

1                                   **SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA**  
2                                   **SADDLEBACK VALLEY AND LAGUNA BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

3                                   **Notice to Parent/Guardian/Surrogate**

4                                   **Notice of Procedural Safeguards**

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6                   This notice is provided to you as parents, legal guardians, surrogate parents or court appointed educational  
7 rights holder, because your child is receiving special education services or has been referred for possible placement  
8 in special education. This information is your Notice of Procedural Safeguards (Notice) as required under the  
9 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA is a federal law that requires school districts to provide a  
10 "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities, as defined further below. This Notice  
11 will also be provided to students who are entitled to these rights at age eighteen (18). The purpose of this Notice is to  
12 explain to you your rights as a parent of a child with disabilities under federal and state laws. In California, special  
13 education is provided to disabled students between birth and the student's twenty-second (22<sup>nd</sup>) birthday. Federal  
14 and state laws protect you and your child throughout the procedures for evaluation and identification of special  
15 education placement and services. Parents of children with disabilities have the right to participate in the  
16 individualized education program (IEP) process, including development of the IEP, and be informed of the availability  
17 of FAPE and of all available alternate programs, including public and nonpublic programs.

18                   A copy of this Notice will be given to you only one time a school year; except that a copy must also be given  
19 to you upon (1) initial referral or your request for evaluation; (2) upon the receipt of the first filing of a state complaint  
20 or due process complaint in a school year; (3) when a decision is made to make a disciplinary change of placement;  
21 or (4) upon your request. You have a right to receive this Notice in your primary/native language or other mode of  
22 communication, unless to do so is clearly not feasible. This Notice may also be translated orally to you if your  
23 primary/native language or other mode of communication is not a written language. **A copy of this Notice is**  
24 **available at:** <https://www.saddlespace.org/wuc/socselpa>  
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26                   The definitions below will help you understand the Notice of rights provided herein.  
27 (20 U.S.C. section 1415(d); 34 C.F.R. sections 300.29 and 300.504; Education Code sections 56021.1(a),  
28 56301(d)(2), 56321(b), and 56506(a).)  
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1 **DEFINITIONS**

2 **Children With Disabilities** also referred to as individuals with exceptional needs is defined by federal and state law  
3 as including children with intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language  
4 impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism,  
5 traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities;  
6 and who by reason thereof, need special education and related services.

7 (20 U.S.C. section 1402(3); 34 C.F.R. section 300.8; Education Code section 56026; 5 California Code of  
8 Regulations (CCR) section 3030.)

9 **Evaluation** means the assessment of your child using various tests and measures in accordance with state and  
10 federal laws to determine whether your child has a disability and the nature and extent of special education and  
11 related services needed by your child for his or her educational benefit. The assessment tools are individually  
12 selected for your child and are administered by trained and knowledgeable professionals employed or contracted by  
13 the school district. These tests do not include the basic tests given to all children in the school setting.

14 (34 C.F.R. sections 300.15, 300.304 – 300.311; Education Code sections 56302.5 and 56320.)

15 **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** is defined as a written document developed by your child’s IEP team that  
16 includes at least all of the following: (1) present levels of academic achievement and functional performance; (2)  
17 measurable annual goals; (3) a description of how the child’s progress toward meeting the annual goals will be  
18 measured and when periodic reports on progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals will be  
19 provided; (4) a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be  
20 provided to the child; (5) an explanation of the extent to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children  
21 in the general education programs; (6) a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary  
22 to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state and district wide  
23 assessments; and (7) the projected date for initiation and the anticipated duration, frequency and location of the  
24 programs, services and modifications included in the IEP.

25 (20 U.S.C. section 1414(d); 34 C.F.R. sections 300.22, 300.320-300.324; Education Code section 56345.)

26 **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** is defined as special education and related services that: (1) are  
27 provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to you; (2) meet the standards  
28 of the California Department of Education (CDE); (3) are provided in conformity with a written IEP developed for your  
29 child to confer an educational benefit; and (4) are provided in an appropriate preschool, elementary or secondary  
30 school program of the State, or in a nonpublic school if there is no appropriate program available in a school district.

31 (20 U.S.C. section 1402(9); 34 C.F.R. section 300.17; Education Code section 56040.)

1 **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** means that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities will  
2 be educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of  
3 children with disabilities from the regular education environment will occur only when the nature or severity of the  
4 disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be  
5 achieved satisfactorily.

6 (20 U.S.C. section 1412(a)(5); 34 C.F.R. section 300.114; Education Code section 56040.1.)

7 **Related Services** means transportation and such developmental, corrective and supportive services that may be  
8 required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, including the early identification and  
9 assessment of disabling conditions. Related services may also include:

- 10 1. Speech-language pathology and audiology services.
- 11 2. Interpreting services.
- 12 3. Psychological services.
- 13 4. Physical and occupational therapy.
- 14 5. Recreation, including therapeutic recreation.
- 15 6. Counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling.
- 16 7. Orientation and mobility services.
- 17 8. School health services and school nurse services.
- 18 9. Medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes only.
- 19 10. Social work services.
- 20 11. Parent counseling and training.

21 (20 U.S.C. section 1402(26); 34 C.F.R. section 300.34; Education Code section 56363.)

