

Privacy

WORLD PRIVACY
FORUM

...SCHOOL
PRIVACY FOR
K-12 AND
COLLEGE

At the beginning of each school year, tell your kid's school (or your college) that you do not want your information shared with the public. You can do this by filling out a directory information opt-out form.



How one single school opt out can greatly improve your kids' privacy

Why is my kid's email and home address being sold on a marketing list? I didn't give permission for this information to be released! How did this happen?

This kind of sharing could happen unless you proactively opt out of allowing schools to share the information they keep on your kids such as their email, home address, and even their weight. This information can be shared with third parties without your consent—including potentially sharing to strangers.

The kind of information schools can share without your permission is called "directory information."

What specifically is included in directory information?

Directory information could include:

1. Name, address, telephone listing, e-mail address, date and place of birth, dates of attendance and grade level;
2. participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
3. weight and height of members of athletic teams;
4. degrees, honors, and awards received;

5. the most recent school attended;
6. some schools also include photographs in their listing of directory information.

Schools differ in the information they designate as directory information to release to others.

Your rights to opt out

A law called FERPA* gives parents and students the right to tell schools they cannot share their directory information with third parties. Parents opt their children out until the age of 18. Students aged 18 and over who attend school or college must opt themselves out.

Schools must tell parents and students what information they are designating as directory information, and they must allow students to opt out of the sharing of their directory information. It is a federal law.

Schools usually set a time frame during which students can opt out. Usually this happens at the beginning of the school year, or when a student begins school. Schools can set their own time frames for accepting opt outs. Some schools give 10 days from the beginning of the school year. Some schools give 15 days. Schools rarely give more than 30 days, however there is a lot of variability, you'll need to check with your school for specifics.

* FERPA stands for *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*.

How to opt out

Here's how you can opt your child or yourself out:

1. Request a **directory information opt out form** from your child's or your school. These forms may be on the school's web site. Sometimes these forms are called FERPA opt out forms.
2. Fill the form out, and make a copy or store a digital picture of it.
3. Turn the form in to the school.
4. The best time to turn in opt out forms is at the very beginning of the school year, as soon as possible. Schools designate a set and often brief period of time to notify the school of directory information opt out.

If you do not opt out, students' school directory information can be given to third parties, and can become public information.

More info at: World Privacy Forum
www.worldprivacyforum.org