

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
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Memo No. VCSCS 21-008

MEMO To: Virginia Public School Division Superintendents
(Please share with other division staff, schools, and first responder partners as appropriate)

From: Donna Michaelis, Director

Date: November 20, 2020

Subject: **Information Sharing Guide for K–12 Schools**

The purpose of this memo is to announce the publication of a new Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) resource. The [2020 Virginia Information Sharing Guide for K-12 Public Schools](#) has been released and is available on our website.

This new resource provides detailed and practical guidance on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and how it relates to information sharing in the K–12 environment. This guide is broken down into three topical areas surrounding FERPA and sharing of student information. The first section addresses understanding and navigating FERPA. The second section looks at the role of mental health care providers. Finally, the third section explores the keys to making information sharing work through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The recently updated Model MOU is also available on the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) website ([Model MOU](#)) and reflects the requirement to update it every two years.

The Information Sharing Guide is intended to serve Virginia school officials and their partners as a desk reference that is easily accessible and relevant for issues surrounding the sharing of student information. This guide is meant as a resource for school and law enforcement personnel to help you identify issues for discussion with your legal counsel when considering how you can share and/or access pertinent student information in an effective and timely manner. This guide is not intended to provide legal advice, and should not be viewed as a substitute for legal advice from legal counsel consulted specifically by schools, divisions and/or law enforcement entities to provide such advice regarding the legal rules and considerations that apply in particular circumstances. Schools, divisions and law enforcement entities are encouraged in all cases to seek legal advice from their own counsel regarding the types of issues that are highlighted, in introductory, summary form only, in this guide.

In the coming months, the VCSCS will be scheduling webinar training sessions to introduce the guide and its content. We are pleased to be able to share this resource with you to assist you in your work and stand ready to support you in achieving your educational mission while keeping your school communities safe for all. We hope this resource will help you make informed decisions with important and time-sensitive information sharing.

Please contact Kristina Fawcett, Technical Assistance and Information Dissemination Coordinator, at (804) 225-3948 or kristina.fawcett@dcjs.virginia.gov to request technical assistance or a training.

To receive future training announcements on this and other topics, please sign up for our [DCJS Updates](#). Current DCJS online and in-person trainings can be found on the DCJS [Training and Events](#) page.