22 **Special Education** means specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child  
23 with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in  
24 other settings, and instruction in physical education.

25 (20 U.S.C. section 1402(29); 34 C.F.R. section 300.39; Education Code section 56031.)

## 27 **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL RECORDS**

28 All parents of a child enrolled in the school district have the right to inspect their child's educational records  
29 under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the California Education Code. Under the  
30 federal and state laws, parents of a child with disabilities (including noncustodial parents whose rights have not been  
31 limited) are presumed to and have the right to inspect and review all educational records regarding their child unless  
the school district has been advised that the parent does not have the authority to do so under applicable state laws.

1 This includes the right to inspect and review all educational records with respect to the identification, evaluation,  
2 educational placement and the provision of a FAPE, as well as to receive an explanation and interpretation of the  
3 records without unnecessary delay, including prior to a meeting regarding your child's IEP or before a resolution  
4 session or due process hearing. Under California statutes, parents have the right to review and to receive copies of  
5 educational records. You also have the right to have a representative inspect and review the records in accordance  
6 with FERPA. These rights transfer to a pupil upon their eighteenth (18<sup>th</sup>) birthday unless the pupil has had a  
7 conservator appointed by a court to assume the educational rights of the pupil.

8 Educational records are those records that are directly related to your child and maintained by the school  
9 district, or an agency, or institution acting for the school district that collects, maintains, or uses personally identifiable  
10 information, or from which information is obtained. Both federal and state laws further define an educational record or  
11 pupil record as any item of information directly related to an identifiable pupil, other than directory information, which  
12 is maintained by a school district, whether recorded by handwriting, print, computer media, video or audio tape, film,  
13 microfilm, microfiche or by other means. If records contain information about more than one child, you have access  
14 only to that portion of the record pertaining to your child. The school district must keep a record of parties obtaining  
15 access to educational records collected, maintained, or used under the IDEA, other than school district employees in  
16 accordance with FERPA.

17 The school district must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage,  
18 disclosure and destruction stages. All persons collecting or using personally identifiable information must receive  
19 training or instruction regarding the state's policies and procedures under the IDEA and FERPA. Each school district  
20 must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees who may have  
21 access to personally identifiable information.

22 The school district must inform you when personally identifiable information collected, maintained or used  
23 under the IDEA is no longer needed to provide educational services to your child. Upon receiving notice that the  
24 records are no longer necessary to the school district, you may request destruction of the records, which will take  
25 place either by physical destruction or by removing personal identifiers from the records so that the information is no  
26 longer personally identifiable. However, the school district is obligated to keep a permanent record for each child.

27 Personally identifiable information may include: (1) the name of the child, the child's parent or family  
28 member; (2) the address of the child; (3) a personal identifier such as the child's social security number, student  
29 number, court file number, or biometric record; (4) other indirect identifiers such as the child's date of birth, place of  
30 birth and mother's maiden name; (5) a list of personal characteristics or other information that would make it possible  
31 to identify the child with a reasonable certainty. Parental consent must be obtained before personally identifiable  
information is disclosed to parties other than school district employees and in accordance with FERPA.

1 The custodian of records at each school site is the principal of the school. The district custodian of records  
2 is the Director of Special Education. Pupil records may be kept at the school site or the district office, but a written  
3 request for records at either site will be treated as a request for records from all sites. The custodian of records will  
4 provide you with a list of the types and locations of pupil records (if requested). A request for a copy of your child's  
5 special education records may be made to the District's Director of Special Education.

6 A review and/or copies of educational records will be provided to the parent within five (5) business days  
7 after the request is made by the parent, either orally or in writing. A fee for copies, but not the cost to search and  
8 retrieve, is determined by local policy and will be charged unless charging the fee would effectively prevent the parent  
9 from exercising the right to receive the copies. Once a complete copy of the records has been provided, a fee will be  
10 charged for additional copies of the same records.

11 If you believe that information in the education records collected, maintained or used by the school district is  
12 inaccurate, misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the child, you may request in writing that the school  
13 district amend the information. If the school district agrees with your request, the record will be amended and you will  
14 be informed within a reasonable time after receipt of the request. Should the school district refuse to amend the  
15 information as requested, the school district will notify you of the right to a hearing to determine whether the  
16 challenged information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of your child.  
17 If you request a hearing, the school district will provide a hearing, within a reasonable time, which must be conducted  
18 according to the procedures for such hearings under FERPA.

19 If as a result of the hearing the school district decides the record will not be amended, you have a right to  
20 provide what you believe is a corrective written statement, which will be permanently attached to the contested record  
21 and also provided if the contested record is disclosed to any party. Additional information regarding your right to  
22 access and challenge educational records is available in the District's Annual Notice of Parent Student Rights and  
23 Responsibilities.

24 (20 U.S.C. section 1232g; 34 C.F.R. sections 99.1-99.67; 34 C.F.R. sections 300.610-300.625, 300.613; Education  
25 Code sections 48980, 49060-49079; Education Code sections 56041.5, 56043(n) and 56504; 5 CCR section  
26 432(b)(1).)

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28 **PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE**

29 The IDEA requires school districts to provide prior written notice to you as the parent of a child with  
30 disabilities when the school district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or  
31 educational placement of your child or the provision of a FAPE to your child or if you revoke consent in writing for the  
continued provision of special education and related services. The notice will be provided in your native language or

1 other mode of communication you use, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, and must be provided to you within a  
2 reasonable time.

