

STUDENT RECORDS

Acton Public and Acton Boxborough Regional Schools Annual Notice The Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act Massachusetts Student Records Regulations

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations ("Massachusetts Regulations") together provide parents and eligible students (those who have reached the age of 14 or who have entered the ninth grade) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. A general overview of those rights is provided below. Parents and students may obtain a complete copy of their rights under the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations by contacting the Director of Pupil Services, 978-264-4700, extension 3265. These rights include:

1. The **right to access** the student's education records. Parents or eligible students should submit their request for access to the building principal. Access is generally provided within ten days of a request. Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, Section 34H, however, provides specific procedures that must be followed prior to release of records to a parent who does not have physical custody of a child. Information about these procedures can be obtained from the building principal or the Director of Pupil Services.
2. The **right to request amendment** of the student's education records. Parents or eligible students should direct their request to the principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they wish to have amended and why.
3. The **right to consent to disclosures** of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and the Massachusetts Regulations authorize disclosure without consent.

Some of the Exceptions:

- One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. Such school officials include professional, administrative and clerical staff who are employed by or under agreement with the Acton Public and/or Acton Boxborough Regional Schools
- The Acton Public and Acton Boxborough Regional Schools also disclose all student records (which includes health records and special education records, if any) without parent/eligible student consent to officials of other schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, upon receipt of a request from such school officials.

- The Acton Public and Acton Boxborough Regional Schools may disclose, without written consent, designated "directory information," which is information generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the district to include this type of information from your child's records in certain school publications. Information that a district designates as directory information may be disclosed to outside organizations (for example, class ring manufacturers and yearbook publishers) without prior consent.

Acton Public Schools has designated elementary students' names, address, telephone number, date of birth, grade level, and classroom assignment as "directory information." Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools has designated middle and high school students' names, address, telephone number, date of birth, team/class assignment (middle school), graduation class, participation in recognized activities and sports and honors and awards as "directory information."

In addition, federal law requires that Acton-Boxborough provide military recruiters or officials of institutions of higher education, upon request, with three categories of directory information - names, addresses and telephone listings - of all secondary students. If a parent or eligible student does not want the district to disclose any of the above director), information, the parent/eligible student must notify the building principal in writing by a certain date, otherwise the information will be released without further notice or written consent.

4. The **right to file a complaint** concerning alleged failures by the districts to comply with the regulations and laws governing student records. Complaints may be filed with the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148 and/or the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-5901.

It should be noted that the Acton (APS) and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts (ABRSD) maintain student records using an electronic student information management system, PowerSchool. These electronic student records include the same documents that would otherwise be found in a paper version of the student record including, but not limited to, student photos, emergency contact cards, report cards, etc.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy and confidentiality of student records. All of the FERPA protections apply to electronic student information management systems.

Approved by APS/AB School Committees on 1/4/07

Revised by APS/AB School Committees on 5/1/08