

Community Relations

Digital Recording and Media of Students/Staff

The Thomaston Board of Education is committed to ensuring the privacy, safety, and security of all students and staff while allowing for the use of currently available technology for educational, professional development, and other purposes determined appropriate by the District.

1. Definitions

- a. **Digital Recording:** The act of capturing audio, video, or still images using electronic equipment, where the data is encoded into a format that can be stored, transmitted, and retrieved.
- b. **Electronic Consent:** A legally recognized agreement or permission obtained through digital means, such as an e-signature, a checked box on a parent portal, or an emailed confirmation, rather than a physical paper form.
- c. **Personal Technology Devices:** Any non-district-owned hardware capable of recording or storing data, including smartphones, personal tablets, smartwatches, and private laptops.
- d. **Cloud Storage:** The practice of storing digital recordings on remote servers accessed via the internet rather than a local hard drive or physical server.
- e. **Protected Settings:** Specific designated private/confidential areas that restrict access to recordings and prevent the content from being publicly searchable or shareable.
- f. **Encryption:** The process of encoding recordings so only authorized parties can view them.
- g. **Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Any data that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity. In the context of digital recordings, it includes a student's face, voice, or even a unique birthmark. Under FERPA, PII is strictly protected to ensure that a classroom video does not, by accident, become a public record of a specific child's presence.

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Digital Recording and Media of Students/Staff (continued)

2. Consent Requirements

- a. **Staff Members:** Digital recording (video or audio) of school district employees requires the prior written or electronic consent of the Principal and the participating staff.
- b. **Students:** If a student is the primary subject of a recording or is clearly identifiable, prior written consent via a Media Release/Waiver must be obtained from the student's legal guardian via PowerSchool

3. Scope of Use

- a. **Purpose Limitation:** Recordings may only be used for the specific purpose outlined in the original consent form, including but not limited to a specific classroom project, teacher evaluation, or school website content.
- b. **Personal Devices:** The use of personal smartphones or wearable technology by staff to record students is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the administration for a documented educational purpose.
- c. **AI:** The use of AI to digitally record is prohibited for staff or students unless written notification is approved by School Administration and all parties.

4. Exceptions

- a. **Security Surveillance:** Recordings made by authorized school security/CCTV systems.
- b. **Public Events:** Large-scale recordings of public performances, including but not limited to graduation ceremonies, or athletic events where there is no expectation of privacy.

Instructional Necessity: Short-term recordings used solely for immediate student feedback or clearly identified instructional purposes

The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to develop and implement Administrative Regulations to ensure this policy is implemented consistently with the Board's expectations and compliant with all State and Federal Law, judicial decisions, and other compliance requirements.

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Digital Recording and Media of Students/Staff (continued)

(cf. 1112 - News Media Relations)
(cf. 1112.5 - Media Access to Students)
(cf. 5125 - Student Records)
(cf. 6145.4 - Student Performances)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-209 Records not to be public
1-200 et seq. (Freedom of Information Act)
1-226 Recording, broadcasting or photographing meetings
31-48d Employers engaged in electronic monitoring to give prior notice to employees
53a-189a Disseminating Voyeuristic Material

Federal Statutory References

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq
Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), 15 U.S.C. §§ 6501–6506
Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232h

Judicial Decisions

Safford Unified School District #1 v. Redding, 557 U.S. 364 (2009),
Docket No. 08-479
Letter to Wachter (FPCO, 2017)

Media Consent & Release Form

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ School: _____

The (District Name) Public Schools uses digital media to document student learning and celebrate achievements. Please indicate your preference below:

1. General Educational Use (Internal)

I grant permission for my child to be recorded for internal classroom purposes, including teacher-to-student feedback, student projects, and staff professional development.

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Public Media & Social Media (External)

I grant permission for the District to use my child's image, voice, or video in public-facing materials, including the school website, district social media accounts, and local news press releases.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Name Printed: _____

Date: _____

(Rationale for review purposes only – NOT FOR USE IN FORM)

1. **The Collective List** ensures the main office maintains an updated "Do Not Record" list in a central location for staff access.
2. **Tiered Consent** provides parents an opportunity to select among a range of options/scenarios when and where their children can be recorded.
3. **Security Compliance** ensures appropriate restrictions on personal technology device use for recording and storing student images.)

Teacher Guide for Recording in the Classroom

1. **Always Check the Master Media List:** Before recording in the classroom, verify that every student in the frame has a signed Media Release on PowerSchool.
2. **Use Approved Technology Only:**
 - a. **District Devices:** Use school-issued iPads, cameras, or laptops.
3. **Storage & Sharing:**
 - a. **Internal Only:** Recordings used for student feedback or teacher coaching remain on the District drive.
 - b. **Public Sharing:** If you wish to post a school-related recording on the school's social media page, you must have consent for every identifiable student via PowerSchool
4. **When NOT to Record:**
 - a. **Private or "Special" Places:** Never record in bathrooms, locker rooms, nurse's offices, or other areas considered private and require confidentiality.
 - b. **Peer Conflicts:** Do not record student-to-student disciplinary issues unless directed by administration for security purposes.

Administrative Checklist for Implementing the Policy

1. Update Master Media List Monthly. (Central Registration Secretary)
2. Regularly Provide Staff Training on AI Tools (Qualified Internal Staff/Tech Coaches/Trainers)