3 The prior written notice must include:

- 4 1. A description of the action proposed or refused by the school district.
- 5 2. An explanation of why the school district proposes or refuses to take the action.
- 6 3. A description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the school district used  
7 as a basis for the proposed or refused action.
- 8 4. A description of other options that the IEP team considered and the reasons why those options  
9 were rejected.
- 10 5. A description of other factors that are relevant to the school district's proposal or refusal.
- 11 6. A statement that the parents of a child with a disability have protection under the procedural  
12 safeguards of the IDEA, and if this notice is not an initial referral for evaluation, the means by which  
13 a copy of a description of the procedural safeguards can be obtained.
- 14 7. Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of this part.

15 (20 U.S.C. section 1415(c); 34 C.F.R. sections 300.503 and 300.300(b)(4); Education Code section 56500.4.)  
16

### 17 **INFORMED PARENTAL CONSENT**

18 The IDEA requires that school districts obtain informed consent from you before the commencement of an  
19 initial evaluation of your child to determine if your child qualifies as a child with disabilities. Informed consent means  
20 you have been fully informed in your native language, or other mode of communication, of all information about the  
21 action for which you are giving consent and that you understand and agree in writing to the carrying out of the activity  
22 for which consent is sought, such as an evaluation or educational placement decision for your child. Your consent is  
23 voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. Should you withdraw/revoke consent the revocation is not retroactive, it  
24 will not negate an action that has occurred after the consent was given and before the consent was revoked.

25 Your consent for the initial evaluation does not imply or grant consent for placement and receipt of special  
26 education and related services. The school district will request your consent for special education and related  
27 services separately and at a later date. The school district will also obtain your informed consent for reevaluations of  
28 your child and will not conduct a reevaluation unless you fail to respond to requests for your consent.

29 If you do not provide consent for an initial assessment or fail to respond to a request to provide the consent,  
30 the school district may pursue the initial assessment by using due process procedures.  
31

1 If you refuse to consent to the initiation of special education and related services, the school district must not  
2 provide special education and related services and shall not seek to provide services through due process  
3 procedures.

4 If at any time after the initial provision of special education and related services, you revoke consent in  
5 writing for the continued provision of special education and related services after having consented to those services  
6 in the past, the school district must provide you prior written notice before ceasing the provision of special education  
7 and related services to your child and shall not seek to provide services through due process procedures. If you  
8 submit a written revocation of consent after the initial provision of special education and related services to your child,  
9 the school district is not required to amend the education records of your child to remove any reference of your child's  
10 receipt of special education and services.

11 If you consent in writing to the receipt of special education and related services for your child but do not  
12 consent to all of the components of the IEP, those components of the program to which you have consented must be  
13 implemented so as not to delay providing instruction and services. If the school district determines that the proposed  
14 special education program component to which you do not consent is necessary to provide a free appropriate public  
15 education to your child, the school district must file a request for a due process hearing. If a due process hearing is  
16 held, the hearing decision shall be final and binding, unless appealed within 90 days from the date of the decision.

17 In the case of reevaluations, the school district must document reasonable measures to obtain your consent.  
18 If you fail to respond, the school district may proceed with the reevaluation without your consent.

19 (20 U.S.C. sections 1414(a)(1)(D), 1414(c) and 1415; 34 C.F.R. sections 300.9 and 300.300, 300.514 and 300.516;  
20 Education Code sections 56021.1, 56321(c) and (d), 56346, 56381(f) and 56506(e).)

21 When a parent cannot be identified and the school district cannot locate the whereabouts of a parent to  
22 obtain consent, the school district must ensure that an individual is assigned to act as a surrogate for the parents of a  
23 child with a disability. A surrogate parent may also be appointed for unaccompanied homeless youth or a child who  
24 is a dependent or ward and an educational representative has not been appointed by the Court.

25 (20 U.S.C. section 1415(b)(2); 34 C.F.R. section 300.519; Education Code section 56050; CA Rules of Court Rule  
26 5.650.)

27  
28 **PROTECTION IN EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

29 Federal law refers to "evaluation" and California law refers to "assessment". Therefore, these words may be  
30 used interchangeably by employees of the school district and in this Notice. The school district must provide you with  
31 a written assessment plan or prior written notice within fifteen (15) days after a referral for special education has been  
received, including your written request for evaluation. You will have a minimum of fifteen (15) days in which to

1 review the assessment plan and to provide consent to the school district to conduct the written assessment. The  
2 proposed assessment plan will be provided to you in your native language or other mode of communication used,  
3 unless to do so is clearly not feasible, and will include the following: the types of assessments to be conducted,  
4 notification that no education program will be developed from the assessment without your consent, description of  
5 any recent assessments conducted, including any available independent assessments and any assessment  
6 information you want considered, and information indicating your child's primary language and your child's proficiency  
7 in his/her primary language. You may request assessment in additional areas of suspected disability. Thereafter, the  
8 school district has sixty (60) days after receipt of your written consent to complete the assessment and to develop an  
9 IEP to determine the educational needs of your child. However, this timeline is extended by periods of school holiday  
10 or vacation, if you refuse to make your child available for assessment, or if your child transfers to another school  
11 district and you and the receiving school district agree to a specific time when the assessment will be completed.

