



Parents' Common Questions around Privacy and Video Use

1. What is a video observation?

A video observation is the process of watching a recorded classroom lesson and providing feedback on that lesson for improvement. With your permission, your child's teacher may use video observations for self-reflection, peer collaboration, formative coaching, formal evaluation, or to contribute to a video archive to be shared with other teachers within the school district.

2. Why are video observations helpful?

Video observations empower both teachers and administrators to do their best at their jobs. Teachers are likely to be able to leverage video to identify particular student needs, evaluate the effectiveness of a lesson, and be more reflective on their practice. Administrators are freed from time constraints of watching live instruction, can target feedback to specific practices, and can better recognize opportunities for professional development and peer support.

3. How will my child be involved?

Your child will be present during the recording, but the primary focus of the camera will be your child's teacher. Class will proceed normally; the recording will not cause distractions or disruptions to the usual routine. Your child will not be identified on video, although in the course of the class they may be referred to by first name. No data will be collected from your child, and there will be no educational profile or tracking information created for your child as a result of this recording.

4. Will these videos be released, sold, or used for any other non-educational purpose?

No, the purpose of these videos is to provide high quality feedback to teachers. As such, the videos will only be viewed by principals and other observers, whose sole focus during the recording will be to observe teachers. Videos will almost never be disseminated to anyone else; if a situation arises in which that might be necessary, your permission will be sought.

5. What are the benefits for my child?

Over time, video observations will help teachers to specifically identify their individual strengths and areas for growth, resulting in more effective, engaging instruction for your child.

6. What are the risks for my child?

Video recordings have no significant risks for your child. As the observations are focused on the teacher, nothing that happens during a recording will reflect on your child. The videos will be safely stored and visible only to a few observers and the teacher in question.

7. How are video observations regulated under federal education laws?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that was created to govern the protection of student records in all schools who receive funds from the U.S. Department of Education. Classroom observation videos are considered a student record and therefore will be governed by FERPA. Parents must provide consent for their children to be recorded, and have the right to access the video upon request. You can learn more about FERPA on the [Department of Education website](#).¹

¹ For educators: Please refer to your district or state department of education website or contact them directly to learn more about your area's legal policies and practices around video. When implementing policies that include minors, audio and/or video recordings, and the Internet, you should always consult with your legal team.

