

Richland Community College

Faculty and Staff Guide to FERPA

Student educational records are PRIVATE! This is guaranteed by the federal law known as *The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974* (FERPA). Richland fully complies with FERPA and works hard to ensure that student records are kept **private** and **accurate**.

Under FERPA students have specific rights, including:

1. The right to inspect and review their educational records maintained by Richland.
2. The right to challenge and require Richland to amend any portion of their record that is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise violates their privacy rights.
3. The right to require the Richland to obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of their personal information (with some exceptions – see “Directory Information” below).

Who is protected under FERPA?

Students, who are currently enrolled (or were formerly enrolled), are protected – regardless of their age. At the college level, even parents are not allowed unrestricted access to their child’s records. The right to inspect records is limited solely to the student, *except* under the following specific circumstances:

1. through the written consent of the student (see below)
2. in compliance with a subpoena
3. if the student was claimed as a dependence on the most recent tax return (note – this must be confirmed through the Registrar’s Office).

What are education records?

While there are some exceptions, an “*education record*” is any Richland record that can personally identify a student. This includes records in any format (handwritten notes, computer files, printed material, e-mails, pictures, videos, audio tapes, etc.) that are in the possession of any Richland official.

Directory Information

Directory Information is information that is generally *not* considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, and may be released for any purpose by Richland. The following items have been established by the college as directory information:

- Name, address, telephone number
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major/Field of Study
- Grade Level
- Participation in officially-recognized activities
- Dates of attendance
- Certificates or degree(s) conferred (including dates)
- Honors and awards received
- Most recent educational institution attended
- Student ID number

Students do have the right to restrict the release of Directory Information. The “*Request to Opt Out of Directory Information*” form can be found on the Richland website (<http://www.richland.edu/info/ferpa>). Once restricted, this information will not be released without written consent. This also prevents a student’s name from appearing in the newspaper for honors, graduation and/or other awards or in the graduation program.

What is the procedure for sharing confidential information?

Students can choose to let a Richland representative (a teacher or staff member) discuss their educational records with a third party (i.e., a parent, employer, etc.). In order to do this they must create a *Student Information Release Authorization* on myRichland (under the *My Student Info* Tab – *Academic* – *FERPA Waiver*).

Authorization to release information does not have an expiration date; however, students may revoke their authorizations at any time by submitting a written request to Student Records.

For more information on FERPA

To learn more about FERPA, contact the Registrar at (217) 875-7211, ext. 6438 or registrar@richland.edu.