



Code of Ethics for School Interpreters

Communicating Effectively with Your Child's School

Federal laws require schools to communicate information to English Learner parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is also shared with parents who are fluent in English. This includes information about:

- Registration and enrollment in school
- Language assistance programs
- Report cards
- Student discipline policies and procedures
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Procedures to file complaints
- Student and parent handbooks
- Gifted and talented programs
- Magnet and charter schools
- Special education and related services
- Information about extracurricular activities
- Notices of nondiscrimination

An interpreter is someone who can offer you language support during meetings with your child's teacher or other school personnel in person, through video or over the phone. A translator is someone who can help you understand written documents originally in English by recreating them in a language of your choice. For interpretation to work, everyone involved must cooperate, ask questions, request repetitions and clarification when necessary. Remember, if you do not understand something, ask the interpreter to clarify or make the school personnel aware. The interpreter can communicate your request but **should not** answer your question directly. Below are some of the rules that interpreters and translators should follow when they help you at schools:

<p>CONFIDENTIALITY: Interpreters must always protect your information and information related to your child. Information shared during a meeting or in documents such as student records, transcripts, or medical records, should be kept private unless you give the interpreter permission to communicate it to teachers or other school personnel.</p> <p>The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA is a law that explains how this information is protected: https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html</p>	<p>ACCURACY: The interpreter should communicate what you say, exactly as you say it, without changing your message or deleting information that you said. Interpreters may ask you to clarify a word or an expression to make sure that your message is communicated with precision.</p> <p>RESPECT: Interpreter should always treat you and school personnel with respect. They should resolve conflicts with professionalism. If you ever feel disrespected, it is important that you let the school know.</p>
<p>IMPARTIALITY: Interpreters should always be impartial and cannot give you counseling, advice, or offer you their personal opinions or beliefs. When they are acting as your interpreter, they cannot try to convince you to make one decision over another.</p>	<p>ADVOCACY: The interpreter will support you as you protect your own rights and make sure that your voice is heard. If you feel that something is not fair to you or your child, it is important that you let the school know.</p>
<p>PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES: During a meeting, the interpreter must act only as an interpreter. They can help you communicate with other school personnel that can answer any of your other questions or concerns.</p>	<p>PROFESSIONALISM: The interpreter must always be professional. The interpreter should not be late to a meeting and should demonstrate respect for you and the school at all times.</p>
<p>CULTURAL AWARENESS: The interpreter should demonstrate respect for you, your child, and your cultural beliefs and practices. The interpreter can help clarify cultural misunderstandings between teachers and parents, but should always ask for your input first.</p>	<p>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: The interpreter should continue to learn new skills and vocabulary to help you understand information. The interpreter should never stop learning.</p>



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These are examples of phrases you can use if you need clarification from an interpreter or a member of the school personnel, or if you need more information during a meeting.

English phrases	Translation
Please repeat that.	
Can you please explain this one more time?	
There are many words I don't understand. Can you please explain them in another way?	
If I have questions after the meeting, how can I let the school know?	
I will need an interpreter for our next meeting. I speak: _____	
Can I please have these documents translated to my language?	
Can you please explain what this word means?	
I would like to schedule another conference with my child's teacher and will need an interpreter.	
What else can I do to help my child?	
What can I do if my child needs help?	