

A Parent's Guide to Student Information and Confidentiality

The transition into adulthood carries many new experiences, responsibilities, and choices. Each year, we at Trinity University are honored to host an exceptional class of new students and look forward to facilitating this transition as well as providing support and assistance to both parents and students in what can be a trying time.

One of the notable differences students will find at the inception of their academic career at Trinity is that they are expected to act as advocates for themselves regarding their learning experience, and must bear primary responsibility for directing their own progress and achieving their own goals. Of course, parents and others may offer their support, and the vast majority of our students are eager to receive such support.

The University encourages student responsibility and individual initiative while maintaining compliance with Federal legislation and recommended principles of confidentiality. Trinity University complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended. This Act was designed to protect students' rights by maintaining the privacy of educational records, establishing the rights of students to review their education records, and providing guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading information. Upon enrollment in college, the rights afforded under FERPA are transferred from the parent to the individual student. Therefore, it is important to note that in many circumstances, Trinity University may not be permitted to release education records to parents.

Because parents have significant concern for, and a legitimate interest in their child's academic performance, it is important for parents and students to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement regarding the release of education records. Parents who would like to receive grade reports or access to other protected education records should request that their son or daughter sign a *Student Consent to Release Educational Records* form (available online at www.trinity.edu/departments/registrar/FORMS/student_forms.htm or in the Office of the Registrar). If this form is completed, parents may receive grade reports upon written request unless the student revokes the consent in writing. Although certain exceptions apply, under FERPA, grades, financial information, and other education records are not to be disclosed to parents or anyone else outside the University without a student's prior written permission.

Students' employment records, medical records, and counseling records are not educational records as defined in FERPA. Other laws as well as professional ethics protect their confidentiality. The University is not permitted to disclose information contained in medical records or counseling records to anyone, including parents, without specific prior written consent of the student, if the student is at least 18 years old. Certain exceptions apply to protect the health or safety of the student.

If you have questions about the University's policies concerning disclosure of academic records, please contact the University Registrar (Roffice@trinity.edu). For questions regarding disciplinary or other records, please address your concerns to the Vice President for Student Affairs (Student.Affairs@trinity.edu).

Trinity University strives to work in partnership with parents and will share information relevant to the safety and success of students when doing so does not compromise the confidentiality of student records or violate Federal regulations.