



Cambridge Public Schools Media Release: Frequently Asked Questions Regarding

Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) celebrates the accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff through a variety of broadcast, online, print, and audio media. CPS is committed to protecting student privacy. Student Data may include, but is not limited to, a student's name, likeness, spoken words, student work, performance or movement, recorded, in any form, including, but not limited to, images, film, recordings, photographs, audio recordings, video recordings or written documents (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Works"). Parents/guardians/caregivers have the right **to authorize, not authorize, or limit the release of such Works. *Verbal permission from a parent/guardian/caregiver is not acceptable.***

****Please Note:** With the proliferation of mobile digital and electronic media, CPS cannot control the actions of private individuals or organizations that are not part of or connected to the school district and that at school-related activities that are open to the public (e.g., athletic events, music concerts, school plays and/or graduations) students who are either participating or spectators may be recorded, filmed, photographed, audiotaped or videotaped.**

1. What is the purpose of a media release?

A media release has two purposes:

- To allow school staff, CPS volunteers, chaperones, student teachers, interns and/or CPS-contracted vendors to be able to record, film, photograph, audiotape or videotape a student's image, likeness, spoken words, student work, performance and movement in any form if they have a signed media release on file; and
- To authorize, not authorize, or limit the release of student data that may include a student's name, likeness, spoken words, student work, performance or movement.

There are three options for release:

A. Most Helpful and Flexible

To permit CPS, community partner organizations, or news media outlets (broadcast, digital, and/or print) to record, film, photograph, audiotape or videotape a child's name, image, likeness, spoken words, student work, performance and movement and learning experiences in any form, whether undertaken by the Cambridge Public Schools, school staff, students or news media (i.e., newspapers, television, radio, etc.) from outside of the Cambridge Public Schools. I further authorize the Cambridge Public Schools and outside news media to use, display, publish, distribute or exhibit these Works or any part thereof, in any and all manners, including without limitation in connection with any material that may be created by the Cambridge Public Schools and/or outside news media, including its website and social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, any website that has been approved by the Cambridge Public Schools Information, Communications, and Technology Services Department and/or for broadcasting on television, including Cambridge Educational Access (CEA) and/or displaying, publishing, distributing or exhibiting such information at community or school-based events, and other publications such as school newsletters, at a school open house or a public exhibition of student work or announcement of a student's scholarship, awards, honors and/or post-high schools plans or as part of classroom instruction.

B. Flexible

To permit CPS and/or the child's school to record, film, photograph, audiotape or videotape a child's name, image, likeness, spoken words, student work, performance and movement and learning experiences in any form, and to use, display, publish, distribute

or exhibit these Works or any part thereof, in all manners, for the purpose of and in connection with any material that may be created by the Cambridge Public Schools and/or School's website and social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, any website that has been approved by the Cambridge Public Schools Information, Communications, and Technology Services Department and/or for broadcasting on television, including Cambridge Educational Access (CEA) and/or displaying, publishing, distributing or exhibiting such information at community or school-based events, and other publications such as school newsletters, at a school open house or a public exhibition of student work or announcement of a student's scholarship, awards, honors and/or post-high schools plans or as part of classroom instruction.

C. Restrictive

To permit CPS and/or the child's school to record, film, photograph, audiotape or videotape a child's name, image, likeness, spoken words, student work, performance and movement and learning experiences in any form and to use, display, publish, distribute or exhibit these Works or any part thereof, in all manners, for the purpose of and in connection with any any school-based purpose including, but not limited to, posting my child's photo inside of a classroom or school building or school hallway, allowing my child to participate in recorded school projects, using photos, film or recordings for instructional use or service provision, for creating classroom photo "memory books" for students and their families, for creating classroom newsletters or other such publications for students and their families and/or displaying, publishing, distributing or exhibiting such information at community or school-based events (such as the school's open house or a public exhibition of student work or as part of classroom instruction) or for including my child in school-wide contexts such as class pictures or school slide-shows for showcasing student work and performances.

