

# **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

## **I. Policy Statement**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their Education Records. They include:

- The right to inspect and review their own Education Records;
- The right to request amendment of their own Education Records;
- The right to consent to disclosure of information from their Education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent; and
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Functional area of Education concerning alleged failures to comply with FERPA.

## **II. Reason for Policy**

The College is required to comply with its obligations under FERPA, including the obligation to advise students of their rights under FERPA.

## **III. Applicability of the Policy**

This policy applies to all functional areas of the College that maintain Education Records. As described below, protected “Education Records” include most personally identifiable information pertaining to a student; accordingly, all College personnel having custody of, or responsibility for, student information will review this policy annually with an acknowledgement of understanding.

The College will provide all students an annual notification in order that students are aware of this policy and their rights under FERPA.

## **IV. Related Policies and Documents**

- Authorization to Release Student Records (FERPA Release Form) - available on Cayuga’s Website
- Personally Identifiable Information Policy
- Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) – Higher Education Act Restrictions on Releasing Data Appearing on FAFSA
- SUNY’s Record Retention Policy (#6609)

## V. Definitions

Term	Definition
College Official	See Item VII, below.
Education Record	<p>Any record, in whatever medium, which contains information directly related to an identifiable student (including but not limited to course grades, GPA, class schedules, disciplinary records, law enforcement records).</p> <p>Education Records do not include records of instructional, administrative and educational personnel which are in the sole possession of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any individual, except a temporary substitute; student health records; employment records; alumni records pertaining to the period after the student ceased to be enrolled at the College; or grades on peer-graded work before they are collected and recorded by the instructor.</p>
FERPA	The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
Student	Includes all persons enrolled in or auditing courses, either full-time or part-time, from the time of initial enrollment through the actual awarding of a degree, including the time before classes begin, during the academic year, after classes end, and during periods between terms of actual enrollment. A student is subject to adjudication of and sanctions for violations of the law and of the Student Code of Conduct through the campus disciplinary system.
Legitimate Educational Interest	See Item VII, below.

## VII. Procedures

*Right to Inspect and Review Education Records.* A student has the right to inspect and review one's Education Records. The College is obligated to make the records available within 45 calendar days of the request for access. The student shall submit the request to the head of the functional area or designee maintaining the Education Record(s) identifying the Education Record(s) they wish to inspect. The functional area head or designee will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and the place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the functional area to which the request was submitted, the functional area head should advise the student of the correct functional area to which the request

should be addressed. A student can also submit a request for a proxy to gain access to their records.

*Right to Request the Amendment of Education Records.* A student has the right to request the amendment of their Education Records that they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of their privacy rights. The student shall write to the head of the functional area responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when they are notified of the right to a hearing.

*Right to Consent to Disclosure of Personally Identifiable Education Record Information.* A student has the right to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in his or her Education Records, except in instances when FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Among the FERPA provisions authorizing disclosure without consent are the following:

- **College Officials**

One exception which permits disclosures without consent is disclosure to College Officials with Legitimate Educational Interests. A “College Official” is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research or support staff position (including law enforcement personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another College Official in performing his or her tasks; or a person volunteering or otherwise performing services for the College. A contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom the College has outsourced institutional services or functions may be considered a College Official under this exception only if he, she, or it performs an institutional service or function for which the College would otherwise use employees, is under the direct control of the College with respect to the use and maintenance of Education Records, and agrees to use the Education Records only for the purposes for which they were disclosed.

A College Official has a “Legitimate Educational Interest” if he, she or it needs to review an Education Record in order to (a) perform a task specific to his or her job description or his, her or its contractual or volunteer duties to the College, (b) perform a task related to the student’s education (including discipline of the student), or (c) provide a service or benefit relating to the student or the student’s family.

- **Emergency Situations**

A second exception permits disclosures of Education Records without consent if the College determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of the student to whom the Education Records pertain or other individuals, but only to those

persons whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

- **Directory Information**

Another exception which permits disclosures without consent is disclosure of “Directory Information.”<sup>1</sup> Directory Information at Cayuga Community College is defined as: the student’s name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade level, enrollment status, dates of attendance; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees, honors, and awards received; and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

Directory Information does not include the following unique personal identifiers: a student’s social security number, a student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems. The identifier cannot be used to gain access to Education Records, except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

A student has the right to withhold the public release of Directory Information pertaining to them by giving notice to the Registrar’s Office. The decision to prevent release of Directory Information will remain effective until revoked by the student by subsequent direction to the Registrar’s Office. The student’s decision will be effective for materials printed after the effective date and for online and other disclosures from and after the effective date.

