

1-20: Accounts Receivable: Disclosure of Student Records

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I. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - FERPA defines the requirements for access to, and release of, student education records. Student education records are defined as records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational institution. In general, the education records of a student may be disclosed only to the student unless the student provides prior written consent to disclose their records to other persons. Prior written consent is not required, however, if disclosure is made to an individual if the student is eligible to be claimed as a dependent on that person's federal income tax return, as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code. Additionally, prior written consent is not required if disclosure is in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to:

1. Determine eligibility for the aid;
2. Determine the amount of the aid;
3. Determine the conditions for the aid; or
4. Enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.

Financial aid is defined as a payment of funds provided to an individual that is conditioned on the individual's attendance at an educational agency or institution.

II. Accounts Receivable Records - Charges and payments posted to a student's account are considered to be education records subject to FERPA requirements.

III. Requests for Information on Student Accounts

A. Parent, Family Member, or Other Individual - Frequently a parent or someone other than the student will request information pertaining to a student's account. Specific requests may be for a balance due, an itemization of amount due, any financial aid amounts applied to an account, or other information relating to the student's account. If the person requesting information claims the student as a dependent on their federal tax income return, then release the information requested. If the person does not claim the student as a dependent on their federal income tax return, then explain the federal law which prohibits releasing information without signed permission from the student. Suggest the following solutions to the person making the request:

1. The student can come to the Accounts Receivable Office and sign a FERPA Release Form allowing release of information to others.
2. The requester can get billing information from the Internet (WEBOPUS) with the student's ID number and personal identification number (PIN). The student must provide the PIN to the requester.

3. The student can get the information and provide it to the requester.

If a student has previously submitted a FERPA Release Form, it will be referenced in the Comment Block of the data form TSADETL (Student Account Detail Form.)

B. Student Requests to Send Information to Others - If former students request that we mail or fax information to them or to another person, then inform them that we need a signed request specifying the information needed and the address or fax number for distribution. Current students are responsible for mailing or faxing their billing information to their parents or others.

C. Scholarship Agencies or Trust Funds - Various scholarship agencies or trust funds may request information about a student's account to enable them to pay the correct amount due for the student. We will release the accounts receivable information requested since these payments meet the definition of financial aid.

IV. Requests to Pay on Student and Obtain Payment Information - Frequently a parent or someone other than the student will desire to make a payment on a student's account. Before paying, however, the person will generally want information relating to the amount due. The information requested may include an itemization of the amount due, any financial aid amounts applied to the account, or other information relating to the student's account. The more difficult it is for an individual to pay a bill, the more difficult collection efforts will be. Therefore, if someone simply wants to make a payment on a student's account, then inform them of the total amount due. If they want additional information about the student's account, then follow the procedure as described in section III of this fiscal procedure.