

Privacy Rights of Students

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. These rights include:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day Covenant receives a request for access. A student should submit to the Office of Records or other appropriate official, a written request that identifies the records the student wishes to inspect. The college official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. A student who wishes to ask Covenant to amend a record should write the appropriate official clearly identifying the part of the record the student wants changed, and specify why it should be changed. If Covenant decides not to amend the record as requested, Covenant will notify the student in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to provide written consent before Covenant discloses personally identifiable information from the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. FERPA was designed to transfer parental "rights" to their "adult" child when he or she enrolls in college. The College intends to uphold the letter and the spirit of FERPA while at the same time upholding biblical relationships and responsibilities of the family and/or legal guardian.

As general practice, parents and/or other students are not informed by the College of disciplinary action taken toward a student. The College will always encourage the student to communicate openly and honestly with the parent. There may, however, be exceptions. Even though each student is legally and morally responsible for his or her own conduct, the College also recognizes the concern of legal guardians for the welfare of their sons and daughters. Thus, the College reserves the option to notify a parent in the following conditions:

- Discontinuation of enrollment or extended absence from the College.
- Medical treatment or psychiatric examination required to meet emergencies or to maintain one's status as a student.
- Misconduct which is of such a nature that the student is in danger of suspension.

Covenant discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A Covenant official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. A Covenant official is a person employed by the college in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom Covenant has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using Covenant employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; 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.

Covenant designates the following categories of student information as public or "directory information." Such information may be disclosed by the institution for any purpose at its discretion:

Category I Name, address, telephone number, email address, dates of attendance, enrollment status, class,

photograph.

Category II Previous institution(s) attended, major field of study, awards, honors, degrees conferred (including dates).

Category III Past and present participation in officially recognized sports and activities, physical factors (height, weight of athletes), date and place of birth.

Currently enrolled students may withhold disclosure of any category of information under FERPA by submitting a written request to withhold disclosure to the Office of Records.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the college to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Please direct any questions regarding privacy right to the Office of Records at Records@covenant.edu or call 706-419-1134.

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