
EDUCATIONAL RECORDS AND STUDENT INFORMATION POLICY

Excel Academy Charter Schools (“EACS” or the “Charter School”) adopts this Educational Records and Student Information Policy to apply to all educational records and student information maintained by the Charter School.

Definitions

1. **Education Record:** An education record is any information recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, video or audiotape, film, microfilm, and microfiche that directly relates to a student and is maintained by the Charter School or by a party acting for the Charter School. Such information includes, but is not limited to: Date and place of birth; parent and/or guardian’s address, mother’s maiden name and where the parties may be contacted for emergency purposes;
 - a. Grades, test scores, courses taken, academic specializations and school activities;
 - b. Special education records;
 - c. Disciplinary records;
 - d. Medical and health records;
 - e. Attendance records and records of past schools attended; and/or
 - f. Personal information such as, but not limited to, a student’s name, the name of a student’s parent/guardian or other family members, student identification numbers, social security numbers, photographs, biometric record, or any other type of information that aids in the identification of a student.
 - g. An education record does not include any of the following:
 - i. Records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record;
 - ii. Records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the Charter School that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement;
 - iii. In the case of a person who is employed by the Charter School but not in attendance at the Charter School, records made and maintained in the normal course of business, relate exclusively to the individual in that individual’s capacity as an employee and are not available for any other purpose;
 - iv. Records of a student who is 18 years of age or older, or is attending an institution of postsecondary education, that are: a) made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in their professional capacity or assisting in a paraprofessional capacity; b) made, maintained, or used only in connection with the treatment of the student; and c) disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment. For the purpose of this definition,

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- “treatment” does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of the program of instruction at the Charter School;
- v. Records that only contain information about an individual after the individual is no longer a student at the Charter School; or
 - vi. Grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.
2. **Personally Identifiable Information:** Personally identifiable information (“PII”) is information about a student that is contained in the student’s education records that cannot be disclosed without compliance with the requirements of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 2001 (FERPA). PII includes, but is not limited to: a student’s name; the name of a student’s parent/guardian or other family members; the address of a student or student’s family; a personal identifier, such as the student’s Social Security number, student number or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student’s date of birth, place of birth, and mother’s maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or information requested by a person who the Charter School reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.
3. **Directory Information:** The Charter School may disclose the PII that it has designated as directory information, consistent with the terms of the annual notice provided by the Charter School pursuant to the FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g). The Charter School has designated the following information as directory information:
- a. Student’s name
 - b. Student’s address
 - c. Parent/guardian’s address
 - d. Telephone listing
 - e. Student’s electronic mail address
 - f. Parent/guardian’s electronic mail address
 - g. Photograph
 - h. Date and place of birth
 - i. Dates of attendance
 - j. Grade level
 - k. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
 - l. Weight and height of members of athletic teams
 - m. Degrees, honors, and awards received
 - n. The most recent educational agency or institution attended
 - o. Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student’s SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

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4. **Parent/Guardian:** Parent/guardian means a parent/guardian of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian.
5. **Eligible Student:** Eligible student means a student who has reached eighteen (18) years of age.
6. **School Official:** A school official is a person employed by the Charter School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the Board of Directors of the Charter School. A school official also may include a volunteer for the Charter School or an independent contractor of the Charter School or other party who performs an institutional service or function for which the Charter School would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the Charter School with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent/guardian or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent/guardian, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing the school official's tasks.
7. **Legitimate Educational Interest:** A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill the school official's professional responsibility.

Disclosure of Directory Information

At the beginning of each school year, the Charter School shall provide parents/guardians and eligible students with a notice containing the following information: 1) The type of personally identifiable information it designates as directory information; 2) The parent/guardian's or eligible student's right to require that the Charter School not release "directory information" without obtaining prior written consent from the parent/guardian or eligible student; and 3) The period of time within which a parent/guardian or eligible student must notify the Charter School in writing of the categories of "directory information" that it may not disclose without the parent/guardian's or eligible student's prior written consent. The Charter School will continue to honor a valid request to opt-out of the disclosure of a former student's directory information made while the former student was in attendance unless the student rescinds the opt-out request.

