

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as the Buckley Amendment, helps protect the privacy of student education records. The Act provides for the right to inspect and review education records, the right to seek to amend those records, and the right to limit disclosure of information from the records. The intent of the legislation is to protect the rights of students and to ensure the privacy and accuracy of education records. The Act applies to all institutions that are recipients of federal aid administered by the Secretary of Education.

Who is protected under FERPA?

Students, who are currently or formerly enrolled, regardless of their age or status in regard to parental dependency, are protected.

What are education records under FERPA?

With certain exceptions, education records are defined as any record directly related to a student from which a student can be personally identified, and is maintained by an education agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. Education records include any records in whatever medium (handwritten, print, magnetic tape, film, computer media, microfilm, video, etc.) that are in the possession of any school official. This includes transcripts or other records obtained from a school at which a student was previously enrolled.

Education records are not:

- sole possession records (private notes of a school official that are not accessible or released to other personnel,
- law enforcement or campus security records,
- employment records,
- medical records, or
- post-attendance (alumnae) records.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Institutions may disclose information designated as “directory information” on a student without violating FERPA. Under the terms of FERPA, Sweet Briar College has established the following as directory information:

- Name
- Address (Permanent and Campus)
- Telephone number (Home and Campus)
- E-mail address
- Dates of attendance
- Major fields of study
- Full or part-time enrollment status
- Class
- Academic Honors and Awards
- Degree(s) conferred (including dates)

The above information may be released for any purpose at the discretion of our institution. However, FERPA states that each student has the right to withhold any or all of the information. Sweet Briar College will honor the student’s request to restrict the release of “Directory Information.” Once restricted, that information cannot be released without the written consent of the student. The Request to Prevent Disclosure of Directory Information form is enclosed.

PARENTAL ACCESS TO CHILDREN’S EDUCATION RECORDS

At the postsecondary level, parents have no inherent right to inspect a student’s education records. The right to inspect is limited solely to the student. Records may be released to parents ONLY under the following circumstances: (1) through the written consent of the student, (2) in compliance with a subpoena, or (3) by producing a copy of the most recent Federal Income Tax form showing that the student was claimed as a dependent.

What is the procedure for a parent to obtain confidential information?

It is Sweet Briar College’s expectation that students should take the responsibility to inform their parents of their academic progress. In order for the College to release information to parents about their daughter’s progress, Sweet Briar College must have on file a **Consent to Disclosure** signed by the student. Each semester, new students are given the opportunity to file this form with the Office of the Registrar and it remains in effect as long as the student is enrolled at the college or until the student amends her consent.

For questions or additional information about FERPA, contact the Office of the Registrar at 434-381-6179.