U.E.A and A.E.A
FAQ AND BEST PRACTICES
FOR
DISTANCE LEARNING
1. THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM/EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

Can you hold virtual classes?

Yes! Holding a virtual class does not violate FERPA laws. FERPA requires a record.
So long as the virtual class is not recorded there is no record. Avoid
speaking about any personal information just as you would
during an in-person class. Always make sure your virtual
class is secure with a password and the link is only given to those
who need to attend the meeting.

Know your employer's rules for online engagement and follow them or seek clarification.
Most districts have internet use policies to define what is allowable on work
computers and networks. In addition, check to see if your district has policies that
address appropriate and inappropriate online interactions with students and
families (see also R277-217 and R277-215 – Google: R277-217 and/or R277-215
and look for the pdf version of the changes implemented in February 2020).
If you can't find relevant polices reach out to your UniServ Director.

If educators hold a virtual class, who can appear on camera?
Students can be on camera; however, it is important for both educators and
parents to think about best practices. For example, educators should be sure to
have a professional background. Also, showing
student's homes or rooms could be uncomfortable for some as it could
reveal socio-economic status. Students could be positioned in front of

a wall in a public, not personal, area. This would protect both educator and student. Students, of course, do not need to have their camera on at all. Educators may mute students so that no one hears any background information.

Be aware of your professional online presence. Be familiar with the online learning platform you plan to use. Be present when online and minimize distractions and personal interruptions (refrain from eating, drinking, multitasking, how you are dressed, what is viewable in your background). If a student presents with an inappropriate background (from a bedroom) gently remind the student that you would not teach them in their bedroom and gently reschedule the meeting for another time. Use the same level of professionalism you would use in the school building.

2. **PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS FOR 1:1 INTERACTIONS AND WEB CONFERENCING**

When may an educator have a one-on-one conversation with a student using web conferencing software?
If you are answering general content related questions or providing one-on-one help, this likely does not breach any privacy laws. However, if you are discussing grades, IEPS, 504s, or similar information take extra care to make sure this conversation is private. You can make a note that the meeting was private but do not record the meeting as that creates a record and implicates FERPA protections.

Be conscious of and ensure student privacy. Be sure the platform you are using does not automatically record the conversation. Be sure you are instructing or communicating from a private space. Do **not** send your students to websites or social media apps that are not approved by your district or principal. Check with your district or principal about a list of allowable apps and websites that meet FERPA guidelines. If you have concerns, contact your UniServ Director.

Which privacy/security requirements must be met for web conferencing or other software to be approved?
Whichever website is used, it should not claim control/ownership over the information and they do not redisclose personally identifiable information. If it does collect personally identifiable information, the

students and their parents will have to sign a data privacy agreement. It is possible that students and parents have already signed this at the beginning of the school year. If you are not sure contact your UniServ Director.

Be sure to maintain your own online privacy in your interactions with students. Do **not** use your private accounts for professional purposes. Establish professional accounts on all platforms and applications that you need for work. Ask your student if s/he is recording the communication or lesson and make clear that the communication or lesson should **not** be recorded (because of FERPA). Remember, if you are using a district computer or district network you do **not** have any right to privacy. If you think a student or parent is recording the lesson or communication, report that to your UniServ Director or directly to your principal.

3. **What else do I need to know?**

Be aware of copyright laws just as you are in your classroom. For more information google: Library of Congress Copyright Laws.

Commit to creating a positive community online. Stay positive about ALL of your students and be patient with their progress. You ARE doing enough. Be patient with parents and administrators and colleagues.

As much as you can, focus on <u>instruction</u>. Students will need more reassurance than usual right now but set good boundaries and recognize if the student needs a referral to a counselor. Do **not** try to be all things to all people. Do **not** turn to your student to meet your need for reassurance.

Put your oxygen mask on first. More than ever, this is the time where you must be deliberate and diligent in exercising self-care about all else:
- Follow the CDC Guidelines for Control and Prevention
- Have a schedule for every workday.
- Get dressed for the workday and have a set beginning and end to the workday.
- Make time for exercise on most days (walk, bike ride, dance, stretch, find an online free exercise program).
- Intentionally seek out socialization.
- Be sure to get essential time AWAY from your screen.

What other resources are there about virtual learning?

☐ U.S. Department of Education Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Educational Services: Requirements and Best Practices (Feb 2014)

☐ U.S. Department of Education FERPA and Virtual Learning Related Resources (Mar 2020)

☐ U.S. Department of Education FERPA & Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions (Mar 2020)

☐ U.S. Department of Education FERPA & Virtual Learning During COVID-19 slideshow and video recording (Mar 30, 2020)

Check in with your local UniServ Director and check the UEA website for additional information (www.myuea.org)

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