

# FERPA Question and Answer for Parents and Guardians

## *General Information*

### **What is FERPA?**

FERPA is the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, a federal law on educational records covering kindergarten through higher education. For higher education, it identifies the student as the owner of their educational record. A student is defined as a person who is enrolled and taking classes at an institution of higher education regardless of their age.

### **What records are covered under FERPA?**

An education record is any file, electronic media or paper kept by any department of the College. The most common student educational records are the transcript, student conduct files, career planning records, housing records, counseling center and student health records. Some records may have additional restrictions based on the law or professional practice particularly counseling and medical records.

### **Is there a waiver so I can access my student's records covered by FERPA?**

New students are asked to complete a FERPA form usually during orientation or early in their college experience. On the waiver, they may choose to permit specific people, usually parents or guardians, to have access to their college records. They can also choose to release information to any other person or they can decline to release information to anyone. The student can change their FERPA permission at any time by contacting the Registrar's Office, Academic Advisement or the Student Affairs Office.

### **If my student provides permission for me to have access to their educational records, does that mean the College will contact me regarding academic or non-academic issues?**

The simple answer is no. The College, in general, will communicate with the student and not parents/guardians. There are some exceptions regarding alcohol/drug offenses, disciplinary probation and emergencies- see some of the other questions. By signing the waiver, the student provides access to parents/guardians if they contact a College office.

### **I heard the student's directory information is available at any time. What is directory information and is it correct?**

Directory information is defined as basic information regarding a student including the student's name, home address, on campus and off campus telephone number, cell phone number, date and place of birth, campus email address, photo, field of major, dates of attendance and degrees and awards received and previous educational institution attended. Body weight and height are considered directory information for intercollegiate athletes. A student may also place a privacy restriction on their records preventing the release of directory information by contacting the Registrar's Office. If a privacy restriction is placed, no information is released to anyone including parents/guardians with few exceptions.

### **Are there exceptions to FERPA?**

There are exceptions to FERPA. The College must provide information as directed by subpoena or court order. Information can be provided in the case of an emergency with the student or campus. There are exceptions when there is an application for financial aid, information provided to an accrediting body, certain government officials in carrying out a lawful function, a student transferring to a college or university and employees with legitimate educational interests has access to student's educational records.

## *Academic Questions*

### Can I find out my student's grades?

Parents do not have direct access to a student's grades. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to keep track of their grades for each course. It is important the parents keep an open line of communication with their student regarding their academic performance.

#### Mid-term Grades

- Are NOT mailed to parents
- Are available to ALL students through their Web-Advisor Account
- Are mailed to all first-year students to their home address regardless of their grades
- Are mailed to upperclass students only if they have a "D" or an "F" in a course.
- *NOTE: A HOLD placed on a student's account may prevent them from viewing their midterm grades on Web Advisor.*

#### Final Grades

- Are NOT mailed to parents OR students
- Are available to ALL students through their Web-Advisor Account
- *NOTE: A HOLD placed on a student's account may prevent them from viewing their final grades.*

### Will I be notified if my student is on academic probation or suspension?

No, parents are not notified if their student is on probation, suspended or dismissed. The student receives a letter through their King's Email and via surface mail to their home address from the Academic Standing Committee informing them of their Academic Status (Probation Suspension, or Dismissal). It is important the parents keep an open line of communication with their student regarding their academic performance.

### Am I notified if my student misses class?

No, parents are not notified if their student misses class. Faculty usually report students who are absent through our Academic Alert System. The student is notified via their King's email and is instructed to meet with their Academic Advisor immediately. The Academic Advisor also receives notification of the Academic Alert and is encouraged to follow-up with the student in the event the student does not meet with the advisor. It is important the parents keep an open line of communication with their student regarding their academic performance.

### Can I call my student's academic advisor about their academic performance?

Provided the parents' names are on the FERPA form, parents can call their student's academic advisor; however, the advisor may have limited information. Advisors traditionally only have access to Mid-Term and Final Grades and any Academic Alerts that were submitted. It is important the parents keep an open line of communication with their student regarding their academic performance.

### What type of information will my student receive regarding their academic performance?

- Individual assignments:** Your student ought to receive feedback on assignments submitted, presentations given, and quizzes or tests taken. Some instructors provide such feedback through Moodle, while others provide feedback when an assignment or its grading rubric is returned to the student in person. Students are encouraged to retain every assignment when returned by the instructor, and to take the opportunity to learn from the feedback provided.

