may not be available beyond the established time for the meeting. Therefore, parties will make good faith efforts to remain on the topic for the meeting or telephone conference and succinctly state information. Should the meeting or telephone conference begin to exceed the scheduled time, all parties must agree to extend the meeting or conference time; otherwise the meeting or conference will continue at another time to be determined.

Meeting Preparation:

4. **Parties should review relevant records prior to meetings.** All parties to a meeting or telephone conference should prepare by reviewing all relevant, current or proposed documents *prior* to the start of the meeting or telephone conference. Prior notice of a request to review records should be given to the student's school counselor or case manager so that all relevant records can be produced in one location. Adequate notice of a request to review records will ensure that the records are available. Schools will comply with a written request to review records without unnecessary delay and in no case more than five (5) administrative working days after the written request has been made. Upon request, copies of education records may be made and the requestor may incur a charge for such copies.

Note: In the case of a student with a disability, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) prohibits charging fees for the Individualized Education Program (IEP); however, fees may be charged for all other parts of the record as long as the fees do not prevent the parent/legal guardian/adult student from exercising their rights under IDEA to inspect and review the records.

5. **Parents/legal guardians/adult students should provide relevant documentation to school personnel prior to meetings.** If documentation, evaluations, or other information concerning the student need to be considered by participants to a meeting or communication, that information should be provided to the appropriate personnel, or in the case of students with disabilities, the case manager, two (2) business days before the meeting or communication. Doing so allows school personnel to be prepared to address the issues, and to have appropriate personnel present to address the information. Failure to provide the information in advance of the meeting or communication may require rescheduling to allow school personnel sufficient time to prepare. The parent/legal guardian/adult student may request for documentation to be added to the student scholastic record.

Note: In the case of a student with a disability, evaluation report(s) shall be available to the parent no less than two (2) business days prior to a meeting to determine eligibility.

Meeting Participants:

6. **School personnel reserve the right to speak directly with the responsible party (parents/legal guardians/adult students) when represented by attorneys or other representatives.** School personnel will communicate directly with the responsible party. It will be the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian/adult student to discuss these communications with any other representative for the student. School personnel will not participate in meetings or other forms of communications with representatives unless the responsible party also participates in the meeting or communication. A signed disclosure form must be in the student's file for any representative participating in such meetings or communications and before school personnel will discuss the student's educational matters with such representative. With the consent of the responsible party, direct communication concerning the student's educational needs may occur between NHREC and outside sources. School personnel reserve the right not to communicate with any party other than the parent/legal guardian/adult student.

7 **Parties will give prior notice of intent to bring attorneys, advocates or other representatives to meetings.** As provided by law, parents/legal guardians/adult students may have other representatives attend a meeting or telephone conference, but adequate notice should be provided to the school so appropriate facilities and services can be reserved and necessary school personnel invited to attend. Failure to inform the school of the attendance of legal counsel or other representatives may result in rescheduling the meeting or communication.

8. **Parents or legal guardians should notify school personnel prior to meetings that he/she will need a foreign language interpreter or interpreter for the deaf or hearing impaired.** Notifying the school of a meeting well in advance, preferably with fourteen (14) calendar days notice, that the parent or legal guardian will require a foreign language interpreter or interpreter for the deaf or hearing impaired will ensure that the parent or legal guardian will have an opportunity to fully participate in the meeting.

Meeting Conduct:

9. **Parties will exhibit respectful and productive conduct.** Parties to a school related meeting or other communication are expected to display respectful, cooperative, and non-threatening behaviors. If communication between parties becomes non-productive, disparaging, or threatening, the party causing the disruption will be asked to leave the meeting and/or the building or will be terminated from the communication. The remaining parties may continue with the meeting or communication if an adequate record of the meeting or communication is made. Any party who has unreasonably disrupted a meeting or other form of communication may be prohibited from participation in future

meetings, telephone conferences, or other communications, or may be asked to participate by telephone or other means.

10. **Parties will provide prior notice of intent to record meetings.** Any party to a meeting or other form of communication may record such meeting or communication if prior notice is given to the other parties. When parents/legal guardians/adult students opt to record a meeting or communication, NHREC shall also record the proceeding. Failure to provide prior notice of recording may result in discontinuance of the meeting or communication. Recordings made by school personnel will be made part of the student's educational record.

11. **Concerns about a party's conduct during meetings should be directed to the principal or administrator.** Concerns about the conduct of parties to a meeting, communication, or an observation should be first addressed to the principal/coordinator of the student's assigned school if the meeting occurred at school. If the parties cannot reach resolution regarding the concerns, the concerns should be forwarded to the appropriate Director/Executive Director. The Director/Executive Director will attempt to resolve the concerns through established procedures and will inform the parties of other methods of resolving the concerns.

Note: In the case of a student with a disability, the Director will attempt to resolve the concerns through established procedures and will inform the parties of other methods of resolving the concerns under the IDEA.

Other Matters:

12. **Observations of students allowed under limited conditions.** Parents/legal guardians of minor students may participate in school activities in accordance with Virginia Code §22.1-4.3 and with the prior approval of the principal or his or her designee. Parents/legal guardians who wish to observe their student during school hours may do infrequent, brief observations (30-60 minutes) with the principal's permission, in a manner that is not disruptive to the learning environment. The administration will determine whether the observation is disruptive.

Observations of students during school hours by non-school personnel will be limited to licensed professionals conducting an independent educational evaluation (IEE) or with a prior history of treating or evaluating the student. Such persons must have written parental consent, prior approval of the principal, and such observations must be in conjunction with a scheduled school-related evaluation or meeting. The private observation will be limited to the same time and scope as a school staff observation (30- 60 minutes) and no more than one observation within a month. The principal or his or her designee may set additional conditions

on the observations and may terminate an observation should it become disruptive to the learning environment.

13. Audio and Video Recording

Audio or video recording by any means in classrooms and on all school property by staff, parents, students or third parties while students and/or school staff are engaged in providing educational opportunities to students or during school-sponsored activities not open to the general public is prohibited without prior written notice and approval by the building administrator. No recording shall be approved if it violates the rights of any student pursuant to state and federal privacy laws and regulations including but not limited to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Note: In the case of a student with a disability utilizing a GPS tracking device, any audio “listen-in” feature must be disabled during school hours.

14. The Board and Executive Director reserve the right to direct communications regarding students to school personnel. Board Members, the Executive Director, and his/her designees reserve the right to refer communications regarding a student to school personnel more familiar with the student’s educational needs.

New Horizons Regional Education Centers prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy and childbirth, or marital status. School Board policies provide equal access to courses, programs, counseling services, physical education and athletics, vocational education, instructional materials, and extracurricular activities.