2. What is the school district's process for obtaining media releases for students?

At the beginning of each school year, the media release is distributed to parents/guardians/caregivers as part of the annual forms process, however, the media release can be completed at any point through the [Family Portal](#). Family liaisons also do significant outreach to ensure families are completing all of the forms, including the media release.

3. Is verbal permission from a parent/guardian/caregiver to record, film, photograph, audiotape or videotape their child acceptable?

No, verbal permission is not sufficient for authorization.

4. How does a school/staff member know if a student has a signed media release on file?

A staff member can [log in to Aspen](#) to view this information. After locating the student in Aspen, select "Forms" from the drop-down menu to see this information. School staff can also contact the school clerk.

5. If a student is not authorized to be recorded, filmed, photographed, audiotaped or videotaped will they be excluded from a learning experience or activity?

No, a student will not be excluded from participating. CPS and/or school are responsible for knowing which students have a signed media release on file.

6. Could a student who does not have a signed media release on file be cropped or edited out of the work?

No, a student must have a signed media release on file **prior to** being recorded, filmed, photographed, audiotaped or videotaped. If a student who does not have a signed media release on file is inadvertently recorded, filmed, photographed, audiotaped or videotaped, then the recording, film, photograph, audiotape or videotape of the student must be destroyed unless the parent/guardian/caregiver gives specific written authorized consent for use of that specific work.

7. What steps does a school need to take if a student does not have a media release on file and a specific or special event is being planned?

If the event has been approved by the Principal, the school will work with the Office of Legal Counsel regarding the creation of a customized media release for the specific event. The school will share the customized release with the parents/guardians/caregivers of those students who do not already have a signed media release on file to sign prior to the event.

8. How long should signed media releases be retained?

Signed media releases must be retained for either seven years after the last date of the school year in which the media release was executed or seven (7) years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from CPS, whichever is later.

9. Are original recordings, film, photographs, audiotapes or videotapes ever released?

If all students in the original Work have selected Option A or B for the media release, copies of recordings, film, photographs, audiotape or videotape may be released by CPS, in whole or in part, by CPS to local media, whether print, electronic, digital or other forms of media, and in school district and/or school-based publications, whether print, electronic, digital or other forms of media, including the CPS website and social media, any website that has been approved for use by the CPS Information, Communication and Technology Services (ICTS) Department, for broadcasting on television, including Cambridge Educational Access (CEA-TV), and/or displaying, publishing, distributing or exhibiting such information at community or school-based events, such as a school open house, public exhibition of student work or awards, or as part of classroom instruction.

10. How long are recordings, film, photographs, audiotapes or videotapes maintained before they are erased or destroyed?

It depends on the content and nature of the recordings, film, photographs, audiotape or videotape. The Principal should be consulted before any recordings, film, photographs, audiotapes or videotapes are destroyed.

11. Does the media release cover the use of recordings, film, photographs, audiotape or videotape by external organizations or sources for purposes other than the school district highlighting and sharing the activities and achievements of CPS students, such as inclusion in professional development materials, submission in connection with an application for an educator award, or grant?

No, if a staff member is contemplating the use of recordings, film, photographs, audiotape or videotape by external organizations or sources for their own purposes (in other words, purposes other than the school district highlighting and sharing the activities and achievements of CPS students), then they will need to obtain approval from the Principal, who will then obtain approval from the Superintendent's Office. The school will then work with the Office of Legal Counsel regarding the creation of a customized media release for the specific request and share it with parents/guardians/caregivers of all the students who would be involved.

12. What if an external organization, such as a film or television show or a school of higher education, wants to record, film, photograph, audiotape or videotape during the school day?

The external organization must first obtain permission from the Superintendent's Office, the Principal, and the staff member(s) involved. If the request is approved, the Principal and the external organization will then work with the Office of Legal Counsel regarding the creation of a customized media release for the specific request and share it with parents/guardians/caregivers of all the students who would be involved.

Updated: July 14, 2023