



**How to File a Complaint
with the U.S. Department of Education under the
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99**

A parent or eligible student (one who is at least 18 years of age or attending a postsecondary institution) may file a complaint against an educational agency or institution for violating the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Please note that, under FERPA, an individual must have "standing", that is, have suffered an alleged violation, in order to file a complaint under FERPA. The FERPA regulations provide that a complaint must be submitted in writing to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8520

In order to file a complaint, please complete the following form. Be sure to type or print legibly and *include sufficient detail and/or evidence to support your allegation*. You should also attach a copy of any pertinent documentation in support of your complaint. Please do not submit video or audio tapes with your complaint as any extra information not pertinent to a FERPA allegation will be returned to you.

Please consider that in order for the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) to investigate a complaint, it must be *timely* and must contain *specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a FERPA violation has occurred*. Therefore, before filing, be sure that you understand clearly what your rights are under FERPA, that you have contacted appropriate school officials about the exercise of those rights, and that you are able to explain in detail and document, if appropriate, any alleged violations. For example, a school has 45 days in which to respond to a request to inspect and review education records and need not, under FERPA, provide you with a *copy* of education records unless, for example, you do not live within commuting distance of the school. Your complaint must also be "timely," meaning that it must be submitted to *the FPCO within 180 days* of the date that you knew or should have known of the violation.

The FPCO will notify you and the educational agency or institution in writing if it initiates an investigation and will ask the institution or agency to submit a written response. The FPCO will also notify you if it does not initiate an investigation if your complaint fails to comply with the requirements for filing a complaint under the FERPA regulations as described above.



**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Complaint Form**

1. Name and address of parent or eligible student filing complaint ("Complainant"):

2. Complainant's daytime telephone number: _____

3. Name and age of student whose education records are subject of this complaint:

4. Name of educational agency or institution (include name of specific school district, State educational agency, or postsecondary institution that is the subject of the complaint):

5. Name, title, address, and telephone number of chief school officer (superintendent of district, president of university):

6. Names and titles of school officials involved in complaint: _____

(Continued on next page.)

