

Camera Installation Frequently Asked Questions

Will the video 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 video cameras and images when necessary for their official duties. An example is a school alarm after hours.

How long will the images be retained? By regulation, they 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 video involves more than one student, the parents of any student who is a primary subject of the video may review the recording but may 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.

Who will these videos be released to? 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 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 surveillance systems come with a 3-year parts and labor warranty and thereafter are covered under a preventive maintenance and repair contract currently funded centrally. 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 video cameras, the principal may consider adding additional ones in the future, if circumstances warrant an expansion.

What is the funding source? The funding for the project is included in the current FCPS 2019-2020 budget.

If you obtain video surveillance, what reporting does the school have to do? Schools that are granted permission to utilize ongoing video monitoring are required to submit data regarding the number of incidents in specific areas of the schools in which cameras have been installed and the number of successful investigations of incidents using video recordings. Successful means that the video was helpful in determining what happened in an incident. The Student Information System has an input field for camera use as it relates to discipline cases. Additionally, the superintendent is required to annually

report to the School Board incident and survey data collected regarding the effectiveness of ongoing video monitoring.

Are the cameras effective? The experience of FCPS with video surveillance strongly suggests that their use resulted in significant reductions in vandalism at schools that used the systems, as well as aid administrators in timely and accurate determinations in student/staff and building incidents

Do other school systems use video surveillance? 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). Locally, the school divisions that utilize video surveillance include 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 cameras. Washington D.C. also uses them.