



## **THE COTTONWOOD SCHOOL**

### **Policy for Inspection of Public Records**

#### **I. Purpose**

This Policy sets forth The Cottonwood School's ("School") policies and procedures regarding requests for inspection of the School's public records under the California Public Records Act ("PRA") (Government Code section 6250 et seq.). The School recognizes the public's right to access public records and intends to provide public members with reasonable access to public records consistent with the law. If any provision of this Policy conflicts with the law, the law shall take precedence.

#### **II. How to Request Records**

Requests for the School's public records must be submitted to:

Principal  
The Cottonwood School  
7006 Rossmore Lane  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762  
Phone: 530-285-2578  
Fax: (530) 285-2580  
Email: pra@cottonwood.school

The Principal or designee may then determine the most appropriate employee of the School to assist in assembling any public records for production. To ensure that requests can be responded to appropriately, the School encourages that all requests be made in writing by submitting a Public Records Request Form, attached as Appendix A. While a request need not be in writing, if the requestor chooses not to reduce the request to writing, the Principal or designee shall reduce the request to writing and confirm the request with the requestor. To the extent possible, the requestor should specify, in writing, the records sought with sufficient detail to enable the School to identify particular records.

#### **III. Right to Inspect**

To the extent required by law, the School will make available all public records open to inspection by any person during normal business hours and by appointment only. However, if records are not readily available, or if portions of the records to be inspected must be redacted to protect exempt material, then the School must be given a reasonable period of time to perform these functions prior to inspection. Such records shall be examined in the presence of the staff member regularly responsible for their maintenance. Copies of public records may be obtained by any person, subject to compliance with the procedures set forth in this Policy and consistent with the law.

#### **IV. Records Exempt from Disclosure**

There are numerous circumstances under which public records are exempt from disclosure. Whether an exemption applies will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The School will determine which records or a portion thereof are exempt from disclosure consistent with the PRA and other relevant state and federal laws. The notification of denial or withholding of records must be in writing and shall provide the reason for the denial or withholding of records and shall set forth the names and titles or positions of each person responsible for the denial.

#### **V. Procedures for Responding to Requests for Inspection or Copies of Records**

The School will follow a two-step process when responding to a PRA request. First, within 10 calendar days of receiving any request to inspect or copy a public record, the School shall acknowledge receipt of the request and inform the requestor whether the School has disclosable public records in its possession that are responsive to the request and when it will make them available. Second, if the School determines that it has disclosable documents, it shall make the documents available within a reasonable time. If the School determines that it will not provide some records, it shall provide the grounds for withholding them and shall set forth the names and titles or positions of each person responsible for the denial.

In unusual circumstances, the School may extend the 10-day limit for an additional 14 days by providing written notice to the requestor setting forth the reasons for the extension and the date on which a determination is expected to be made. Unusual circumstances include, but only to the extent reasonably necessary to properly process the request, the following:

1. The need to search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other locations that are separate from the office processing the request;
2. The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records that are demanded in a single request;
3. The need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request, or among two or more components of the School having substantial subject matter interest therein;
4. The need to compile data, to write programming language or a computer program, or to construct a computer report to extract data.

If the request is ambiguous or unfocused, the School shall make a reasonable effort to elicit additional clarifying information from the requestor that will identify public records responsive to the request. To the extent reasonable under the circumstances, the School shall do all of the following in assisting the requestor:

1. Assist the member of the public to identify records and information that are responsive to the request or to the purpose of the request, if stated;

2. Describe the information technology and physical location in which the records exist; and
3. Provide suggestions for overcoming any practical basis for denying access to the records or information sought.

These requirements are deemed to have been satisfied if the School is unable to identify the requested information after making a reasonable effort to elicit additional clarifying information from the requestor that will help identify the record or records.

The School may charge a reasonable fee (not to exceed the direct costs of duplication) for preparation of copies of identifiable public records. Deposit of applicable fees is required prior to preparation and delivery of any requested records. Requests to waive applicable fees related to the direct cost of duplication shall be submitted to the Principal's Office.

In response to a request for public records sent or received on an employee's personal devices or accounts, the School shall disclose all public records that can be located with reasonable effort and that are otherwise subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act. The School's search for such public records shall be reasonably calculated to locate responsive documents. To fulfill such a request for public records, employees of the School may be asked to search for and disclose all responsive disclosable public records maintained on the employee's personal devices or accounts.

**Policy Approved by Board on October 20, 2020.**

**THE COTTONWOOD SCHOOL  
PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST FORM**

<b>Fee Schedule</b>	
<u>Duplication Cost</u>	Paper and electronic records (black): \$0.15 per page Paper and electronic records (color): \$0.25 per page Records provided on CDs: \$1.00 per disc Records provided on DVD: \$2.00 per disc
<u>Mailing Documents</u>	Envelope (letter sized) \$0.05 per envelope Envelope (9x12 or 12x13) \$0.10 per envelope Postage determined based on actual cost
The cost to construct a record, and the cost of programming and computer services necessary to produce a copy of the will be determined on a case-by-case basis pursuant to Government Code section 6253.9.	
<b>Requestor's Information</b>	
Name: _____ Title: _____ Organization: _____ Address: _____ _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____	
<b>Records Requested</b>	
I am requesting to inspect the following documents: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	
I am also seeking _____ copies of the documents listed above.	
I understand that The Cottonwood School will respond to all public records requests in compliance with the timelines provided under state law and consistent with its policies.	
I understand that in accordance with the School's Policy for Inspection of Public Records, the School may charge for the direct cost of duplication of public records as specified above. Payment is required in advance of duplication of the requested records. If more than 15 pages are requested, the School may require a deposit before making copies.	