

WAC 72-276-055 Processing of public records requests. (1) **Order of processing public records requests.** The public records officer or designee will process requests in the order that allows the most requests to be processed in the most efficient manner.

(2) **Acknowledging receipt of request.** Within five business days of receipt of the request, the public records officer will do one or more of the following:

(a) Make the records available for inspection or copying;

(b) If copies are requested and payment of a deposit for the copies, if any, is made or terms of payment are agreed upon, send the copies to the requestor;

(c) Provide a reasonable estimate of when records will be available;

(d) If the request is unclear or does not sufficiently identify the requested records, request clarification from the requestor. Such clarification may be requested and provided by telephone. The public records officer or designee may revise the estimate of when records will be available; or

(e) Deny the request.

(3) **If no response is received.** If the school does not respond in writing within five business days of receipt of the request for disclosure, the requestor should consider contacting the public records officer to ensure that the school received the request.

(4) **Protecting rights of others.** In the event that the requested records contain information that may affect rights of others and may be exempt from disclosure, the public records officer may, prior to providing the records, give notice to such others whose rights may be affected by the disclosure. Such notice should be given so as to make it possible for the affected persons to seek an order from a court to prevent or limit the disclosure. The notice to the affected persons will include a copy of the request.

(5) **Records exempt from disclosure.** Some records are exempt from disclosure, in whole or in part. If the school believes that a record is exempt from disclosure and should be withheld, the public records officer will state the specific exemption and provide a brief explanation of why the record or a portion of the record is being withheld. If only a portion of a record is exempt from disclosure, but the remainder is not exempt, the public records officer will redact the exempt portions, provide the nonexempt portions, and indicate to the requestor why portions of the record are being redacted.

(6) **Inspection of records.**

(a) Consistent with other demands, the school shall promptly provide space to inspect public records. No member of the public may remove a document from the viewing area or disassemble or alter any document. The requestor shall indicate which documents they wish the school to copy.

(b) The requestor must claim or review the assembled records within 30 days of the school's notification to them that the records are available for inspection or copying. The school will notify the requestor in writing of this requirement and inform the requestor that they should contact the school to make arrangements to claim or review the records. If the requestor or a representative of the requestor fails to claim or review the records within the 30-day period or make other arrangements, the school may close the request and refile the assembled records. Other public records requests can be processed ahead of a subsequent request by the same person for the same or almost identical records, which can be processed as a new request.

(7) **Providing copies of records.** After inspection is complete, the public records officer or designee shall make the requested copies or arrange for copying.

(8) **Electronic records.** The process for requesting electronic public records is the same as for requesting paper public records. When a person requests records in an electronic format, the public records officer will provide the nonexempt records or portions of such records that are reasonably locatable in an electronic format that is used by the school and is generally commercially available, or in a format that is reasonably translatable from the format in which the school keeps the record.

(9) **Providing records in installments.** When the request is for a large number of records, the public records officer or designee will provide access for inspection and copying in installments, if they reasonably determines that it would be practical to provide the records in that way. If, within 30 days, the requestor fails to inspect the entire set of records or one or more of the installments, the public records officer or designee may stop searching for the remaining records and close the request.

(10) **Completion of inspection.** When the inspection of the requested records is complete and all requested copies are provided, the public records officer or designee will indicate that the school has completed a diligent search for the requested records and made any located nonexempt records available for inspection. Then the public records officer will close the request.

(11) **Closing withdrawn or abandoned request.** When the requestor either withdraws the request or fails to fulfill their obligations to inspect the records or pay the deposit or final payment for the requested copies, the public records officer will close the request and indicate to the requestor that the school has closed the request.

(12) **Later discovered documents.** If, after the school has informed the requestor that it has provided all available records, the school becomes aware of additional responsive documents existing at the time of the request, it will promptly inform the requestor of the additional documents and provide them on an expedited basis.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 72.40.022, 34.05.220, 34.05.250, 28A.155.010, and 42.56.100. WSR 24-16-108, § 72-276-055, filed 8/5/24, effective 9/5/24. Statutory Authority: RCW 72.40.022 and 42.56.100. WSR 16-13-067, § 72-276-055, filed 6/13/16, effective 7/14/16.]