



NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS REGARDING STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students 18 years of age and older (“adult students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records.

Each student’s records will be kept in a confidential file located at the student’s school office. The information in a student’s record file will be available for review only by the parents or legal guardian of a student, adult student (eighteen years of age or older), and those authorized by federal law and state and district regulations. The school secretary or registrar is the Custodian of Records and is responsible for the supervision of student records at the school.

A parent/guardian or adult student has the following rights:

- A. The right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days after receipt of the written request for access. The school has a form which may be used to submit a written request. After receipt of the completed form/written request, the Custodian of Records will notify the parent/guardian or adult student of the time and place where the records can be inspected. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents/guardians or adult students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- B. The right to request amendments to the student’s education records if the parent/guardian or adult student believes the record is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Parents/guardians or adult students who wish to ask the school to amend a record must submit a written request identifying the part of the record they would like changed and why it should be changed. The school has a form which may be used to identify the information in the record the parent/guardian or adult student believes is inaccurate or misleading and to specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. After receipt of the completed written request to amend the student record, the school will review the request and make a determination regarding the amendment request. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or adult student, the school will notify the parent/guardian or adult student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for an amendment. Additional information concerning the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or adult student has the right to place a statement with the record identifying his/her view about the contested information.
- C. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to those disclosures allowed by FERPA without prior consent. The school’s Administrative Guideline 8330 describes those exceptions and is available upon request.

- D. The right to request non-disclosure of “directory information” to third parties. Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can be disclosed by law to outside organizations without a parent/guardian’s prior written consent. Additionally, two federal laws require public school districts to provide military recruiters, upon request, with specific directory information (name, address, telephone number), unless parents/guardians or adult students have submitted a request in writing that they do not want their student’s directory information disclosed without their prior written consent. The written request to not release directory information to third parties must be submitted by October 1 of each school year, and is in effect for only that school year (i.e., requests for non-release of directory information must be submitted annually). For new students enrolling in West Ottawa Public Schools after October 1, the written request for non-disclosure of directory information must be received within 30 days of enrollment.
- E. The right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U. S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. S.W., Washington, DC 20202.
- F. The right to obtain a copy of the District’s Policy 8330 and Administrative Guideline 8330 on student records.

Each year the District will provide public notice to students and their parents of its intent to make available upon request certain information known as “directory information.” The Board designates as student “directory information”:

- Student’s name
- Student’s address
- Student’s listed/published telephone number
- Date of birth
- Photographic and computer images of the student
- Video images of the student
- Parent/guardian name, address and phone number
- Grade level
- Participation in officially-recognized activities and sports
- Height and weight, if a member of an athletic team
- Dates of attendance (date entered and date left the District)
- Date of graduation
- Awards received, honor rolls, scholarships
- Current West Ottawa school attending

Directory information may be kept by various means including, but not limited to, written or printed documents, audio or videotape, computer database, microfilm, and microfiche.

The primary purpose of directory information is to allow West Ottawa Public Schools to include this type of information from your child’s education record in certain school publications. Examples include:

- Student directory for students, parents, and staff only,
- Other educational or governmental agencies, including military recruiters,
- To recognize and honor student achievement in various public and local media,
- Prospective employers of district students.

The District may also disclose student directory information to vendors who provide approved services or products to District students (e.g., senior class rings, cap and gowns, and the like). The District carefully reviews each request for educational benefit and applicable state and federal law prior to making a determination to release or not release directory information. Otherwise, the District does not provide student directory information to third parties.