Annual Notification to Parents and Eligible Students

At the beginning of each school year, in addition to the notice required for directory information, the Charter School shall provide eligible students currently in attendance and parents/guardians of students currently in attendance with a notice of their rights under the FERPA. The notice shall inform the parents/guardians and eligible students that they have the right to:

1. Inspect and review the student's education records;

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2. Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;
3. Consent to disclosures of PII contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that disclosure is permitted without prior written consent pursuant to FERPA;
4. File with the U.S. Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the Charter School to comply with the requirements of FERPA and its promulgated regulations; and
5. Request that the Charter School not release student names, addresses and telephone listings to military recruiters or institutions of higher education without prior written parental consent.

The notice must also include the following:

1. The procedure for exercising the right to inspect and review educational records;
2. The procedure for requesting amendment of records;
3. A statement that the Charter School forwards education records to other agencies or institutions that have requested the records and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer; and
4. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest.

Parental and Eligible Student Rights Relating to Education Records

Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to review the student's education records. In order to do so, parents/guardians and eligible students shall submit a request to review education records in writing to the registrar/admissions office. Within five (5) business days, the Charter School shall comply with the request.

Copies of Education Records

The Charter School will provide copies of requested documents within five (5) business days of a written request for copies. The Charter School may charge reasonable fees for copies it provides to parents/guardians or eligible students. However, no charge shall be made for furnishing (1) up to two transcripts of former students' records or (2) up to two verifications of various records of former students. The charge will not include a fee to search for or to retrieve the education records.

Request for Amendment to Education Records

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Following the inspection and review of a student's education record, a parent/guardian or eligible student may file a written request with the registrar/admissions office to correct or remove any information in the student's education record that is any of the following:

- a. Inaccurate
- b. Misleading
- c. In violation of the privacy rights of the student

The Charter School will respond within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request to amend. The Charter School's response will be in writing and if the request for amendment is denied, the Charter School will set forth the reason for the denial and inform the parent/guardian or eligible student of their right to a hearing challenging the content of the education record.

If the Director or designee sustains any or all of the allegations, the Director or designee must order the correction or the removal and destruction of the information. The Director or designee must then inform the parent/guardian or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

Hearing to Challenge Education Record

If the Charter School denies a parent/guardian or eligible student's request to amend an education record, the parent/guardian or eligible student may, within thirty (30) days of the denial, request in writing that the parent/guardian or eligible student be given the opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the student's education record on the grounds that the information contained in the education record is: inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy rights of the student.

The Director or designee may convene a hearing panel to assist in making determinations regarding educational record challenges provided that the parent/guardian has given written consent to release information from the student's records to the members of the panel convened. The hearing panel shall consist of the following persons:

- a. The Director or designee of a public school other than the public school at which the record is on file;
- b. A certificated Charter School employee; and
- c. A parent/guardian appointed by the Director or by the Board of Directors, depending upon who convenes the panel.

The hearing to challenge the education record shall be held within thirty (30) days of the date of the request for a hearing. Notice of the date, time and place of the hearing will be sent by the Charter School to the parent/guardian or eligible student no later than twenty (20) days before the hearing.

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The Director or designee of a public school will serve as the chairman and shall not be required to use formal rules of evidence or procedure. The parent/guardian or eligible student will be given a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues relating to the challenge to the education record. The parent/guardian or eligible student may also, at the parent/guardian or eligible student's own expense, be assisted or represented by one or more individuals of the parent/guardian's or eligible student's choice, including an attorney. The decision of the Director or designee will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and is final. Within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the hearing, the Charter School's decision regarding the challenge will be made in writing and will include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.

If, as a result of the hearing, the Charter School decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it will amend the record accordingly and inform the parent/guardian or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the Charter School decides that the information in the education record is not inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall inform the parent/guardian or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why the parent/guardian or eligible student disagrees with the decision of the Charter School, or both. If the Charter School places a statement by the parent/guardian or eligible student in the education records of a student, it will maintain the statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

Disclosure of Education Records and Directory Information

The Charter School must have a signed and dated written consent from the parent/guardian or eligible student before releasing any non-directory information from a student's education record except as provided below. The written permission must specify the records that may be disclosed, the purpose of the disclosure, and the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. When disclosure is made pursuant to written permission, the parent/guardian or eligible student may request a copy of the disclosed records and the Charter School shall provide the parent/guardian or eligible student with a copy of the records disclosed upon request. Signed and dated written consent may include a record and signature in electronic form if it identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic consent and indicates such person's approval of the information contained in the electronic consent.

