

Minnesota North College

Confidentiality of Student Records and Data Privacy Policy

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The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education record. The law applies to all educational agencies and institutions that receive funding under any program administered by the U.S. Department of Education and to private entities who perform services on behalf of those educational agencies and institutions. It is also codified in the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act at Minn. Stat. Section 13.32.

Students have the following rights under FERPA and Minn. Stat. 13.32:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education record within 10 business days of the day the College receives a written request to inspect.
2. The right to obtain copies of educational records within 10 business days of the day the College receives a written request for copies, if the student is willing to pay any applicable copy costs.
3. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
4. The right to provide written consent before the College discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
5. 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 20202-4605.
6. The right to request that the College treat the student's directory data as private educational data.

This information is also sent in an annual notice to all enrolled students, as required by FERPA.

Requests to Inspect/Review and Amend/Remove Education Records

Upon signed written request, the College shall provide a student with access to his or her education records, unless limited by law. The College shall also provide copies of educational data to students if the student is willing to pay applicable copy costs. Students who believe that their education records contain information that is inaccurate, misleading, incomplete or is otherwise in violation of their privacy rights may challenge the record through the complaint process. Students whose records are not amended will be informed of their right to a formal hearing.

Disclosure without Consent via FERPA Exceptions

The College may provide educational data to third parties without student consent as set forth in 99 CFR 99.30 and Minn. Stat. 13.32.

Federal and state law authorize release of private information without consent to:

- other school officials, including faculty within the College/University, who have legitimate educational interests in the information;
- other schools in which you seek or intend to enroll, or are enrolled;
- other schools where you are also enrolled or receiving education services;
- the federal Comptroller General or other federal, state or local education officials for purposes of program compliance, audit or evaluation;
- as appropriate in connection with your application for, or receipt of, financial aid;
- the juvenile justice system, if you are a juvenile, and the information is necessary, prior to adjudication, to determine the juvenile justice system's ability to serve you;
- an alleged victim of crime of violence or sexual assault, if you are the alleged perpetrator of the assault, and the release is of the final results of a disciplinary proceeding against you related to the alleged crime;
- a court, grand jury, or state or federal agency, if the information is sought with a valid subpoena;
- an institution engaged in research for an educational institution or agency related to testing, student aid, or improved instruction;
- appropriate persons in connection with an emergency, if necessary to protect your health or safety or the health or safety of others;
- if required by a court order;
- others as required or permitted by law.

Allowing Disclosure / Authorization for Release of Information

The College will not disclose or release to a third party personally identifiable information from education records without prior written consent of the student except as authorized by law.

The “Authorization for Release of Student Information” form is used by a student to provide written consent for disclosure of education records. To be valid it must specify the records to be disclosed, state the purpose of the disclosure, identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made, and be signed and dated by the student.

The authorization consent begins on the date signed, and expires three years from the date signed or until consent is withdrawn, whichever comes first. A section at the bottom of the “Authorization for Release of Student Information” form is to be used to withdraw previous consent.

At a student’s request Minnesota North will provide a copy of the records released pursuant to the consent.

Directory Data

Minnesota North College designates the following information as directory data. Directory data is public data under Minn. Stat. Section 13.32:

- Name
- Hometown (city and state listed in permanent address record)
- Major field of study (program pursued)
- Class status (freshman or sophomore)
- Enrollment status (full-time or part-time)
- Dates of attendance
- Honors, awards, and scholarships received
- Degrees, diplomas, certificates, and dates awarded
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of athletic team members
- Most recent previous educational institution attended

Regardless of the above list, Minnesota statute prohibits colleges from providing student contact information to credit card issuers.

Limited Directory Data

Minnesota North College has designated the following data as “limited directory data” under FERPA:

1. Student name, e-mail address, and Student Change Code (NEW/RTN/DROP) are defined as limited directory data for sharing with the official College student association.
2. Student email addresses and Star ID numbers are defined as limited directory data for enterprise technology related purposes internal to the Minnesota State system of colleges and universities that are approved by System Office IT, including, but not limited to, inclusion of email addresses and Star ID numbers in a directory accessible to Minnesota State students and employees.
3. Student images (ID picture, photographs, etc.) are defined as limited directory data for release at the discretion of the college to media and other third parties as official college photographs, and for publications by the college.
4. Student name and current address are defined as limited directory data for sharing with county auditors for use in election day registration.

Suppressing Directory Data

A student chooses to restrict/suppress their directory data from being disclosed by completing a “Request to Restrict Directory Information” form.

Students who are considering restricting their directory information should realize the following:

- Even with a restriction, a student’s directory information will be used by internally by Minnesota North as needed to perform college business and as otherwise allowed by law.
- Restrictions may have negative consequences or inconveniences for the student. With a restriction in place, a student’s name will not appear in honors lists or the commencement program. Third parties such as potential employers will be informed there is no information available about the student’s enrollment or degrees awarded.

A student’s request for restriction remains in effect until formal written request to remove the restriction is received by Minnesota North. A section at the bottom of the “Request to Restrict Directory Information” form is used to rescind previously requested restrictions.