12 The IDEA states that in conducting the evaluation the school district will:

- 13 1. Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental and  
14 academic information, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining  
15 whether the child is a child with a disability and the content of the child's IEP, including information  
16 related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum or, for  
17 preschool children, to participate in appropriate activities;
- 18 2. Not use any single procedure as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a  
19 disability or determining an appropriate educational program for the child; and
- 20 3. Use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution  
21 of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.

22 The school district will also make sure that tests and other evaluation materials used to assess your child  
23 are selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally or sexually discriminatory and are provided and  
24 administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.  
25 Any standardized tests that are given to the child will have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are  
26 used, administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel, and administered in accordance with any instructions  
27 provided by the producer of such tests. Your child will be assessed in all areas of suspected disability and the school  
28 district will use assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that will directly assist the school  
29 district in determining the educational needs of your child. Upon completion of the administration of evaluation  
30 materials, the determination of whether the child is a child with a disability will be made by you and qualified  
31 professionals comprising the IEP team. A copy of the evaluation report and documentation of the determination of  
eligibility will be given to you.



1 In making a determination of eligibility, your child will not be determined to be a child with a disability due to  
2 a lack of instruction in reading or math or as a result of limited English proficiency.

3 As part of an initial evaluation (if appropriate) and as part of any reevaluation under this section, the IEP  
4 Team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, will:

- 5 1. Review existing evaluation data on the child, including evaluations and information provided by  
6 you, current classroom-based assessments and observations, and teacher observation; and
- 7 2. On the basis of that review, and input from you, identify what additional data, if any, are needed to  
8 determine:
  - 9 a. Whether the child has a particular disability, or, in case of reevaluation of a child, whether  
10 the child continues to have such a disability and such educational needs;
  - 11 b. The present levels of performance and related developmental needs of the child;
  - 12 c. Whether the child needs special education and related services, or in the case of a  
13 reevaluation of a child, whether the child continues to need special education and related  
14 services; and
  - 15 d. Whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are  
16 needed to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the IEP of the  
17 child and to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.

18 Generally, a reevaluation is required every three (3) years. However, if the IEP Team determines that no  
19 additional data is needed to determine whether your child continues to be a child with a disability and to determine  
20 the child's educational needs the school district will notify you as to the reasons the school district believes a  
21 reevaluation is not necessary. After receiving this notice, you may request a reevaluation of your child. If the school  
22 district does not receive a reevaluation request from you, the school district will not conduct a reevaluation of your  
23 child.

24 Before determining that your child is no longer a child with a disability, the school district must conduct an  
25 assessment in accordance with the procedures discussed above.

26 (20 U.S.C. sections 1414, 1415; 34 C.F.R. sections 300.301 – 300.306; Education Code sections 56320, 56321,  
27 56329, and 56381; 5 CCR section 3022.)

### 28 **INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION**

29 After the school district has completed its evaluation, if you disagree with the school district's evaluation of  
30 your child and notify the school district of your disagreement, you have the right to request an independent  
31 educational evaluation at school district expense. Upon your request for an independent educational evaluation, the

1 school district will provide you with information about where to obtain an independent educational evaluation and the  
2 district's criteria applicable for independent educational evaluations. A parent is entitled to only one (1) independent  
3 educational evaluation at public expense each time the district conducts an evaluation with which the parent  
4 disagrees. However, if the school district disagrees that an independent educational evaluation is necessary, the  
5 school district must request a hearing before a due process hearing officer to dispute your request for an independent  
6 educational evaluation and to show that the school district's assessment is appropriate. If the school district prevails,  
7 you still have the right to an independent evaluation but not at public expense. If you choose to obtain an  
8 independent educational evaluation at your own expense, the results of the assessment must be considered by the  
9 district. The independent educational evaluation must comply with all of the requirements that apply to school district  
10 evaluations.

11 If the school district observes your child in his or her classroom during an assessment, or if the school  
12 district procedures provide for in-class observations, an equivalent opportunity must be provided for any independent  
13 educational evaluation in the current and any proposed educational placement.

14 If you unilaterally place your child in a nonpublic school and you propose the placement in the nonpublic  
15 school to be publicly financed, the school district must be given the opportunity to first observe the proposed  
16 placement and your child in the proposed placement.

17 (20 U.S.C. section 1415(b)(1); 34 C.F.R. section 300.502; Education Code section 56329.)

### 18 **IEP MEETINGS**

19  
20 As the parent of a special education student, you have the right to be a part of the IEP Team and participate  
21 in any meeting regarding the identification, assessment and educational placement of your child. The term IEP or  
22 Individualized Education Program means a written document for each child with a disability that is developed,  
23 reviewed and revised in accordance with federal and state law. The IEP includes the child's present levels of  
24 academic achievement and functional performance and must consider your concerns as a parent for improving the  
25 education of your child. As a parent, you have the right to be a member of any group that makes decisions with  
26 respect to the educational placement of your child. You also have the right to bring individuals who have knowledge  
27 or special expertise regarding your child to an IEP meeting. The school district will provide you with a copy of the IEP  
28 in your primary language upon request. If you are a parent of a child age three through five years, the individualized  
29 family service plan (IFSP) may serve as the IEP if agreed to by the parent and the school district.

