

## **5020-R (JRA – R): Procedure on Student Records and Access (FERPA)**

The following the procedures pertain to the maintenance of student records in accordance with Milford School District policy JRA. Per that policy, all school district personnel will follow the provisions of the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) and its corresponding regulations.

**Directory Information.** Parents/eligible students will be given until October 1, to notify the District in writing of any or all directory information items that they refuse to permit the District to release or disclose. Notice from a parent/eligible student that any or all directory information shall not be released and will only be valid for that school year and must be re-issued each school year.

**Annual Notification/Rights of Parents and Eligible Students.** Within the first three weeks of each school year, the District will publish notice to parents and eligible students of their rights under State law, Federal law, and policy JRA. Acknowledgement by parent/eligible student will be required annually. The notice will include:

1. The rights of parents or eligible students to inspect and review the student's education records;
2. The intent of the District to limit the disclosure of information in a student's record, except: (a) by the prior written consent of the parent or eligible student; (b) as directory information; or (c) under certain, limited circumstance, as permitted by law;
3. The right of a student's parents or an eligible student to seek to correct parts of the student's educational records which he/she believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of student rights; this includes a hearing to present evidence that the records should be changed if the District decides not to alter them according to the parent's or eligible student's request;
4. The right of any person to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if the District violates FERPA; and
5. The procedure that a student's parents or an eligible student should follow to obtain copies of this policy.

**Procedure to Inspect Education Records.** Since a student's records may be maintained in several locations, the school Principal may offer to collect copies of records or the records themselves from locations other than a student's school, so that they may be inspected at one site. If parents and eligible students wish to inspect records where they are maintained, school Principals will determine if a review at that site is reasonable

Although not specifically required, in order that a request is handled in a timely manner, parents/eligible students should consider submitting their request in writing to the school Principal, identifying as precisely as possible the record or records that he/she wishes to inspect. The Principal will contact the parents or the eligible student to discuss how access is best arranged for their inspection or review of the records (copies, records brought to a single site, etc.).

The Principal will make the needed arrangements as soon as possible and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. **This procedure must be completed within fourteen (14) days that the request for access is first made.** *Note: the fourteen (14) day limit is required under New Hampshire RSA 189:66, IV, in contrast to the forty-five (45) day period otherwise allowed under FERPA.*

If for any valid reason such as the parent's working hours, distance between record location sites or the parent or student's health, a parent or eligible student cannot personally inspect and review a student's education records, the Principal may arrange for the parent or eligible student to obtain copies of the records.

When records contain information about students other than a parent's child or the eligible student, the parent or eligible student may not inspect and review the records of the other students. If such records do contain the names of other students, the Principal will seek consultation with the Superintendent and/or the District's attorney to determine how best to proceed. ***Where practicable, it may be necessary to prepare a copy of the record which has all personally identifiable information on other students redacted, with the parent or eligible student being allowed to review or receive only a copy of the redacted record. Both the original and redacted copy should be retained by the District.***

**Seeking To Correct Education Records.** To establish an orderly process to review and correct (amend) the education records for a requester, following processes are established.

1. **First-level decision.** When a parent or eligible student finds an item in the student's education records that he/she believes is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of student rights, he/she should submit a written request asking the building Principal to correct it. If the records are incorrect because of clear error and it is a simple matter to make the change, the Principal should make the correction. If the records are changed to the parent's/eligible student's satisfaction, both parties shall sign a document/form stating the date the records were changed and that the parent/eligible student is satisfied with the correction.

If the Principal believes that the record should not be changed, he/she shall:

- a. Provide the requester a copy of the questioned records at no cost;
- b. Ask the parent/eligible student to initiate a written appeal of the denial of the request for the change, which will be forwarded to the Superintendent;
- c. Forward the written appeal to the Superintendent; and
- d. Inform the parents/eligible student that the appeal has been forwarded to the Superintendent for a decision.