The Charter School will only disclose PII on the condition that the receiving party not disclose the information to any party without the prior written consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student and that the receiving party uses the information for the purposes for which the disclosure was made. This restriction does not apply to disclosures that fall within the disclosure

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exceptions listed below. The Charter School must maintain the appropriate records related to these disclosure exceptions, as described below. Except for disclosures pursuant to a warrant, judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, or directory information or to parents/guardians or eligible students, the Charter School will inform a receiving party of the requirement that the party not disclose the information to any other party without the prior written consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student and that the receiving party use it for the purpose for which the disclosure was made. Note specifically that the Charter School will not release information to third parties for immigration-enforcement purposes, except as required by law or court order.

The Charter School will disclose education records, without prior written consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student, to the following parties:

1. School officials who have a legitimate educational interest as defined by 34 Code of Federal Regulations (“C.F.R.”) Part 99;
2. Other schools to which a student seeks or intends to enroll so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student’s enrollment or transfer. When a student transfers schools, the Charter School will mail the original or a copy of a student’s cumulative file to the receiving district or private school within ten (10) school days following the date the request is received from the public school or private school where the student intends to enroll. The Charter School will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the request for records at the parent/guardian or eligible student’s last known address, unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent/guardian or eligible student. Additionally, the Charter School will give the parent/guardian or eligible student, upon request, a copy of the record that was disclosed and give the parent/guardian or eligible student, upon request, an opportunity for hearing pursuant to Section (IV)(3) above;
3. Certain government officials listed in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1) in order to carry out lawful functions;
4. Appropriate parties in connection with a student’s application for, or receipt of, financial aid if it is necessary to determine eligibility, amount of aid, conditions for aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of the aid;
5. Organizations conducting certain studies for the Charter School in accordance with 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(F);
6. Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
7. Parents/guardians of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
8. Individuals or entities, in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. Subject to the exceptions found in 34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(9)(i), reasonable effort must be made to notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance, so that the parent/guardian or eligible student may seek a protective order;
9. Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies;

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10. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law;
11. A foster family agency with jurisdiction over a currently enrolled or former student, a short-term residential treatment program staff responsible for the education or case management of a student, and/or a caregiver (regardless of whether the caregiver has been appointed as the student's educational rights holder) who has direct responsibility for the care of the student, including a certified or licensed foster parent, an approved relative or non related extended family member, or a resource family, may access the current or most recent records of grades, transcripts, attendance, discipline, and online communication on platforms established by the Charter School for student and parents/guardians, and any individualized education program ("IEP") or Section 504 plan that may have been developed or maintained by the Charter School; and/or
12. A victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense. The disclosure may only include the final results of the disciplinary proceedings conducted by the Charter School with respect to that alleged crime or offense. The Charter School may disclose the final results of the disciplinary proceeding, regardless of whether the Charter School concluded a violation was committed.

Record Keeping Requirements

The Charter School will maintain a record of each request for access to and each disclosure of PII from the education records of each student for as long as the records are maintained. For each request, the record must include the following information: the parties who have requested or received the information and the legitimate interests the parties had in requesting or obtaining the information.

For disclosures of PII to institutions that make disclosures of the information on behalf of the Charter School in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 99.33(b), the record must include the names of the additional parties to which the receiving party may disclose the information on behalf of the Charter School and the legitimate interests that each of the additional parties has in requesting or obtaining the information.

These record keeping requirements do not apply to requests from or disclosure to parents/guardians or eligible students, the Charter School officials with a legitimate purpose of inspecting the records, a party with written consent from the parent/guardian or eligible student, a party seeking directory information, or a party seeking or receiving the records as directed by a court order or subpoena.