### **Student Inspection of Their Record**

Cayuga Community College will provide services to students and former students to inspect and review their own student record upon request. Limitations on this service are as follows.

Cayuga Community College will not allow students to inspect or review:

- financial information submitted by parents (except FAFSA information);
- confidential letters and statements of recommendation to which the student has waived his or her right to inspect and review and that are related to her/his admission, application for employment or job placement, or receipt of honors;
- Educational records that contain information about more than one student. However, in such cases the institution will permit access to that part of the record which pertains only to the inquiring student.

### **Disclosures to Other Schools**

Upon request, the College also discloses Education Records without student consent to officials of another school in which a student is enrolled or seeks or intends to enroll, for purposes related to the student’s enrollment or transfer.

*Right to File a Complaint with the Education Functional area.* A student who believes that their rights under FERPA have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance

Office, U.S. Functional Area of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920.

### **Disclosures to Third Parties**

College auxiliaries and non-affiliated College organizations may request directory information from the Office of the Registrar. As the designated data custodian of student information for the College, the Office of the Registrar is the only unit authorized to release directory information to third parties. Third parties may only request information on student subpopulations based on these elements and these are the only data elements that may be provided.

Third party data requests must be submitted in writing and requests are tracked; the Office of the Registrar retains to the right of refusal to provide the information in an electronic format.

All data requests released to third parties include the following responsibility statement:

*This information is being provided to you for the one-time requested purpose only. Fulfillment of your request does not constitute endorsement of your organization, product or service. Any false claim (expressed or implied) concerning Cayuga Community College is expressly forbidden. Misrepresentation of the College with your organization, product or service (e.g. improper use of the Cayuga Community College name, seal or logo) will result in the denial of future requests for student information and possible legal action.*

*Please be advised that the Cayuga Community College Office of the Registrar declines to release or sell to the public any student information, student lists, mailing labels or other education record that is not deemed 'Directory Information'.*

*Confidentiality Precautions.* College personnel may not disclose Education Record information except as permitted by FERPA and this policy, and are expected to take precautions to prevent impermissible disclosures. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- All documents containing personally identifiable information on students must be shredded. These include (among other things) class lists, student folders, grade sheets and transcripts.
- Grades may not be posted on office doors using student social security numbers/student ID (C#). Social security numbers are considered personally identifiable information and are, therefore, confidential.
- College personnel shall consult with the Registrar's Office in the event that they are uncertain as to whether Education Record information may be disclosed in particular circumstances.

*Record-keeping Obligations.* If a student has not provided consent and the institution is required to disclose, persons who release Education Record information on behalf of the College must maintain a record of all requests for and/or releases of this information. The record will indicate the name of the party making the request, any additional party to whom it may be re-released, and the legitimate interest the party had in requesting or obtaining the information. The student

may inspect this record of requests. The requirements of this paragraph do not apply to disclosures to (a) the student, (b) a College Official, (c) any party with the student's written consent, (d) a party seeking Directory Information, or (e) a party receiving the information pursuant to a law enforcement subpoena if the issuing court/agency has ordered that the existence or contents of the subpoena, or the information furnished in response to the subpoena, not be disclosed.

*Restrictions on Re-disclosure.* Persons who release Education Record information on behalf of the College must inform the recipient that the disclosure is subject to the condition that the recipient not disclose the information to any other party without the prior consent of the student. The requirements of this paragraph do not apply to disclosures (a) to the student, (b) to a College Official with a legitimate educational interest, (c) to a party seeking Directory Information, (d) to a party receiving the information pursuant to a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, (e) of certain information regarding student disciplinary proceedings as expressly permitted by FERPA, (f) to parties otherwise authorized to receive the information pursuant to FERPA without the student's consent, provided that the parameters of permissible re-disclosure have been established and documented prior to the initial disclosure, or (g) of information provided to the College pursuant to federal law concerning sex offenders and other individuals required to register under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (also known as the Wetterling Act).

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<sup>1</sup> FERPA does not mandate the disclosure of Directory Information to anyone, but simply allows the College to make such disclosures in the absence of a student's election to opt out using the procedure described in this Policy.