2. **Second-level decision.** If the parent/eligible student wishes to challenge the Principal's decision to not change the student record, he/she may appeal the matter to the Superintendent. The parent/eligible student shall submit a written request to the Principal asking that the matter be appealed to the Superintendent. The Principal will forward the appeal to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall, within ten (10) business days after receiving the appeal:

- e. Review the request;
- f. Discuss the request with other school officials;
- g. Make a decision whether or not to make the requested correction to the educational record;
- h. Schedule a meeting with the parents/eligible student if the Superintendent believes such a meeting would be necessary; and
- i. Notify the parents/eligible student of the Superintendent's decision on their request to correct the student's educational record.

3. If the Superintendent determines the records should be corrected, he/she will make the change and notify the parents/eligible student in writing that the change has been made. The letter stating the change has been made will include an invitation for the parent/eligible student to inspect and review the records to verify that the records have been corrected and the correction is satisfactory. If the records are changed to the parent's/eligible student's satisfaction, both parties shall sign a document/form stating the date the records were changed and that the parent/eligible student is satisfied with the correction.

If the Superintendent determines the records are will not be corrected, he/she will notify the parents/eligible student in writing of his/her decision. Such letter will also notify the parents/eligible student of their right to an appeal hearing before the School Board.

4. **Third-level decision.** If the parents or eligible student are not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, they may submit a written request for a hearing before the School Board. The parents/eligible student shall submit the request for a hearing with the Superintendent within ten (10) business days of the date of the Superintendent's written decision in level-two. The Superintendent will inform the School Board of the request for a hearing and will work with the School Board to schedule a hearing within forty five (45) days of receipt of the request. Once the meeting is scheduled, the Superintendent will inform the parents/eligible student in writing of the date, time and place of the hearing.

The hearing will be held in non-public session consistent with the provisions of RSA 91-A:3, unless the parent/eligible student requests that the hearing be held in public session. The School Board will give the parent/eligible student a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues raised under their request. The parents/eligible students may be assisted or represented by one or more individuals of their own choice, including an attorney.

The School Board will issue its final decision in writing within thirty (30) days of the hearing, and will notify the parents/eligible student thereof via certified mail, return receipt requested. The School Board will base its decision solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. The School Board's written decision will include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for its decision.

If the School Board determines that the student record should be corrected, it will direct the Superintendent to do so as soon as possible. The Superintendent will then contact the parents/eligible student for a meeting so they can review and inspect the records to verify that they have been corrected. At this meeting, both parties shall sign a document/form stating the date the records were corrected and that the parent/eligible student is satisfied with the correction.

The School Board's decision will be final.

5. **Parent/Eligible Student Explanation to be Included in Record.** Notwithstanding the resolution of any request to correct a student's record(s), in accordance with section (a)(2) of FERPA, a parent or eligible student may insert into that student's educational record a written explanation respecting the content of the record.

**Disclosures Made From Education Records.** When a request is made to disclose information from, or to permit access to, a student's education record, a record is kept by the record custodian. The record includes:

1. The name of the person who or agency which made the request;
2. In the event of a health and safety emergency, the articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals that formed the basis for the disclosure; and the parties to whom the agency or institution disclosed the information.
3. Whether the request was granted and, if it was, the date access was permitted or the disclosure was made; and
4. The date on which the person or agency made the request;
5. The interest which the person or agency has in the information;

The District will maintain this record as long as it maintains the student's education record. The records do not include requests for access or information relative to access which has been granted to parent(s) of the student or to an eligible student; requests for access or access granted to officials of the District who have a legitimate educational interest in the student; requests for, or disclosures of, information contained in the student's education records if the request is accompanied by the prior written consent of a parent/eligible student or if the disclosure is authorized by such prior consent or for requests for, or disclosures of, directory information designated for that student.

The records of a request for the correction of an educational record, including any appeal of a denial of that request, if the educational record is ultimately corrected shall not be treated as part of the educational record of the student and shall be preserved separately.