

VFMC RELEASE OF INFORMATION POLICY and PROCEDURES

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords eligible students certain rights with respect to their educational records. (An “eligible student” under FERPA is a student who is 18 years of age or older or who attends a postsecondary institution). These rights include:

- The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days after Valley Forge Military College (VFMC) receives a request
- The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA
- The right to provide written consent before VFMC discloses personally identifiable information from the student’s educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by VFMC to comply with requirements of FERPA

In accordance with the Family Education Rights to privacy act (Buckley Amendment), no information pertaining to a student’s education record will be released without the written consent of that student.

An education record consists of the following information:

Academic Records
Disciplinary Records
Financial Records
Health Records

Students are informed of their rights via the “Annual FERPA notification” that is posted to the VFMC website and provided during Registration and Orientation.

Exceptions to Written Consent

VFMC may release personally identifiable information from a student’s education record without the student’s written consent, if the disclosure meets one of the following:

1. School official with a legitimate academic interest. A school official has a legitimate academic interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her responsibility for VFMAC.

A school official is a person employed by VFMAC in an

- administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement personnel and health staff)
 - a person or company with whom VFMAC has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using VFMAC employees or officials. This includes our legal counsel, auditors, and collection agencies
 - a person serving on the College Oversight Committee or the Board of Trustees
2. If the information has been designated by VFMC as directory information.
 3. Officials of another institution of postsecondary education in which a student seeks to enroll or is already enrolled, so long as the information is for purposes related to the student’s enrollment or transfer.
 4. Authorized representatives of federal, state or local educational or other authorities
 5. Persons in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or the student has received

6. Organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the institution, relating to a state higher education authority's ability to make disclosures on behalf of VFMC
7. To accrediting agencies
8. To parents of a dependent student
9. To comply with a judicial or administrative agency order or lawfully issued subpoena or as otherwise required or permitted by law.
10. To persons in connection with a health or safety emergency
11. To the student
12. To a victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense concerning the final results of a disciplinary hearing with respect to the alleged crime
13. To a third party the final results of disciplinary proceedings relating to a crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense (if the students been found in violation of VFMC's rules and policies)
14. To the parent of a student concerning the student's violation of any Federal, State or Local law or policy regarding the use or possession of alcohol (if under the age of 21) or a controlled substance
15. The disclosure concerns sex offenders and other individuals required to register under state and or federal law

VFMC makes a reasonable attempt to notify each student of these disclosures.

Directory Information is not normally considered a violation of a person's privacy. Students have the right to "block" the institute from distributing directory information, provided the student notifies the Registrar's Office in writing and at least 7 days in advance of the distribution of the directory information.

VFMAC also has the right to release directory information without a student's written consent. The following is considered directory information by VFMC:

- Student's Name
- Honors
- Field of study
- Dates of Attendance
- Enrollment status (full time/part time)
- Degrees awarded
- Participation in recognized athletic activities and extra-curricular activities
- Rank in chain of command
- Student Photographs
- Weight and Height of members of athletic teams

Directory Information CAN NEVER include a student's:

- Race
- Gender
- Social Security Number
- Grades
- GPA
- Class schedule
- Country of citizenship
- Religion
- Disciplinary Action
- Academic Status (dismissal/probation)

This information CAN NEVER be released except with the written permission of the student, or to comply with a judicial or administrative agency order, a lawfully-issued subpoena, or as otherwise required or permitted by law.

A VFMAC employee does not have permission to disclose any personally identifiable information regarding a student, to a third party, without the written consent of the student.

Personally identifiable information includes:

1. Name of student, student's parent, or any other family member
2. Student's campus or home address
3. A personal identifier (social security number, student ID number)
4. A list of personal characteristics or other information which would make the student's identity traceable.

Procedures for Release of information:

At the beginning of a student's first term at VFMC, they are required to sign a FERPA Waiver for Academic and Disciplinary Information. The student has the right to sign the waiver indicating that no information can be released without their written permission.

If the student signs the form allowing VFMC/VFMAC to release information to a third party, they will include the third party(s) name and the relationship of the third party(s) to them.

Information is only released per request by that third party, no information will be automatically sent to the third party. Information pertaining to grades is only released in writing, not over the phone or in an email.

Faculty and staff will be provided access to a spreadsheet of current students, and whether or not they have given permission for information pertaining to their education records to be released and to whom we may release the information.

If a faculty or staff member is contacted by a third party trying to gain access to information contained in a student's educational record, that the student has not given VFMC/VFMAC permission to release, the faculty or staff member is to automatically inform the individual that they cannot release any information and to contact the Registrar's Office. The Registrar will forward that individual to the correct overseer of the various section of the student's educational record.

Each part of the student's educational records is administered and the release of that information is controlled by a specific office. The Offices which are responsible for release of specific information:

Academic Records:	Office of the Registrar (College)
Disciplinary Records:	Commandant's Office
Health Records:	Health Department
Financial Records:	Bursor's Office
Financial Aid Records:	Financial Aid Office
Counseling Records:	Counseling Center
Accommodations for Learning Disabilities:	Learning Assessment and Support Center (LASC)

Once a student has graduated, withdrawn or been dismissed from VFMC, their educational record is sealed and the FERPA waiver is no longer valid.

All information from a student's educational record, that is requested to be released after they are no longer a current student, must ordinarily have the written permission of the student, or be the subject of a lawfully-issued subpoena or to comply with a judicial or administrative agency order, or as otherwise permitted by law.

If a request is made by a third party to release information from a former student's education record, that student must give permission in writing to release the information requested. All correspondence must be in writing, and signed. No email correspondence for the release of information will be accepted.

If a student signs their written request in the presence of the responsible party releasing the information, and the responsible party will sign document as a witness.

Requesting copies of educational records:

Both current and former students may request copies of their educational records.

The "Request for Access to Student Records Form" must be requested by student. This form pertains to Academic and Disciplinary and LASC information only. Copies of health and financial records must be processed directly through those offices.

The form must be completed and returned to the appropriate office (Registrar, Commandant, and LASC). The Office has 15 business days to copy the records. A fee can be requested.

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