

## **2024-2025 School Year**

### **Annual Notification of Rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for the 2024-2025 School Year /Notice to Parents and Guardians Regarding the Disclosure of Student “Directory Information”**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, affords parents, legally emancipated students, and students over eighteen (18) years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records.

These rights are briefly summarized below and are explained more fully in the Board’s Student Records Policy, which is on file at the School and is available upon request:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within forty-five (45) days of the day PA Virtual Charter School (“Charter School”) receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to Charter School’s Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) or his/her designee a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Charter School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the record(s) may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s educational record(s) the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the Charter School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students should write to Charter School’s CEO or his/her designee, clearly identifying the part of the record(s) they want amended and specify why the record(s) is inaccurate or misleading. If the Charter School decides not to amend the record(s) as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Charter School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision in writing and advise of the right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s educational record(s) except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent, as discussed below.
4. 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 SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

## Release of Records Without Consent

Generally, the Charter School must have written permission from parents or eligible students in order to release any information from a student's education records. However, FERPA allows the Charter School to disclose that information without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interests. A School Official may include a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law unit personnel); a person serving on the Board; a person or company with whom the Charter School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); contractors, consultants, volunteers, and other outside service providers used by the Charter School; or a parent or student serving on official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another Charter School official in performing his/her tasks. A School Official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record(s) in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility;
- Other schools, school systems, or institutions of postsecondary education to which a student is transferring;
- Authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States, the Secretary, or State educational authorities may have access to student or other records which may be necessary in connection with the audit and evaluation of Federally-supported education programs, or in connection with the enforcement of the Federal legal requirements which relate to such programs: Provided, That except when collection of personally identifiable information is specifically authorized by Federal law, any data collected by such officials shall be protected in a manner which will not permit the personal identification of students and their parents by other than those officials, and such personally identifiable data shall be destroyed when no longer needed for such audit, evaluation, and enforcement of Federal legal requirements.
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for aid, determine the amount of aid, determine the conditions of aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of aid;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school, to develop, validate or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction. The U.S. Comptroller General, U.S. Attorney General, U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities may redisclose student information to organizations conducting studies identified here. Any re-disclosure of student information, whether by schools or the entities and officials identified here, requires a written agreement. The written agreement shall contain provisions intended to guard the privacy of student information;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To parents of dependent students for IRS tax purposes;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;

- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

The Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA) (Public Law 112-278), which was signed into law on January 14, 2013, amends FERPA in the following two ways:

- 1) Educational agencies and institutions are permitted to disclose a student's education records, without parental consent, to a caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization authorized to access a student's case plan "when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student."
- 2) Educational agencies and institutions are permitted to disclose a student's education records pursuant to a judicial order without requiring additional notice to the Parent by the educational agency or institution in specified types of judicial proceedings in which a parent is involved. The theory behind this change is that the Parent has already been informed by being involved in the child abuse, neglect, or dependency proceeding.

The child welfare agency can then disclose (or re-disclose) the records to "an individual or entity engaged in addressing the student's education needs." This individual or entity must be authorized to receive the records and the disclosure (or re-disclosure) must be consistent with State confidentiality law.

These changes to FERPA (and, consequently, to the confidentiality provisions applicable to Parts B and C of the IDEA), help in improving educational and developmental outcomes for children in foster care by providing those agencies that are legally responsible for such children access to specific information that is maintained by those agencies that provide early intervention or educational services to such children. More specifically, child welfare agency workers must develop a written case plan for each child in foster care, which includes the education records of the child, including the most recent information regarding:

- The names and addresses of the child's education providers;
- The child's grade level performance;
- The child's school record;
- Any other relevant education information the child welfare agency determines to be appropriate.

As part of the Student's Educational Stability Plan, which is revised when placing a child in foster care, or, when a child is changing foster care placements, the agency must consider the appropriateness of the child's current school and the proximity of that school to the foster care placement; and coordinate with the local educational agency to ensure the child can stay enrolled in his or her school of origin despite the foster care placement. However, if the child welfare agency determines it isn't in the child's best interests to stay in the same school, the

agency must ensure that the child is immediately enrolled in a new school, and all the child's education records are provided to that new school.

