



## Parent/Guardian Data Security & Privacy FAQ

*Updated: 10/12/22*

### **Can I see a copy of the survey my child is being asked to take?**

Yes! PEAR provides copies of our assessments to the schools and programs we work with. Please contact your school/program administrator to view the assessment.

### **What is PEAR's background in educational research?**

PEAR is a Benefit Corporation spin off from McLean Hospital that was founded in 1999 by Dr. Gil G. Noam, a developmental psychologist and Director of McLean's Institute for the Study of Resilience in Youth (ISRY). Our team includes experienced psychiatrists, social workers, instructional specialists, school and classroom teachers, former school and out-of-school time (OST) administrators.

### **How does PEAR protect the privacy of students?**

PEAR is deeply committed to ensuring student data security and privacy in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations and district policies of the schools and programs we work with. PEAR works closely with a team of cybersecurity experts who reviewed our policies and procedures and helped us to adopt a set of policies aligned to [NIST CSF](#). This team monitors our procedures and provides ongoing advice and best practice recommendations for our data team. Every PEAR staff member is trained in our security policies and industry best practices. Additionally, staff who process and analyze student data complete a research ethics training. Only students with parental consent will be given access to the survey by your school/program.

PEAR can also work with your school or program at their request to conduct a personally identifiable information (PII)-free survey collection. Only personnel authorized by your school or program will have access to your student's data.

### **Can you address concerns that my student's data will be sold and used for purposes we have not consented to?**

PEAR will never sell or release a student's personally identifiable information (PII) for any commercial purpose, nor does PEAR release any identified data. PII, as defined by Education Law § 2-d and FERPA, includes direct identifiers such as a student's name or identification number, parent's name, or address; and indirect identifiers such as a student's date of birth, which when linked to or combined with other information can be used to distinguish or trace a student's identity.

PEAR's business model is not based on the monetization of student data (nor will it ever be). Our benefit corporation status lets us prioritize our mission over profits. We provide data as a service to schools and programs to better understand the social-emotional needs of their students and to help support program quality and improvement. Our focus is on the coaching, professional development, curricula, and evaluation services work that the data we collect helps inform. Any profits the company makes goes back into PEAR's research and development work.



**What is PEAR’s policy on sharing data?**

We will never share student data with any group that doesn’t have explicit authorized permission from the school/program (with parental consent).

**Could any of the questions on the assessment be used in a punitive way or to incriminate my child?**

No, PEAR’s approach to our work is strengths-based. The survey questions are designed to help educators better understand the needs of the students in the moment. PEAR has a policy of not sharing individual responses to HSA questions with anyone outside of authorized PEAR staff members, so student privacy is strictly maintained. Additionally, the survey administration instructions emphasize to students that they can stop at any time if they no longer want to answer the questions.

**What happens if there is a breach? How will you contact parents?**

In the case of any data breach, PEAR will directly notify the school or program that was impacted by the breach with information to share with parents.