30 Federal and state law requires that the first IEP to be in effect beginning at age sixteen include a statement  
31 of the transition service needs of the child and that the IEP be updated annually thereafter. Beginning at age sixteen  
or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, appropriate measurable postsecondary goals related to

1 training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills, a statement of needed transition  
2 services for the child, including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages between  
3 the agencies is required. Beginning at least one year before the child reaches age eighteen (18), a statement must  
4 be included in the IEP that the child has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer to the child on reaching  
5 the age of majority. Under California law, when a child turns age eighteen (18), he or she is considered an adult and  
6 unless the parent obtains a conservatorship or guardianship over the child through court proceedings, the child may  
7 make decisions regarding his or her education.

8 In developing an IEP for your child, the IEP Team must include positive behavioral intervention strategies  
9 and supports in cases where the child's behavior prevents the child from learning and consider, when appropriate,  
10 strategies, including positive behavioral intervention strategies and supports to address the child's behavior. The  
11 regular education teacher of your child, as a member of the IEP Team, must to the extent appropriate, participate in  
12 the development of the IEP of your child, including the determination of appropriate, positive behavioral intervention  
13 strategies and the determination of supplementary agency services, program modifications and support for the school  
14 personnel.

15 The IEP will be reviewed by the IEP Team at least annually in order to determine whether the annual goals  
16 for your child are being achieved and revise the IEP as appropriate to: (1) address any lack of anticipated progress  
17 toward the annual goals and in the general curriculum, where appropriate, (2) to address the results of any  
18 reevaluation conducted, (3) to address information about your child provided by you, and 4) to address your child's  
19 anticipated needs, if necessary. Your child will also receive report cards in the same manner as regular education  
20 students. You and the school district may agree in writing that the attendance of an IEP Team member is not  
21 necessary because the member's area of curriculum or related service is not being modified or discussed at the  
22 meeting. In addition, if you and the school district agree in writing to excuse a member of the IEP team from the IEP  
23 Team meeting, in whole or in part, when the meeting involves a modification to or discussion of the member's area or  
24 the curriculum or related service, the member must submit in writing to you and the IEP Team, input into the  
25 development of the IEP prior to the meeting. Under state law, you have the right to electronically record IEP  
26 meetings by audio tape if you give 24 hours notice to other members of the IEP Team. After the annual IEP meeting  
27 for a school year, you and the school district may agree in writing not to convene an IEP meeting to make changes to  
28 the annual IEP, and instead may develop a written document to amend or modify the current IEP.

29 (20 U.S.C. section 1414(d); 34 C.F.R. sections 300.320-300.324; Education Code sections 56032, 56304, 56341,  
30 56341.1, 56341.5, 56342.5 and 56345; 5 CCR section 3040.)

1 **PLACEMENT (“STAY-PUT”) DURING THE PENDENCY OF**  
2 **DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES**

3 As a parent of a child with disabilities, should you get involved in a disagreement with the school district over  
4 the identification, evaluation or placement of your child and you file a request for a due process hearing, your child  
5 will remain (“stay-put”) in the current educational placement during the pendency of the proceedings. Unless you and  
6 the school district agree to a change in placement, or the school district obtains a court order or an order from a  
7 hearing officer, your child will remain in his or her current educational placement during the pendency of the  
8 proceedings. For initial admission to school, your child will be placed in a public school program, with parental  
9 consent, until the proceedings have been completed. There are exceptions to this general rule which allow the  
10 school district to place your child in an alternative educational setting for a limited period of time. These exceptions  
11 will be discussed in the next section on interim alternative educational settings.

12 (20 U.S.C. section 1415(j); 34 C.F.R. section 300.518; Education Code section 56505(d).)

13  
14 **INTERIM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS**

15 **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

16 School personnel may change the placement of your child if he or she violates a code of student conduct to  
17 (1) an appropriate interim alternative educational setting; (2) another educational setting, or (3) suspend your child for  
18 not more than ten (10) consecutive school days (to the extent such alternatives would be applied to children without  
19 disabilities) and for additional removals of not more than ten (10) consecutive school days in that same school year  
20 for separate incidents of misconduct. If school personnel seek a change in placement that exceeds more than ten  
21 (10) school days in the same school year, school personnel must determine if the behavior that gave rise to the  
22 violation of the code of student conduct is a manifestation of your child’s disability. If a determination is made that the  
23 behavior is not a manifestation of your child’s disability, school personnel may discipline your child under the same  
24 procedures applicable to children without disabilities.

25 In order to determine if the behavior that gave rise to the violation of the code of student conduct is a  
26 manifestation of your child’s disability, the school district, you and relevant members of the IEP Team must review all  
27 relevant information in your child’s file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information  
28 provided by you to determine if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to  
29 your child’s disability. This meeting must take place within ten (10) school days of any decision to take disciplinary  
30 action. If the IEP Team determines that the conduct is a manifestation of your child’s disability, the IEP Team must  
31 either conduct a functional behavioral assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for your child, or  
review and modify as necessary the existing behavioral intervention plan.

