
FERPA

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT



VANDERBILT



UNIVERSITY

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT OF 1974

- FERPA is a federal law designed to:
 1. Protect the privacy of education records
 2. Establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records
 3. Provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings
- FERPA is enforced by the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

EDUCATION RECORDS

Education records are defined as records that contain information directly related to a student and that are maintained by Vanderbilt or its agent acting on behalf of the university.

Education records **include:** Graded papers, exams, student's current class schedule, database containing uniquely identifiable student information, email containing information about a student

Education records **do not include:** peer-graded papers, online forums (e.g., Brightspace chat), student employment records, medical records

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE INFORMATION

Directory/public information: information contained in the record which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

- At Vanderbilt, this includes name, address, e-mail address, phone number, major, dates of attendance, admission or enrollment status, school, class standing, degrees and awards, activities, sports and athletic information, student ID photos, and the most recent previous educational agency.
- Disclosure of student directory information is discretionary. Institutions are not required to release directory information.

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE INFORMATION

Personally identifiable/private information: information contained in the record which would generally be considered more sensitive or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

- At Vanderbilt, this includes Social Security number, birthdate, grades, hours completed, GPA, current class schedule, parent name and address, race/ethnicity, gender, and country of citizenship.
- Personally identifiable information contained in the education record **may not released** without student consent.

HEALTH AND SAFETY EMERGENCIES

- Institutions may release student information to appropriate parties when there are health and safety concerns. Exceptions for health concerns include serious communicable diseases, serious infectious diseases, and suicidal ideation.
- Information released should be documented.

BEST PRACTICES

- Use secure tools (YES, Brightspace, Box, Online Grading, etc.) provided by the university
- Do not send restricted information via email (grades, SSN, etc.)
- Do not store student education data on personal computers, flash drives, etc.
- Confer with your school's Dean's Office before speaking with parents about their student's academic performance
- Use VPN for secure remote access
- Access only the information needed to do your job

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- FERPA Information for Faculty: <https://registrar.vanderbilt.edu/ferpa/ferpa-for-faculty.php>
- FERPA Tutorial for Faculty: <https://registrar.vanderbilt.edu/ferpa/ferpa-tutorial.php>
- Information Security at Vanderbilt:
<https://it.vanderbilt.edu/services/catalog/category/Authentication+and+Security>
- Box for Vanderbilt:
<https://it.vanderbilt.edu/services/box/index.php>
- Virtual Private Network (VPN) Information:
https://it.vanderbilt.edu/services/catalog/end-point_computing/network_access/remote-access/index.php

ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION

If you are unsure . . .

. . . Don't do it!