

Brookline School Committee
Policy Review Subcommittee Meeting
Monday, June 9, 2025
5:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Remote via Zoom

Policy Subcommittee Members present: Andreas Liu (Chair), Jesse Hefter, and Mariah Nobrega.

Staff present: Hal Mason, Assistant Head of School, Brookline High School; Susan Harris, Associate Town Counsel, Town of Brookline; and Betsy Fitzpatrick.

Dr. Liu called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

1. Exterior Surveillance Camera Policy: Discussion and Possible Vote

Dr. Liu shared the most recent draft of the Exterior Surveillance Camera Policy (attached). This new policy had a First Reading (May 1, 2025) and a Second Reading (May 22, 2025) before the full School Committee. The draft was shared with Town Counsel, who has no objections to the policy but did share that any video recordings from these cameras may be/are subject to public records requests. At the May 22 meeting, the School Committee sent the draft policy back to subcommittee for additional review regarding this new information, particularly with regard to public records requests and student privacy rights through FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). Susan Harris, Associate Town Counsel, participated in the meeting to offer guidance.

Dr. Liu suggested some edits to the draft policy. He noted that some of the bullets on the draft policy are redundant, some can be combined, and others can be removed entirely from the policy and moved to related procedures. He further suggested that language from the Massachusetts Association of School Committee's model policy be added, clearly articulating the role of the Superintendent to create proper procedures aligned with applicable laws and regulations. This led to a broader discussion of how procedures for any policy are developed, disseminated, and stored, and how all procedures might be made more readily accessible to the school community.

With Ms. Harris' guidance, members discussed educational records (which are protected under FERPA) and how they differ from standard public records. All records of a public agency – such as the Public Schools of Brookline – are presumptively public records unless there is a specific exemption to the contrary. One exemption to public records would be privacy, as provided in FERPA. Educational records under FERPA are not public records. Ms. Harris noted that there are technical and administrative burdens involved in reviewing video records in response to public records request that the subcommittee should take into consideration.

Dr. Liu agreed to incorporate the edits discussed at the meeting into a new draft that he will present at the June 12, 2025 School Committee meeting.

Dr. Liu adjourned the meeting at 5:30pm.

The Public Schools of Brookline seeks to promote school safety and a secure educational environment. Balancing individuals' privacy rights with the district's duty to ensure safety, the district reserves the right to use surveillance cameras, when necessary, in outdoor areas of school grounds and facilities.

Purpose of Surveillance Cameras

Surveillance cameras will be used to assist in areas of:

- Student Safety and threats to students/staff
- Locating missing students
- Deterring illegal activity and incidents that threaten the health, safety, or welfare of members of the school community
- Preventing Vandalism and Property Damage
- Monitoring Suspicious Activity
- Protecting School Property
- After-Hours Surveillance
- Emergency Response Coordination and Assistance

Implementation and Monitoring

- Cameras will only be placed in outdoor areas of school property where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy. This also can include areas adjacent to the schools that are on a public way that are regularly traversed in the course of a school day by students and staff.
- Cameras will not record audio.
- Facial recognition, automatic tracking, and other surveillance technologies will not be used without the express consent of the Brookline School Committee.
- Only authorized personnel, as designated by the Building Principal, may access surveillance footage. Access is also permitted to the security contractor and the Town Building Department.
- Police access will be granted as per district and town agreements.
- Cameras will not be monitored continuously but will be reviewed as needed.

Storage and Access

- The monitor for the system will be housed in a space within the office of the Building Principal (and/or the Assistant Head of School at BHS).
- Video recordings will be stored for 90 days unless needed for investigations.
- Recordings will not be released outside the district except through legal processes.
- As a standard, recordings should primarily be reviewed only in response to specific incidents involving suspected violations of law, or incidents that threatened the health, safety, or welfare of members of the school community. However, in an active situation presenting a clear and present danger to the campus, the system could be used to monitor events in real time.
- Logs will track access to recordings, including the reason for viewing and any actions taken.