1 School personnel may also place your child in an interim alternative educational setting for up to forty-five  
2 (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of your child's disability,  
3 in cases where: (1) your child carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school  
4 function or activity; (2) your child knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled  
5 substance while at school, on school premises, or a school function or activity; or (3) your child inflicts serious bodily  
6 injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function or activity. The IEP team  
7 determines the interim alternative education setting for services.

8 After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for ten (10) school days in  
9 the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal the school district must provide services to enable the  
10 child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress  
11 toward meeting the IEP goals. If appropriate, the child may receive a functional behavioral assessment and behavior  
12 intervention services and modifications designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

13 No later than the date on which the decision to take disciplinary action against your child is made, the school  
14 district must notify you of that decision and notify you of your procedural safeguards. If you disagree with any  
15 decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination of your child, you may request an expedited due  
16 process hearing which must occur within twenty (20) school days of the date of the hearing request. During the  
17 pendency of the due process hearing, your child will remain in the interim alternative education setting pending the  
18 decision of the hearing officer or for forty-five (45) school days, whichever occurs first, unless you and the school  
19 district agree otherwise. If the school district believes it is dangerous for your child or others for your child to return to  
20 the current educational placement, the school district may request an expedited hearing.

21 A hearing officer may order a change in the placement of your child to an appropriate interim alternative  
22 educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days, if the hearing officer determines that maintaining your child  
23 in his or her current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to your child or to others.

24 (20 U.S.C. section 1415(k); 34 C.F.R section 300.530; Education Code section 48915.5.)

25  
26 **CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

27 **ENROLLED BY THEIR PARENTS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

28 A school district's obligation to children with disabilities enrolled in private schools is limited. Under the IDEA  
29 *"no parentally-placed private school child with a disability has an individual right to receive some or all of the special*  
30 *education and related services that the child would receive if enrolled in a public school."* School districts must  
31 locate, identify and assess all private school children with disabilities, including religiously affiliated school age  
children, who have disabilities and are in need of special education and related services, referred to as "child find".

1 The school district in which the private school is located, also referred to as the “District of Location” is responsible for  
2 conducting child find activities for children enrolled by their parents in private schools. If the District of Location is not  
3 the same school district in which the parents of the private school student reside, then the District of Location may  
4 contract with the school district of residence to assess the child.

5 Children with disabilities enrolled in private school may receive equitable special education services as  
6 determined through consultation with private schools and parents. In order to receive such equitable services, a  
7 “Service Plan” must be developed for the private school student and consented to by the parents. The school district  
8 in which the private school is located, the District of Location, is responsible for developing and implementing the  
9 Service Plan.

10 A parent of a child enrolled by that parent in a private school has the right to file a due process complaint  
11 only regarding the school district’s child find activities. A due process complaint must be filed with the school district  
12 in which the private school is located, the District of Location, and the California Department of Education (CDE).  
13 However, because there is no individual right to services for children enrolled by their parents in private school, any  
14 complaints regarding a Service Plan can only be filed in accordance with the CDE’s compliance complaint  
15 procedures.

16 (20 U.S.C. section 1412(a)(10)(A); 34 C.F.R. section 300.130–300.144; Education Code sections 56170–56177.)

17  
18 **UNILATERAL PLACEMENT BY PARENTS IN PRIVATE SCHOOL**

19 If you decide to unilaterally enroll your child in a private school after the school district made a free  
20 appropriate public education available to your child, the school district is not required to pay for the cost of your child’s  
21 education. In order to obtain reimbursement for the cost of the private school from the school district, including  
22 special education and related services, you must first attempt to obtain the consent of the school district, and  
23 establish that the school district does not have an appropriate program for your child. Reimbursement may be denied  
24 or reduced if: 1) at the most recent IEP meeting that you attended prior to removal of your child from the public  
25 school, you did not inform the IEP Team that you were rejecting the placement proposed by the school district to  
26 provide a free appropriate public education to your child, including a statement of your concerns and your intent to  
27 enroll your child in a private school at public expense; or 2) at least 10 business days prior to the removal of your  
28 child from the public school, you did not give written notice to the school district of your concerns regarding the  
29 school district’s proposed placement and your intent to enroll your child in a private school at public expense.

30 If the school district notifies you prior to the removal of your child from the public school that the school  
31 district wishes to evaluate your child and indicates the purpose of the evaluation, you should make your child  
available for the evaluation. If you have not complied with these requirements, a court or hearing officer may find that

1 you acted unreasonably in unilaterally removing your child from the public school and in placing your child in a private  
2 school. The court or hearing officer may deny you reimbursement unless you can show one or more of the following:  
3 1) you are illiterate and cannot write in English, or 2) the school district's placement would result in physical or serious  
4 emotional harm to your child.

5 (20 U.S.C. section 1412(a)(10)(C); 34 C.F.R. section 300.148; Education Code sections 56175-56177.)

## 6 7 **OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT AND RESOLVE COMPLAINTS**

### 8 **A. STATE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

9 The IDEA grants parents an opportunity to present and resolve complaints with respect to any matter  
10 relating to the identification, evaluation or educational placement of your child or the provision of a free appropriate  
11 public education to your child. Written complaints may be filed with the school district or the state or federal agencies  
12 at the addresses listed below. Compliance complaints must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1)  
13 year prior to the date the complaint is received. A copy of the written complaint must also be provided to the school  
14 district serving the child at the same time it is filed with the state agency. The school district, state or federal agency  
15 has sixty (60) days from the date of receipt of the complaint to render a decision in the matter. For complaints filed  
16 with the school district, within fifteen (15) days of receiving the school district's decision, you may appeal the school  
17 district's decision to the California Department of Education (CDE). Complaints may also be filed directly with the  
18 CDE.

