

Students

Conduct

Video Surveillance

District surveillance cameras will only be utilized in public areas where there is no “reasonable expectation of privacy.” Audio recordings shall not be utilized by School District employees without the express permission of the Superintendent or his/her designee. However, such prohibition does not preclude the use of audio recordings by law enforcement officials in accordance with their official duties and/or as otherwise authorized by law.

To further the Board’s objective, the District Security and Safety Committee (DSSC) shall meet as appropriate and/or deemed necessary to develop, implement and review District and building level security and safety practices, emergency operations plans, and emergency response procedures. The DSSC shall also make recommendations to the Superintendent regarding the implementation and use of surveillance cameras as authorized by the Board of Education. The Superintendent shall retain final decision-making authority regarding the recommendations of the DSSC; and he/she shall notify the Board as to the procedures to be implemented with regard to the use of surveillance cameras by the School District.

In determining the most appropriate use and implementation of surveillance cameras in the schools, school buses, and/or on school grounds, the DSSC’s recommendation will be guided by, at a minimum, the following considerations:

- Demonstrated need for the device at designated locations;
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of proposed protocol;
- The use of additional, less intrusive, means to further address the issue of school safety (e.g. restricted access to buildings, use of pass cards or identification badges, increased lighting, alarms);
- Expense involved installing and maintaining the use of surveillance cameras at designated locations, including school buses and/or on school grounds.
- The possibility of linking “live” the video surveillance system with local law enforcement monitoring.

Any video recording used for surveillance purposes in school buildings, school buses, and/or on school property, shall be the sole property of the District; and the Superintendent or his/her designee will be the custodian of such recordings. All recordings will be stored on the hard drive for a minimum of 30 calendar days. If it is necessary to download any file onto a removable data storage device, it will be downloaded only by the Custodian of Recordings onto a CD-ROM and secured to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Requests for viewing a video recording must be made in writing to the Superintendent or his/her designee and, if the request is granted, such viewing must occur in the presence of the District’s designated custodian of the recording. Under no circumstances will the District’s video recording be duplicated and/or removed from the District premises unless in accordance with the direction of the Superintendent, a written request from the Chief of Police of

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Video Surveillance (continued)

the Newtown Police Department for explicit use in a criminal investigation, motor vehicle accident investigation, or an administrative investigation involving police personnel, court order, and/or subpoena.

Appropriate signage will be posted at entrances to the school campus and/or at major entrances into school buildings notifying students, staff and the general public of the District's use of surveillance cameras.

Students and staff will receive additional notification, as appropriate, regarding the use of surveillance cameras in the schools, school buses and/or on school grounds. Such notification may include, but is not limited to, publication in the District calendar, employee handbook, and student handbook. Such notification does not preclude, as deemed appropriate by administration, the discussion of the use of surveillance cameras with staff and students to heighten awareness and help foster a sense of security.

Video Cameras on School Transportation

1. **Policy:**

Video cameras may be installed on school buses operated by the Newtown Board of Education or its transportation contractor. The operation of the cameras must be the type initiated by the ignition switch and not controlled in any way by the vehicle driver. All video recordings will remain in the custody of the transportation provider. The use of video cameras is primarily intended to be an extension of the disciplinary procedures employed by school administrators and for driver/student training purposes. Video recordings may be used to supplement or support the investigation of disciplinary infractions.

2. **Procedures:**

A. **Camera installation/distribution:** Video system hardware and black boxes should be installed on all buses operated by the transportation provider. The actual number of cameras employed will be at the joint discretion of the Board and the transportation provider.

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Video Cameras on School Transportation (continued)

- B. **Video recordings custody:** Video recordings will be retained by the transportation provider for twenty (20) working days. After twenty working days, the tapes will be reused in the video equipment on the vehicles. If an administrator needs to view a tape, he/she must request the tape within twenty (20) days of the time the incident occurred. A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR IS THE ONLY PARTY THAT MAY REQUEST TAPES FROM THE TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER FOR VIEWING PURPOSES.
- C. **Video recording retention:** If a school administrator determines that a tape should be kept for evidence, the tape should be retained permanently by the school administrator and not returned to the transportation provider.
- D. **Confidentiality:** Every effort must be made to preserve the confidential nature of video surveillance and the rights of students and vehicle operators.

(cf. 4112.6/4212.6 – Personnel Records)

(cf. 5125 – Student Records)

(cf. 5131.1 – Bus Conduct)

(cf. 5131.5 – Vandalism)

(cf. 5145.12 – Search and Seizure)

Legal Reference: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, sec. 438, 20 U.S.C. sec. 1232g (1988).

Connecticut General Statutes

10-97 Transportation to vocational schools.

10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education re school attendance.

10-220 Duties of boards of education.

10-220c Transportation of children over private roads.

10-233a and 10-233c Suspension of students.