Child welfare agencies must assure that each child receiving a Federal foster care payment is a full-time elementary or secondary school student (or is incapable of attending school due to a medical condition). Federal child welfare guidance encourages child welfare agencies to ensure that children are not only enrolled, but are actually attending school.

The Charter School must maintain records of each request for access and disclosure of information from a student's education record(s), except for disclosures to school officials with legitimate educational interests, disclosures to parties with written consent from parents or eligible students, disclosures of Directory Information (discussed below), disclosures under select judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, and disclosures to parents or eligible students. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the records of requests for access and disclosures.

### **Release of Directory Information**

Directory Information includes information contained in the educational record(s) of a student, which is not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, so that it may be disclosed without prior parental consent, unless parents or eligible students have advised the Charter School to the contrary in accordance with Charter School procedures. The primary purpose of Directory Information is to allow the Charter School to include this type of information from the student's educational records in certain school-related publications or notices.

As part of the Charter School's annual notification under FERPA, Charter School designates for the 2024-2025 School Year the following types or categories of information as "Directory Information":

- Student Name
- Participation in officially recognized activities, clubs, and sports
- Naming of student to the Honor Roll, National Honor Society or as Valedictorian
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Electronic Mail Address
- Photograph
- Degrees, honors, awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

"Directory Information" for the 2024-2025 School Year also includes:

- Except for social security number, a student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used by a student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used with one or more factors, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user; and
- Except for social security number, a student ID number or other unique personal identifier that is displayed on a student ID badge, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used with one or more factors, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

Examples of how and where the Charter School may disclose Directory Information include:

- Newsletters
- A playbill showing student's role in a drama production
- The annual yearbook
- Honor Roll or other recognition lists
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling: showing weight and height of team members
- Companies or outside organizations that manufacture class rings or yearbooks
- Newspapers or other news sources
- Class Lists
- Staff and/or Student Directories and/or listings
- Charter School Website
- Charter School Bulletin Boards
- Institutions of Higher Learning requesting Directory information

These examples are for illustration only and are not an exclusive list of the manner in which Directory Information may be disclosed. This Notice provides parents and eligible students with an opportunity to object in writing to any or all of those types of information that the Charter School has designated as Directory Information. Parents and eligible students have the right to refuse to permit the release by notifying the Charter School in writing that they do not want any or all of those types of information to be designated as Directory Information.

Please note that an opt out of Directory Information disclosures does not prevent the Charter School from identifying a student by name or from disclosing a student's name, identifier or institutional e-mail address in class in which the student is enrolled. The right to opt out of Directory Information disclosures does not include a right to remain anonymous in class, and may not be used to impede routine classroom communications and interactions, whether class is held in a specified physical location or on-line through electronic communications. Likewise, an opt out of Directory Information disclosures does not prevent the Charter School from requiring a student to wear, to display publicly, or to disclose a student ID card or badge that exhibits information that the Charter School designated as "Directory Information" for the 2024-2025 School Year above.

**YOUR ACTION IS REQUIRED IF YOU WISH “DIRECTORY INFORMATION” NOT TO BE PUBLISHED.** Please submit any refusal with the types of information you wish removed from the list of Directory Information and mail your written objections on or before September 1, 2020, to the CEO of the Charter School.

If you have any questions regarding this Notice, please call the CEO. If you do not submit a written refusal on or before September 1, 2020 then the Charter School may disclose directory information without your prior consent.

THE CONTENT OF THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN STRAIGHTFORWARD, SIMPLE ENGLISH.

IF A PERSON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS NOTICE, HE OR SHE SHOULD ASK THE CEO OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL FOR AN EXPLANATION.

THE CHARTER SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR AN INTERPRETER FOR PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

IF A PARENT IS DEAF OR BLIND OR HAS NO WRITTEN LANGUAGE, THE CHARTER SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR COMMUNICATION OF THIS NOTICE IN THE MODE NORMALLY USED BY THE PARENT (E.G., SIGN LANGUAGE, BRAILLE, OR ORAL COMMUNICATION).

IF A STUDENT HAS A DISABILITY, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN THE CHARTER SCHOOL’S ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AND RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.