19 You may also avail yourself of the compliance complaint process to report an instance of discrimination,  
20 harassment, intimidation or bullying. A complaint must be filed with the school district no later than six months from  
21 the date the incident occurred, or the date you first obtained knowledge that the incident occurred. The timelines for  
22 conducting and completing an investigation of the complaint and rendering a decision are listed in the previous  
23 paragraph.

#### 24 25 **Saddleback Valley Unified School District**

26 Attn: Director of Special Education

27 25631 Peter A. Hartman Way

28 Mission Viejo, CA 92691

29 Phone: (949) 580-3218

30 Fax: (949) 454-1711

1 **Laguna Beach Unified School District**

2 Attn: Director of Special Education

3 550 Blumont Street

4 Laguna Beach, CA 92651

5 Phone: (949) 497-7700 x5208

6 Fax: (949) 497-3199

7  
8 **California Department of Education**

9 Special Education Division

10 Procedural Safeguards Referral Service

11 1430 N Street, Suite 2401

12 Sacramento, California 95814

13 Phone: 1-800-926-0648

14 Fax: (916) 327-3704

15 <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cp/uc/index.asp>

16  
17 **United States Department of Education**

18 Office for Civil Rights

19 50 Beale Street, Suite 7200

20 San Francisco, CA 94105

21 Phone: (415) 486-5555

22 Fax: (415) 486-5570

23 TDD: (800) 877-8339

24 <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

25  
26 The school district encourages you to file your complaint with the school district. We will meet with you and  
27 investigate your complaint in a timely manner and attempt to resolve any concerns. The school district has  
28 established confidential procedures for the filing of complaints. A complaint form is available from the school district.  
29 (20 U.S.C. Section 1415(b)(6); 34 C.F.R. section 300.153; Education Code section 56500.2; 5 CCR section 4600.)  
30  
31



1 **B. MEDIATION AND DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES**

2 The IDEA requires states to establish procedures for mediation and impartial due process hearings  
3 regarding the identification, assessment, and educational placement of your child or the provision of a FAPE. You or  
4 the school district may file a request for mediation-only or a due process hearing complaint.

5 Your request for mediation-only or a due process hearing must include the name and address of the child,  
6 date of birth, grade level and name of the school the child is attending, parent information, parties to the mediation, a  
7 description of the nature of the problem, including facts relating to such problem, and a proposed resolution of the  
8 problem. The CDE has developed model forms to assist you in filing a request for mediation-only or a due process  
9 hearing. You may access these model forms at:

10 <http://www.dgs.ca.gov/oah/home/forms.aspx>

11  
12 You must serve the mediation-only or due process hearing complaint on the school district and file a copy  
13 with the Office of Administrative Hearings at the address listed below:

14  
15 **Office of Administrative Hearings**

16 Attn: Special Education Division

17 2349 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 200

18 Sacramento, CA 95833-4231

19 Phone: (916) 263-0880

20 Fax: (916) 376-6319

21 [SEFilings@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:SEFilings@dgs.ca.gov)

22  
23 In California, mediation is voluntary. You may request a due process hearing or mediation-only. Mediation-  
24 only means you are asking for mediation without asking for a due process hearing. Mediation is an informal  
25 proceeding conducted in a nonadversarial manner. If you request mediation-only you and the school district will  
26 receive a notice that mediation has been scheduled, and the notice will contain the time, date and location of the  
27 mediation as well as the name, address, and phone number of a knowledgeable and impartial mediator assigned to  
28 the case. The mediation must be scheduled within 15 days of the Office of Administrative Hearing's receipt of the  
29 request. Attorneys cannot attend mediation-only. However, you or the school district may be accompanied and  
30 advised by non-attorney representatives. Statements made by you and the school district during mediation are  
31 confidential and may not be used in a due process hearing or court action. Any agreement reached during mediation  
must be in writing and signed by all parties. You may also ask the school district to resolve disputes through

1 alternative dispute resolution (ADR), which is also less adversarial than a due process hearing. ADR and mediation  
2 are voluntary methods of resolving a dispute. If the dispute is not resolved during mediation or through ADR, you  
3 may proceed to a due process hearing. Mediation or ADR are not prerequisites to requesting a due process hearing.

4 A due process hearing is a formal proceeding where you and the school district are given the opportunity to  
5 present witnesses, documentary evidence, and oral and written argument in support of your respective positions on  
6 disputed special education issues. You may request a mediation conference at any point during the due process  
7 hearing. A request for a due process hearing must be filed within (2) years from the date you or the school district  
8 knew or should have known about the alleged action that forms the basis of the due process hearing complaint.  
9 Upon receiving a request for a due process hearing, you and the school district will receive a notice from the Office of  
10 Administrative Hearings with the time, date and location of the due process hearing. If your primary language is other  
11 than English, or other mode of communication, an interpreter will be provided for you at the hearing.

