

WRITTEN PRIOR NOTICE (WPN) Guide

Purpose of a WPN:

A Written Prior Notice (WPN) is written notification that is provided to parents to explain a change that has been proposed or refused by the district, as the result of a team meeting, but which has not yet been implemented. It helps ensure that the parents are included in and aware of the decisions that impact their child. It also helps ensure that there is careful consideration of all factors relevant to the proposed/refused actions before any changes are implemented. This notice must be provided to parents no less than 14 calendar days before the action being proposed or refused may be put into place. Throughout this document “School District” is being used to refer to the public agency which is making the proposal or refusal.

When to use a WPN:

You must have a WPN each time there is a change/action proposed or change/action refused by the district. Some examples of when to use a WPN are:

- For a referral
- An evaluation (initial evaluation and reevaluation)
- Determination of eligibility, initial eligibility, or change in the category of identification
- The provision of FAPE
- An IEP
- Changes to special education programs and/or services
- Educational placement
- Graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma
- Termination of services
- A refusal to hold a meeting of the IEP team in response to a parent request to do so

Basically, you should use a WPN any time there is a proposed change/action or an action/change that is being refused. If you are unsure as to whether a WPN is needed, you should err on the side of caution and complete one; it's better to have one when it's not needed, than to not have one and need it.

How to fill out WPN (explanation):

Each section of the WPN asks for either a “description” or an “explanation”. What is written should be a few sentences either describing or explaining. This is a form that should be carefully thought out and filled in with details and explanations. It should be detailed enough to be read by a parent, or another team member who may not have been able to attend a meeting, so that they can completely understand the decisions that were made, know why the team made those decisions, and what the basis for the decisions were. The information contained in the WPN should be completed in a language that is understandable to the parent.

Remember—The WPN should be filled out carefully and thoughtfully. It should be a “stand alone” document that contains enough descriptions and explanations for someone who knows nothing about the situation to be able to have a clear understanding of the decision, reasons for the decision, and how the team arrived at the decision. It needs to be delivered to parents within 14 calendar days, and prior to consent. Parental consent cannot be obtained without the requisite WPN. Parents must have the WPN before districts ask for their consent. If you are not asking for consent at the end of a meeting, you do not have to provide the WPN by the end of the meeting.