

Fairfax County Public Schools
Interior Security Cameras
Frequently Asked Questions
Created by FCPS in April 2012

Will the security cameras be monitored continuously?

No, they will not be routinely monitored, but rather, will be reviewed after an incident occurs. Security personnel in the office of safety and security may access cameras and images when necessary for their official duties. An example is a school alarm after hours.

How long will the images be retained?

According to FCPS regulation, images must be stored for at least 14 days and not more than 30 days.

Who can view the images?

FCPS staff who need to review and use the images in the course of their official duties may do so. This is typically limited to administrators, security personnel and personnel engaged in disciplinary reviews. The School Resource Officers and the School Liaison Commander are allowed to view the images because they are considered school officials; however, no other police personnel are permitted.

Parents may view images of their own students. When a recording involves more than one student, the parents of any student who is a primary subject of the recording may review it but can not have a copy. Parents of students who are in the background do not have a right to view the recording. Employees may view images in which they are the subject.

To whom may recordings be released?

Disclosure of student images to individuals or organizations outside FCPS may be made only with parent consent (or student consent if the student is 18 years of age or older), in response to a subpoena, search warrant or court order, in connection with a health or safety emergency, in response to legal action against the system, or consistent with one of the other exceptions to the disclosure ban in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations.

Are there future costs?

The security systems come with a 3-year parts and labor warranty and thereafter are covered under a preventive maintenance and repair contract currently funded centrally by FCPS. As the number of cameras increase in FCPS, these contract costs are expected to rise. Additionally, once a school receives their initial permission to implement interior video cameras, the principal may consider adding additional ones in the future, if circumstances warrant an expansion.

What reporting is required by schools as related to security cameras?

Schools with interior security cameras are required to submit data regarding the number of incidents in specific areas of the schools in which cameras have been installed, along with the number of successful investigations of reported incidents using recordings. Successful means that the recording was helpful in determining what happened in an incident. Additionally, the superintendent is required to annually report to the School Board incident and survey data collected regarding the effectiveness of ongoing interior video monitoring.

Are the cameras effective?

As reported in 2012, the experience of FCPS with exterior video surveillance cameras strongly suggests that their use resulted in significant reductions in vandalism at schools that used the systems. Prior to 2012, FCPS also performed a pilot test of cameras in lunch lines to determine if the existence of video cameras were helpful in reducing theft. This pilot test did not show that they were successful in reducing theft, although the principals of the test sites did note that they saw a reduction in inappropriate behavior in the lunch lines.

Since 2012, security cameras have proven to be valuable resources in solving incident reports, deterring certain types of disciplinary infractions, and giving an overall sense of security related to students, staff, visitors, and material assets in a school.

Do other school systems use interior video surveillance?

Yes. Prior to 2010, seventy-seven percent of all public high schools use security cameras to monitor schools (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, November, 2010). That number has increased in the past seven years.

Locally, the school divisions in 2012 that utilized interior video surveillance included the Maryland divisions of Frederick County, Montgomery County and Prince George's County. In Virginia, Alexandria, Loudoun, Prince William, Fauquier, Stafford, Culpepper and Alexandria school divisions utilize interior cameras. Washington D.C. also uses them.

Current Logistics Specific to TJHSST

What is the funding source?

Remaining funds from the TJHSST renovation project will pay for the project. The original plan was developed in 2015 and the updated estimated cost is \$103,000.

What is the proposed timeline for camera installation?

Installation most likely will begin by the end of February 2018. The project may take 3-4 weeks, which would include physical installation and programming cameras to servers. There would be no interruption to instruction or normal school operations.