12 Prior to the opportunity for an impartial due process hearing, within fifteen (15) days of receiving your due  
13 process hearing complaint, the school district is required to convene a mandatory resolution meeting with you and the  
14 relevant members of the IEP Team who have specific knowledge of the facts raised in your complaint, where you can  
15 discuss your complaint and the facts that form the basis of your complaint, and the school district is provided the  
16 opportunity to resolve the complaint. The resolution meeting must include a representative from the school district  
17 who has decision making authority on behalf of the school district, but may not include an attorney for the school  
18 district unless the parent is also accompanied by an attorney. Attorneys' fees may not be awarded relating to a  
19 resolution meeting. Unless the school district agrees, you may not waive the mandatory resolution meeting. If  
20 resolution is reached to resolve the complaint at the mandatory resolution meeting, the parties must sign a legally  
21 binding agreement. If the school district has not resolved the complaint to your satisfaction within thirty (30) days of  
22 the receipt of the complaint, the due process hearing may move forward and all applicable timelines for a due  
23 process hearing shall commence.

24 The due process hearing is limited to those issues raised in your due process hearing complaint. An  
25 impartial hearing officer presides over the due process hearing. You have the right to be accompanied and advised  
26 by an attorney and by individuals with special knowledge or training related to the problems of children with  
27 exceptional needs; the right to present evidence, written and oral arguments; the right to confront, cross-examine and  
28 compel attendance of witnesses; the right to a written or electronic verbatim record of the hearing; and the right to  
29 written findings of fact and decision.

30 At least ten (10) days prior to the hearing you and the school district must inform each other of the issues to  
31 be decided at the hearing and the proposed resolution of those issues as well as whether the parties will be  
represented by an attorney at the hearing. At least five (5) business days prior to the hearing you and the school

1 district must disclose all your witnesses and evidence you intend to introduce at the hearing including evaluations  
2 completed to the other party, or the witnesses, evidence or evaluations cannot be introduced as evidence at the  
3 hearing.

4 In general, a hearing officer's decision should be made on substantive grounds based on a determination of  
5 whether your child received FAPE. The hearing officer must reach a final decision and mail a copy of the written  
6 decision to you and the school district within forty-five (45) days of the receipt of the request for a hearing by the  
7 Office of Administrative Hearings or State Superintendent of Public Instruction, unless a continuance has been  
8 granted for good cause. The decision made in a due process hearing is final, except that any party involved in the  
9 hearing may appeal the decision by filing a civil action with respect to the findings and decision in the due process  
10 complaint.

11 (20 U.S.C. sections 1415(b)(7)(a)–1415(j); 34 C.F.R. sections 300.506–300.518; Education Code sections 56500.3,  
12 56502–56507; 5 CCR section 3082.)

#### 13 14 **CIVIL ACTIONS**

15 Either you or the school district may appeal the hearing officer's decision by filing a civil action. This appeal  
16 must be made within ninety (90) days after the date of the decision of the hearing officer. In a civil action, the records  
17 and transcription of the administrative proceedings shall be filed with the court. The court may hear additional  
18 evidence at the request of either party and must base its decision on the preponderance of the evidence. The action  
19 may be filed in the United States District Court or in Orange County Superior Court.

20 (20 U.S.C. section 1415(i); 34 C.F.R. sections 300.514, 300.516; Education Code section 56505(k).)

#### 21 22 **ATTORNEYS' FEES**

23 The United States District Court or the Orange County Superior Court has the authority to award you  
24 reasonable attorneys' fees if you are the prevailing party in a due process hearing or civil action; or to award the  
25 school district reasonable attorneys' fees if your attorney files a complaint or subsequent cause of action that is  
26 frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation, or the complaint or subsequent action was filed to harass, cause  
27 unnecessary delay, or to needlessly increase the cost of litigation. The fees awarded are based on rates prevailing in  
28 the community in which the action or proceeding arose. No attorneys' fees may be awarded to you following a  
29 written offer of settlement from the school district made at least ten (10) days prior to hearing, if the court or hearing  
30 officer finds that the relief you ultimately obtained is not more favorable than the written offer of settlement. However,  
31 attorneys' fees will not be reduced if you were substantially justified in rejecting the settlement offer, or the school  
district unreasonably prolonged the proceedings.

1 You may not be awarded attorneys' fees and related costs if you unreasonably prolonged the final resolution  
2 of the controversy or the amount of the fees requested is unreasonable. In addition, attorneys' fees or related costs  
3 may not be awarded for attorney time spent attending resolution meetings or IEP Team meetings, unless the IEP  
4 team meeting is convened as a result of an administrative proceeding or judicial action.

5 (20 U.S.C. section 1415(i)(3); 34 C.F.R. section 300.517; Education Code section 56507(b).)

6  
7 **STATE SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

8 The State Special Schools operated by CDE provide services to students who are deaf, hard of hearing,  
9 blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind at each of its three facilities: the California Schools for the Deaf in Fremont and  
10 Riverside and at the California School for the Blind in Fremont. Residential and day school programs are offered to  
11 students from infancy to age 21 at both State Schools for the Deaf and from ages five through 21 at the California  
12 School for the Blind. The State Special Schools also offer assessment services and technical assistance. For more  
13 information about the State Special Schools, please visit the California Department of Education Web site at  
14 <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/> or ask for more information from the members of your child's IEP team.

15 (Education Code section 56321.6.)  
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