

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey POLICY ON PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the circumstances under which Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (“Rutgers”) will disclose information about a student to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the student without the prior consent of the student. The policy developed by Rutgers is consistent with the educational philosophy of the University and with all laws which govern disclosures of information about students to parents or legal guardians.

University Philosophy

Consistent with its mission of educating students, Rutgers treats its students as adults, and supports them as they develop individual responsibility, maturity and independence.

Rutgers respects the trust between students and parents or legal guardians, and is committed to maintaining effective relationships with students and parents or legal guardians. When a student chooses to enlist the support of parents(s) or legal guardian(s), the staff at Rutgers is happy to work in partnership with the student and parent(s) or legal guardian(s). By enabling students to take responsibility for their actions and engage the support of their parent(s) or legal guardian(s), Rutgers fosters students’ learning and growth, and encourages them to mature into responsible, self-sufficient adults.

There are circumstances in which the disclosure of certain information is appropriate. These include questions related to financial aid and certain safety or health emergencies. The applicable law and information which is disclosed to parents is described more fully below.

Federal Law Regarding Disclosure of Educational Records

The right of access to information in a student’s educational records is governed by a federal law known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”). The right of access to other information, such as medical or counseling records, is governed by applicable state or federal law. As a general rule, students attending a college or university, regardless of age, have the right under FERPA to control disclosure of information from their educational records.¹ FERPA permits colleges and universities to make certain exceptions to this general rule and allows disclosure of certain directory information from a student’s educational records without obtaining the student’s prior consent.

¹ There are various exceptions to this general rule. For example, educational records are subject to subpoena. There are other exceptions, some of which are complex, it is not the purpose of this policy to provide a comprehensive summary of FERPA.

Categories of Information Which May Be Disclosed To Parents Without Student Consent

Rutgers reserves the right to disclose information from a student's educational records to parents or guardians under various circumstances without a student's prior consent. Typically, these disclosures fall into the following three categories:

1. Rutgers may disclose information to parents in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or received.
2. Rutgers may notify the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a student in connection with a serious injury or other health or safety emergency when deemed necessary to protect the health or the safety of the student or other individuals.
3. Parents or guardian of students may be provided with information that the University has designated as "directory information" unless the student has specifically requested that directory information be kept confidential.

In those circumstances when Rutgers does not notify parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and when students choose not to involve their parent(s) or legal guardian(s), students nonetheless have an extensive support system available to them. Rutgers provides an array of resources and services within the university community including academic and psychological counseling, a drug and alcohol counseling and prevention program which includes mandatory counseling and education for students who violate university policies, and student health services, among others. All students have full use of services available to them on campus, subject to the policies and procedures which govern the utilization of those services.

Rutgers observes, and is guided by all laws and regulations regarding disclosures of information about students by an institution of higher learning. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to supersede any provision of federal and state laws governing such disclosures.

Questions about this policy or FERPA in general should be directed to the Office of Enterprise Risk Management, Ethics and Compliance and the University Director of Privacy (973) 972 8093 or email ferparu@rutgers.edu.