FERPA Guidelines
RE: Release of Student Educational Records

What is FERPA? The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 protects the privacy of a student’s education records by placing limits on who may have access to the records, what information may be shared or disclosed, and how that information may be used. Santa Monica College complies with FERPA and has strict policies and procedures in place governing student records. In general, the College does not permit access to a student’s records or disclose information in them to anyone (including a student’s parents) without the student’s written consent. The student’s age is not a factor.

Why is FERPA useful and necessary?
FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records, including the right to inspect their education records, request an amendment of the records that the student believes are inaccurate, and the right to control disclosures of their records. The exception to this is “Directory Information” which can be disclosed without consent.

What is considered DIRECTORY INFORMATION?
An exception permitted by FERPA is the release of Directory Information to parties outside the institution. Directory Information is defined as information which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE HAS A MORE RESTRICTIVE DEFINITION OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION.
The following Directory Information may be released without student signature of approval:

Student name
Age
Dates of attendance
Weight & height of members of athletic teams
Most recent or previous school attended
City of residence
Major field of study
Degrees and awards received
Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
Photograph

In most instances all other student educational record information may not be released without written consent of the student, other than to school officials with a "need to know". This includes, grades, social security numbers, ethnicity, ID number, academic progress, or any other non-directory information.

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**How does a student place a CONFIDENTIAL HOLD on their information?**

Students who do not wish to have their directory information disclosed should update their Student Profile information through the Student Self Service System on the Admissions webpage.

**What does a CONFIDENTIAL HOLD mean?**

This means that NO information may be released to anyone without written consent from the student. Release of “CONFIDENTIAL” records to third parties or acknowledging that such students are at SMC is prohibited without the student’s written permission to do so.

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**What does this mean for parents?**

This means that no matter the age of your student, college officials may only share general information with you about college policies and procedures and cannot share specifics about your student UNLESS the student gives prior written permission.

*Ideally, students will interact with the College on their own behalf.*

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**When CAN SMC share information with Parents without student consent?**

Information may be shared with parents or other appropriate family members if there is a health or safety emergency.

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**Whom do I contact if I need to review my student records, or if I feel that there is an error with my educational records?**

Please make a request in writing to the Associate Dean of Enrollment Services in the Admissions Office. Please be specific about what records you are requesting to review or amend. Provide appropriate documentation if necessary.

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**File a Complaint– If you feel the college has failed to comply with FERPA requirements.**

**Edit your educational Records– If you believe your educational records are inaccurate or misleading.**

**Release your directory information? Your directory information may be released unless you put a confidential hold on this information.**

**Provide written consent– If you'd like to allow a parent, family member or other party to access your records. This is done on a case-by-case basis.**

**Access your education records– If you'd like to review your education records, make a request in writing to the Registrar’s office (Admissions), identifying which records you’d like to review.**

For more information about FERPA, please go to the Admissions webpage and click on the FERPA link.

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