- B. **Mid-term grades:** Your student will receive a mid-term grade for classes if they are a first-year student or if the student has earned a D or F in a course. If the student has earned a D or F, the instructor submits a deficiency report that provides some detail as to the reasons for the unsatisfactory performance. This deficiency is shared with the student's academic advisor. Students who earn a D or F ought to make appointments to meet with the instructor and the academic advisor. A grade given at mid-term reflects an assessment of the assignments submitted and graded to date. It suggests that if a student continues to perform at the same level on future assignments that the student can expect a similar final grade for the course.
- C. **Academic Alert:** If an instructor finds a student's level of work or attendance in class to be unsatisfactory, the instructor may notify the student to arrange a meeting with their academic advisor. It is the student's responsibility to contact the advisor to arrange a meeting. An Academic Alert notification may be received by a student at any time during the course of a semester.
- D. **Need to meet with an instructor:** Faculty members will often request that a student meet with them to discuss a student's progress in a course. Such requests may be made in a comment made on a paper or test, through email or in person. While such requests are a serious matter, the instructor can only request a meeting; it is the student's responsibility to arrange a meeting.
- E. **Academic Status in a Course:** Students who are interested in their academic status in a course have two means to attain some evidence. First, a student, who keeps track of their graded assignments, can consult the course syllabus to review the weight given to various assignments by the instructor and discern a general sense of their course status. Second, a student can request to meet with a professor to review their grades and receive feedback on the student's performance to date. It is important to remember that the instructor's feedback is based on the work completed to date and indicates only the present status of a student's work. Faculty cannot predict the quality of work not yet completed.

### *Student Life Questions*

#### **Will I be notified if my student is hurt or in danger?**

There are exceptions to FERPA. One of those exceptions is if a student medically or psychologically cannot make a decision for themselves due to their condition, the College can decide to notify their parent or guardian. In addition, if a student is admitted to the hospital for more than a day (other than emergency room or urgent care) the College may notify parents or guardians. If a student is detained in jail for more than a day, (locally in the Luzerne County Prison) the College may notify parents or guardians.

#### **Will I be notified if my student is in trouble for alcohol or drug offenses?**

Maybe. The Administrative Hearing Officer, if they find a student responsible for violation of the College's alcohol or drug policy, may notify the parents or guardians after the appeal process is completed. If a student is accused of a violation but the Hearing Officer does not make a decision, it is up to the student to communicate that information to their parents/guardians.

#### **Will I be notified if my student violates the College Code of Conduct or other policies?**

Parents/guardians may be notified if a student is placed on disciplinary probation due to being held responsible for violation of the Student Code of Conduct. The Hearing Officer decides as part of the sanction if parental notification is to take place. Students who receive a warning (censure), fine or other sanction may not include parental notification unless the case involves alcohol or drugs.

### **Will I be informed of my student's off campus misbehavior?**

All King's students, as common with most colleges and universities, are accountable for following the College's Student Code of Conduct on and off campus. Students represent the College anywhere on campus and in the the community. If a student violates the Student Code of Conduct, the same parent/guardian notification applies, as outlined above regardless of on or off campus.

### **Does the waiver cover information in the College's Counseling Center?**

The Counseling Center and Student Health Center each require an additional waiver to provide information to parents/guardians regarding their communication with a client. The Counseling Center must obtain a Release of Information form when/if the student presents for services. The Student Health Center includes a waiver within the Medical History Form that is signed electronically via the Student Health Portal upon the student's initial submission of health requirements.

### ***Post Attendance and Other Information***

#### **If a student is applying for graduate/professional school, a job or transferring to another college or university, what information is provided and how is it released?**

If a student is applying for graduate or professional school, a job or transferring to another undergraduate institution, the student completes a release form with that school or job, which is sent to King's College. For student conduct records, the College will provide information on any case the student was found responsible or in violation of College policy. If the request includes a request for copies of the reports or other documentation, it will be provided. Requests for academic records, typically a transcript should be made to the Registrar's Office. The College must provide the information the student releases. Student Affairs files, including student conduct records, are kept for seven years after a student graduates or leaves the College. Records will not be altered or deleted until destroyed at the end of the seven-year period.

If a student is transferring to another institution, the Student Affairs Office can release student conduct records to the institution the student has applied without the student's signed release. This is an exception under FERPA.

#### **Where can I find out more information about FERPA?**

Information regarding the College's FERPA policy is available in the Student Handbook available on-line. Information regarding FERPA is available at the government website:  
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

*King's College*  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711  
Telephone: 570.208.5900