

## **Collaborating with Schools to Collect Student Information**

Schools in Washington State comply with applicable federal and state laws to ensure that personally identifiable information from students' education records are not disclosed without the consent of a parent or an eligible student. This includes the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For DBHR contractors who provide school-based programs, it is important to have a plan for complying with local policies to allow contractors to report on programs and services as contractually required by DBHR.

1. What information is required to be reported to DBHR and why?

Federal and state funding sources require DBHR to report certain data in order to ensure funds are spent appropriately and to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention services. DBHR requires contractors to report into the Substance Abuse Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Online Reporting System the information needed to meet DBHR's federal and state reporting requirements. This includes for individual participants the individual's first and last name, date of birth, age at first service, gender, city, state, zip code, race, and ethnicity. There are additionally optional data elements which are not required to be reported to DBHR.

2. Is DBHR's Substance Abuse Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Online Reporting System secure?

DBHR's Online Reporting System is secure. Access to the Online Reporting System is limited to known users with a unique username and password, IT security policies and protocols protect against unauthorized access, and the system is protected by physical barriers (i.e. locked doors and keycard access to the building). DBHR contractors implementing prevention services also have their own security systems and policies.

3. How can DBHR contractors work with school districts to collect this information?

Because local school districts set their own policies regarding student information (within the guidelines of state and federal law), DBHR contractors should work with local school districts about the best way to ensure that the required information is collected by those providing prevention services in schools and reported to DBHR. Local school districts may ask contractors to secure parental consent or the consent of students eligible to provide such consent on their own.

Some steps to consider include:

- Find and read local school districts' policies on student directory information under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- Work with local school districts' Administrations to understand local policies which may include asking for consent.
- Most school districts already have consent forms that may be used for this purpose or will be able to provide samples that contractors can modify for their specific programs and services.
- Ensure that when programs are implemented in schools, there is a plan for collecting, securing, transporting, and reporting confidential or sensitive data collected on program participants.
- There are a number of optional demographic questions as part of the Online Reporting System that students do not have to answer. These fields can be removed from documents such as information sheets and Participant Intake Forms.