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Video Surveillance in School Buildings, Campuses, and Buses

Video Surveillance System Operation

1. The Board or its administrators may use video surveillance: 1) to monitor and protect District property; 2) to foster the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors while at work or participating in school functions; 3) in response to specific inquiries and proceedings relating to law enforcement; and 4) when warranted, for specific student discipline. Video recordings may not be used for any other purposes.
2. Video cameras will be utilized in school buildings, on school grounds, and on buses as recommended by building administration and approved by the Superintendent. The District shall notify students, staff, and the public that video surveillance may occur on school property. Such notification will occur through incorporation in the school parent/student handbooks, District and school websites, and/or through signs displayed near the main entrance of each school. Video cameras may only be installed on buses with prior notice provided to drivers.
3. Video recording equipment will be installed prominently. Equipment should not monitor areas where the students, employees and public have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as locker rooms, and adult and student restrooms. Video recording equipment may be in operation 24 hours per day, and monitored “live” by local law enforcement personnel.
4. The Superintendent and the Director of Security will retain administrative oversight of the District’s surveillance camera program. The use of video surveillance equipment on school grounds shall be supervised and controlled by the respective building Principal. The use of video surveillance on the school buses shall be supervised and controlled by the Transportation Supervisor. The building Principal operates the system and maintains the recordings; however, the downloading of any video onto a portable data storage device shall only be performed by the Director of Security (Custodian of Recordings).
5. Video recordings should only be reviewed where there is a need to do so, either because an incident has been reported or is suspected to have occurred. Examples of such include, but are not limited to: incidents of vandalism and/or property damage, theft, trespassing, assault, illicit drugs, personal injury, or bullying, etc.

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Video Surveillance in School Buildings, Campuses, and Buses

Video Surveillance System Operation (continued)

6. Administrative staff, School Security Personnel, and School Resource Officers assigned to the video surveillance system will be required to review and apply these regulations in performing their duties and functions related to operation of the system. All staff and students shall be made aware of the Board's video surveillance policy. The regulations shall be incorporated into training and orientation programs. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent and school administration to review and update the regulations periodically.
7. Staff and students are prohibited from unauthorized use, tampering with or otherwise interfering with video recordings and/or video camera equipment and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and/or arrest. Disciplinary action shall be consistent with District policies.
8. The District shall provide reasonable safeguards including, but not limited to, password protection, well managed firewalls and controlled physical access to protect the surveillance system from hackers, unauthorized users and unauthorized use.
9. Video monitors shall be located in administrative offices and/or at security work stations within the school. Local law enforcement personnel shall also have the ability to monitor the system "live". Parental requests to inspect recorded video surveillance must be made in writing.
10. Video surveillance equipment will be used in accordance with all Board of Education policies including the District's nondiscrimination policy.

Storage/Security

1. Video recordings held for review of property or student incidents will be maintained in their original form pending resolution. Video recordings will be stored for a minimum of thirty calendar days after initial recording. The vehicle for temporary storage will be the respective school principal and/or his or her designee's computer hard-drive. If the Principal and/or designee know no reason for continued storage, such recordings will be deleted/erased. Any recordings copied by the Custodian of Recordings for any purpose will follow established procedures outlined in this policy.

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Requests to View Video Surveillance

Requests to review video recordings shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and with Board Policy. All requests for review of video recordings that are considered an educational record will be as follows:

1. All viewing requests must be submitted in writing. Requests for viewing will be limited to those parents/guardians, students, and/or District officials with a direct interest in the proceedings as authorized by the Principal and only the portion of the video recording concerning the related specific incident will be made available for viewing.
2. Written requests for viewing may be made to the Principal within ten school calendar days of the date of recording.
3. Approval/denial for viewing will be made within seven school calendar days of receipt of the request and so communicated to the requesting individual.
4. Video recordings will be made available for viewing within seven school calendar days of the request approval.
5. Actual viewing will be permitted only at school-related sites including the school buildings; or the District office.
6. All viewing will include the Superintendent, Custodian or Recordings, building Principal or his/her designee.
7. A written log will be maintained at the District Office or at each school building of those viewing video recordings including the date of viewing, reasons for viewing, date the recording was made, location at school or central office, and signature of the viewer.
8. Video recordings will remain the property of the District and may be reproduced only in accordance with the law, including applicable Board policy and regulations.
9. Time lines may be altered for requests for viewing which arise at the end of a school year or prior to vacation periods.

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Video Surveillance in School Buildings, Campuses, and Buses

Student Records

1. Video recordings may become a part of a student's educational record. The District shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and District Board policies related to record maintenance and retention.
2. Parents/students and the public will not be specifically notified when a video camera is in use.

Video Surveillance Notification to Post on District and School Websites and Literature

The Newtown Board of Education has authorized the use of electronic surveillance systems on school property and on school buses transporting students. The system will be used to monitor the behavior of students, staff, and building visitors in order to promote and maintain a safe and secure environment for all. Students and parents are hereby notified that the content of the surveillance system may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. Surveillance content will be routinely erased on a periodic basis or ~~be~~ retained if necessary for use in a student disciplinary proceeding or other matter as determined necessary by the administration. Parents may request to view surveillance contents used in a disciplinary proceeding involving their child.

In addition, visitors to the school site should be aware that local law enforcement officials monitor the video surveillance, and may utilize surveillance video data for investigatory and prosecutorial purposes.