

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 9)

7 September 2016

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Student Records Policy

Purpose: This General Order constitutes the VMI policy on educational rights of our cadets concerning their records as well as the privacy and disclosure of cadet information.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99, protects the privacy of student education records, defined broadly to include all records maintained by an institution of higher education or an agency acting for such institution that are directly related to a student. The law applies to all institutions, including VMI, that receive federal funds through the U.S. Department of Education. Virginia Military Institute complies with the provisions of FERPA in maintaining cadet education records and responding to requests for disclosure of education records.

Student Rights:

Students have certain rights concerning education records maintained by VMI, including the following:

- a. Students have the right to inspect and review their own education records maintained by the VMI. Copies of records will not be provided unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for students to review the records. A reasonable fee may be charged for copies.
- b. Students have the right to request that VMI amend records which are believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights. If VMI determines that the record is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights then VMI shall amend the record and inform the student in writing of the amendment. If VMI decides not to amend the record, the student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the VMI still decides not to amend the record, the student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information or stating why he or she disagrees with VMI's determination, or both.
- c. Students seeking to inspect or review education records or to seek amendment should contact the Registrar's Office.
- d. Students have a right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information in the student's education record, subject to certain exemptions under FERPA authorizing disclosure without consent, as detailed below.
- e. Cadets/students may obtain information regarding FERPA or may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning VMI's compliance with FERPA by contacting the Family Privacy Compliance Office at:

Family Privacy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920
Phone: 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327)

Disclosure of Education Records:

Education records may be disclosed if a student provides a written and specific release. A model format for such release may be obtained from the Registrar's Office. VMI also may disclose education records to the parents of students who have provided a specific release authorizing disclosure to parents.

VMI may disclose information from education records without the student's consent under certain circumstances detailed in FERPA including, but not limited to, the following:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
"School officials" for purposes of this policy include faculty, administrative and professional staff, clerical personnel, members of the ROTC units acting in discharge of official duties, and cadets acting in an official capacity in support of the VMI mission including Honor Court and cadet government members.
"Legitimate educational interest" typically will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Generally, a legitimate educational interest will exist when the information is relevant and necessary for a VMI official to perform tasks within the scope of his or her job description in the context of official VMI business and the use is consistent with the purpose for which the information is maintained.
- Outside contracted or affiliated agencies performing functions in support of the VMI mission including Aramark, Follett Corporation (bookstore operations), the VMI Alumni Association, the Keydet Club, and the VMI Foundation. Information will only be disclosed if needed to support contracted obligations under the legitimate educational interest guideline.
- Other post-secondary institutions to which a student is transferring or seeking transfer;
- Federal and state entities in connection with financial aid eligibility or awards, an audit or evaluation of federal or state-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements related to federal education programs;
- In accordance with a validly issued subpoena and after notice to the affected cadet;

- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of VMI;
- Accrediting organizations, including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges;
- In connection with a health or safety emergency, including release of information regarding an act of sexual violence to local law enforcement as required by Va. Code § 23.1-806;
- Disclosure of the final results of a disciplinary proceeding for an offense of violence or a non-forcible sex offense in violation of the cadet rules of conduct (“Blue Book”) or other VMI policy, to the victim of such offense;
- Criminal investigation records disclosed by the VMI Police to local law enforcement or the Virginia State Police;
- In connection with the Virginia Longitudinal Data System;
- Directory information;
“Directory information” is defined by VMI to include a cadet’s name, home address, VMI box number, VMI email address, telephone number, photograph, date and place of birth, honors and awards, participation in VMI recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, major field of study, ROTC unit affiliation and dates of attendance.

Directory information, as defined above, may be released by VMI unless a cadet specifically requests to “opt out” of directory information release before the end of the first week of the fall semester. Opt out requests remain in effect after graduation until rescinded by the former cadet. Any questions about how to opt out of the release of directory information should be directed to the Registrar’s Office.

VMI includes some cadet directory information in an unofficial directory printed in limited supply for the exclusive use of members of the VMI faculty, staff, and Corps of Cadets. It is not the Institute’s practice to release the unofficial directory, or any information contained therein, to parents, alumni, or other outside requestors with the exception of cadet VMI email addresses that are publicly available on the VMI website.

VMI reserves the right to deny requests for cadet directory information from any individual or entity external to the VMI community.

Record of disclosure:

In accordance with FERPA, 99 CFR § 99.32, VMI will maintain a record of each request for access to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from cadet education records including (i) the parties who have requested or received personally identifiable information from education records; and (ii) the legitimate interests the parties had for requesting or obtaining the information. In the event of a disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records in connection with a health or safety emergency, including under the provisions of Va. Code § 23.2-806, the record of disclosure also will include the articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a cadet or other individual that formed the basis for the disclosure.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

James. P. Inman
Colonel, US Army (Ret.)
Chief of Staff

OPR: Registrar

DIST: E, Cadets