The records relating to disclosures of PII may be inspected by parents/guardians and eligible students, the Charter School officials (or their assistants) responsible for the custody of the

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records, and parties authorized by regulations for the purpose of auditing the recordkeeping procedures of the Charter School.

Student cumulative records may not be removed from the premises of the Charter School, unless the individual removing the record has a legitimate educational interest, and is authorized by the Director, or by a majority of a quorum of the Board of Directors at a duly agendaized meeting. Employees who remove student cumulative records or other student records from the Charter School premises without a legitimate educational interest and authorization may be subject to discipline. Employees are permitted to take student work-product, or other appropriate student records, off premises without authorization for legitimate academic purposes (e.g. grading work-product, assigning credit, reviewing materials for classroom discussion, etc.)

Complaints

Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Charter School 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, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Record Retention

The Charter School complies with the definition and retention of student records as established in Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (“CCR”) sections 431 and 438, per the following:

1. Mandatory Permanent Student Records: must be maintained indefinitely or an exact copy thereof for every student who was enrolled in the charter school. These records are defined as:
 - a. Legal name of student
 - b. Date of birth
 - c. Method of verification of birth date
 - d. Sex of student
 - e. Place of birth
 - f. Name and address of parent/guardian of minor student
 - g. Address of minor student if different than above
 - h. An annual verification of the name and address of the parent/guardian and the residence of the student

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- i. Entering and leaving date of each school year and for any summer session or other extra session
- j. Subjects taken during each year, half year, summer session or quarter
- k. If marks or credit are given, the mark or number of credits toward graduation allows for work taken.
- l. Verification of or exemption from required immunizations
- m. Date of high school graduation or equivalent

The mandatory permanent student record or a copy thereof shall be forwarded by the Charter School upon request of a public or private school in which the student has enrolled. If the Charter School forwards the original mandatory permanent student record, a copy must be maintained by the Charter School. If the Charter School forwards a copy, the original must be maintained by the Charter School.

2. Mandatory Interim Student Records: must be maintained until judged to be disposable defined as “when the student leaves the charter school or when their usefulness ceases.” These records may be destroyed during the third (3rd) school year following the determination that the records are disposable (i.e. 2019-2020 records may be destroyed after July 1, 2023). These records are defined as:
 - a. A log or record identifying those persons (except authorized school personnel) or organizations requesting or receiving information from the record. The log or record shall be accessible only to the legal parent or guardian or the eligible student, or a dependent adult student, or an adult student, or the custodian of records.
 - b. Health information, including Child Health Developmental Disabilities Prevention Program verification or waiver
 - c. Participation in special education programs including required tests, case studies, authorizations, and actions necessary to establish eligibility for admission or discharge
 - d. Language training records
 - e. Progress slips and/or notices
 - f. Parental restrictions regarding access to directory information or related stipulations.
 - g. Parental or adult student rejoinders to challenged records and to disciplinary action
 - h. Parental authorizations or prohibitions of student participation in specific programs
 - i. Results of standardized tests administered within the preceding three years

The mandatory interim student record or a copy thereof shall be forwarded by the Charter School upon request of a public school in California in which the student has enrolled. If

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the transfer is to an out of state or to a private school, the mandatory interim student record may be forwarded. If the Charter School forwards the original mandatory interim student record, a copy must be maintained by the Charter School until it is destroyed in accordance with this Policy. If the Charter School forwards a copy, the original must be maintained by the Charter School until destroyed in accordance with this Policy.

3. Permitted Records: must be maintained and may be destroyed when their usefulness ceases or six (6) months following the student's completion or withdrawal from school. These records are defined as:
 - a. Objective counselor and/or teacher ratings
 - b. Standardized test results older than three years
 - c. Routine discipline data
 - d. Verified reports of relevant behavioral patterns
 - e. All disciplinary notices
 - f. Attendance records not covered in the 5 CCR § 400

Permitted student records may be forwarded upon a request by a public or private school in which a student has enrolled. If the Charter School forwards the original permitted student record, a copy must be maintained by the Charter School until it is destroyed in accordance with this Policy. If the Charter School forwards a copy, the original must be maintained by the Charter School until destroyed in accordance with this Policy.