



Haywood County Schools ("HCS") Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What happened?

A: HCS experienced a data security incident that disrupted access to certain systems. Upon discovering this, we immediately took steps to secure our network and initiated an investigation with the assistance of cybersecurity experts to determine the nature and scope of the incident. Through the investigation, we learned that certain data within our network was potentially subject to unauthorized access.

Q: When did this happen?

A: We became aware of suspicious activity within our network on August 24, 2020. As a result of a related investigation, we identified that your information was potentially subject to unauthorized access. We then worked diligently to identify up-to-date address information required to notify potentially affected individuals, and we took steps to notify you of this incident as quickly as possible.

Q: What personal information was involved?

A: The information that may have been involved is listed in the notification letter that you received.

Q: Why wasn't I informed of the incident sooner?

A: After we discovered the incident and secured our network, we launched an investigation with the assistance of cybersecurity experts in order to determine what happened and whether sensitive information was involved. We also issued a press release with several subsequent updates to notify the school community of the incident as quickly as possible. Once that investigation was complete, we worked to identify and gather contact information for potentially affected individuals, which took some time. Notification was provided as soon as this process was completed.

Q: How did you respond to the incident?

A: After discovering the incident, we took immediate steps to secure our network. We also launched an investigation with the assistance of cybersecurity experts to determine what happened and whether any personal information may have been accessed without authorization. We have also taken additional steps to further improve the security of our network environment to minimize the likelihood of a similar incident occurring in the future.

We also reported this matter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, and the National Guard and will provide whatever cooperation is necessary to hold the perpetrator(s) accountable. Finally, out of an abundance of caution, we are offering complimentary identity services to you. Please review your letter for a description of the services and steps to enroll. Moreover, please review the additional information in your letter about other measures you can take to help protect your information.

Q: Was my Information Compromised/Misused?

A: Receiving a letter does not mean that you are or will be a victim of identity theft. Out of an

abundance of caution, however, we are offering identity services to you. Please review your letter for a description of the services and steps to enroll. Moreover, please review the additional information in your letter about other measures you can take to help protect your information.

Q: Is there a deadline to enroll in the identity services?

A: Yes. You must activate your MyIDCare services by April 5, 2021.

Q: Can I speak with someone directly at HCS?

A: I can take your contact information and have someone from HCS call you back.

[Agent: Ask for: (1) name; (2) phone number; (3) three convenient call back times]

Q: I did not receive a letter stating that my information was compromised, but feel that I should have. Can you help me?

A: Individuals whose information may have been accessed without authorization were notified about the incident by letter mailed on January 5, 2021. If you believe your information was accessed without authorization, but you did not receive a notification letter, please provide your name and telephone number, and someone will contact you regarding your concern.

Q: I am not listed in your system but I would like information regarding this incident.

A: I appreciate your concern. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide information except to those individuals who have received a notification letter.

Q: My [spouse/child/family member/partner] has passed away and I handle their affairs. Can you speak to/assist me regarding this letter?

A: Yes, I would be happy to help. Before we begin, can I please have your name and relationship so that I can document this in our system?

Q: Is the letter legitimate? Is this a scam?

A: I can assure you the letter is legitimate and not a scam. We are committed to protecting individuals' security and privacy and take this incident very seriously. We regret any inconvenience this may cause you.

Q: I am calling on behalf of [letter recipient], can you assist me on their behalf?

A: Yes, but I need to speak with them first and confirm that they approve that I speak with you. Are they available?

[Agents: Please get approval prior to speaking with someone other than the recipient.]

Q: I am with the Media, can you provide me with further information about the recent data breach with HCS?

A: Media inquiries should be made to HCS Central Office. The school system can take your contact information and call you back.