A school may disclose directory information to anyone, without consent, if it has given parents: general notice of the information it has designated as "directory information;" the right to opt out of these disclosures; and the period of time they have to notify the school of their desire to opt out.

Does *FERPA* give me a right to see the education records of my son or daughter who is in college?

When a student turns 18 years old or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, all rights afforded to you as a parent under *FERPA* transfer to the student ("eligible student"). However, *FERPA* provides ways in which a school may—but is not required to—share information from an eligible student's education records with parents, without the student's consent. For example:

- Schools may disclose education records to parents if the student is claimed as a dependent for tax purposes.
- Schools may disclose education records to parents if a health or safety emergency involves their son or daughter.
- Schools may inform parents if the student, if he or she is under age 21, has violated any law or policy concerning the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- A school official may generally share with a parent information that is based on that official's personal knowledge or observation of the student.

Contact Information

For further information about *FERPA*, contact the Department's Family Policy Compliance Office.

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-5920
202-260-3887

For quick, informal responses to routine questions about *FERPA*, parents may also e-mail the Family Policy Compliance Office at *FERPA.Customer@ED.Gov*.

Additional information and guidance may be found at FPCO's Web site at: http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index.html.

Parents' Guide to the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act:* Rights Regarding Children's Education Records



What is *FERPA*?

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (*FERPA*) is a federal privacy law that gives parents certain protections with regard to their children's education records, such as report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information, and class schedules. As a parent, you have the right to review your child's education records and to request changes under limited circumstances. To protect your child's privacy, the law generally requires schools to ask for written consent before disclosing your child's personally identifiable information to individuals other than you.

The following questions and answers are intended to help you understand your rights as a parent under *FERPA*. If you have further questions, please contact the U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office using the contact information provided below.

My child's school won't show me her or his education records. Does the school have to provide me with a copy of the records if I request them?

Schools must honor your request to review your child's education records within 45 days of receiving the request. Some states have laws similar to *FERPA* that require schools to provide access within a shorter period of time. *FERPA* requires that schools provide parents with an opportunity to inspect and review education records, but not to receive copies, except in limited circumstances.

Parents whose children receive services under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (*IDEA*) may have additional rights and remedies with regard to their children's education records. The school district, local special education director, or state special education director can answer questions about *IDEA*.



Who else gets to see my child's education records?

To protect your child's privacy, schools are generally prohibited from disclosing personally identifiable information about your child without your written consent. Exceptions to this rule include:

- disclosures made to school officials with legitimate educational interests;
- disclosures made to another school at which the student intends to enroll;
- disclosures made to state or local education authorities for auditing or evaluating federal- or state-supported education programs, or enforcing relevant federal laws; and
- disclosures including information the school has designated as "directory information."

What is directory information?

FERPA defines "directory information" as information contained in a student's education record that generally would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory information could include:

- name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, and grade level;
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- degrees, honors, and awards received; and
- the most recent school attended.