

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

The Student Records Office is the official guardian of student data for Paris Junior College. The Student Records Office strives to maintain accurate records of academic progress for each student, to protect privacy and security of academic and personal information, to provide high quality service, and to uphold college policies and procedures in a professional and friendly atmosphere.

## **What is FERPA?**

Paris Junior College abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended. FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. The intent of the legislation is to protect the rights of students and to ensure the privacy and accuracy of educational records.

## **What are Educational Records?**

With certain exceptions, an educational record is any record (1) directly related to a student and (2) maintained by the College. A student has the right to inspect and review records maintained by the school. Educational records include information recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, video/audio tape, etc. that are in the possession of any school official. This includes transcripts or other records obtained from a school at which the student was previously enrolled.

Educational records do not include records of instructional, administrative, and educational personnel, which are the sole possession of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any individual (except temporary substitutes); College security records; student health records; employment records; or alumni records. Health records may be reviewed by physicians of the student's choosing. In addition, students may not see financial information submitted by their parents, any confidential letters or recommendations to which they have waived their rights of inspection and review, or records containing information about more than one student. In the latter case, a student will be permitted access only to that part of the record pertaining to him or her.

## **What are the Rights of Students under FERPA?**

The primary rights of students under FERPA are:

1. The right to inspect and review educational records.
  - The student must submit a written request to the Registrar.
  - Records covered under the Act will be made available within 45 days.
  - Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for students to review.

- Schools may charge a fee for copies.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records that the student believes is inaccurate.

- Initiated by contact with the Registrar, either in person or in writing, identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate.
- The student may make a written request to the Registrar for a formal hearing if amendment is denied.
- College will deliver written decision to all involved parties. Students who disagree with the decision may place a statement with the educational record setting forth his/her view about the contested information.

3. The right to have some control over the disclosure of information from educational records.

- No one outside the College may have access to, nor will the College disclose, any information from a student's educational record without the written consent of the student.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the institution to comply with the requirements of the Act:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U. S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5920

### **What are the Exceptions to Written Consent?**

Educational records may be shared with officials of other institutions in which the student seeks to enroll, persons or organization providing the student's financial aid, accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation functions, persons in compliance with a judicial order, persons in an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons, and school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the institution in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel); 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 Regents; or a student serving on an official committee; such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

## **What is Directory Information?**

At the discretion of College officials, the following items are considered directory information and may be released without student consent:

- Name and address
- Whether or not currently enrolled
- Classification
- Major and minor
- Degrees and awards received
- Dates of attendance (semester and year, not daily attendance)
- All previous educational institutions or agencies attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Date and place of birth and sex

A student wishing to withhold this directory information must complete a Request for Non-Disclosure of Directory Information with the Student Records Office during the first 12 days of a fall or spring semester or the first four days of a summer term. A new form for non-disclosure must be completed each academic term. **IMPORTANT:** This information will not be released even in emergency situations.

## **Disclosure to Parents**

When a student turns 18 or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, all rights afforded to parents under FERPA transfer to the student. However, FERPA also provides ways in which schools may share information with parents without the student's consent.

For example:

- If the student is a dependent for income tax purposes. The parent must complete a Parental Affidavit for Academic Information (available online or from the Student Records Office). A copy of the parent's most recent tax form may be required.
- If a health or safety emergency involves their son or daughter.
- If the student who is under age 21 has violated any law or its policy concerning the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.