

Case 6: What can your family see in your college records?

Content note

This case is about private records. No student should share their own grades, forms, records or family finances, so keep the discussion on Rafa’s situation.

This case explains general rules. It is not legal advice for your situation.

Overview

Students read about Rafa, an 18-year-old in his first year of college whose family wants to help pay tuition and asks for his login. They read an access form, a college FERPA notice and summaries of federal guidance, then sort billing access from access to grades. They then write the question Rafa could send the records office and the smallest access that would help his family.

Before this case

- Students should already be able to:
- summarize a short source accurately
 - tell a general rule from an exception
 - write a short guide for a named reader

Objectives

- Students will be able to:
- state the FERPA transfer rule accurately
 - separate billing access from access to grades

Objectives, continued

- flag that exceptions exist without guessing which one applies
- name the records office as Rafa’s next step

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per student
- Evidence A and B
- A two-column organizer: billing access and academic access
- The case rubric, printed on the Check your work page

The task in this edition

Task: Write Rafa a one-page guide separating paying the bill from seeing grades.

Students make: One-page guide, 200–250 words

Pacing

- Opener (page 101):** 5 min. Short on time: 4 min. Read What happened aloud and skip the opening discussion.
- Key terms (pages 102 and 103):** 6 min. Short on time: skip. Define FERPA and consent aloud in one minute.
- Look at the evidence (pages 107 and 108):** 10 min. Short on time: 8 min. Students fill in only the What it shows boxes.

Pacing, continued

- Key idea (pages 109 and 110):** 8 min. Short on time: skip. Assign the key idea as reading for the next class.
- Sort the evidence (page 111):** 8 min. Short on time: skip.
- Practice (page 112):** 6 min. Short on time: 5 min. Do the choice and the first fix only.
- Your task (page 113):** 8 min. Short on time: 6 min. Read the steps aloud. Students fill in the two access boxes only.
- Your draft (page 114):** 20 min. Short on time: 18 min. Students write the first two paragraphs in class and finish at home.
- Check your work (pages 115 and 116):** 8 min. Short on time: 4 min. Students answer the Check your work questions. Score the rubric yourself.
- Questions to discuss (pages 117 and 118):** 12 min. Short on time: 5 min. Use question 3 as an exit ticket.
- Talk about this case at home (page 119):** at home.
- Periods:** full chapter 91 minutes; one period 50 minutes.
- Standards**
- RI.9-10.1** Support an analysis with solid, complete evidence from the text, both for what it states and for what it implies.

Case 6 plan, continued

Standards, continued

W.9-10.2 Write an explanatory text that presents complex ideas and information clearly and accurately.

W.9-10.5 Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing or rewriting, focusing on what matters most for the purpose and audience.

SL.9-10.1.c Move a discussion forward with questions that connect it to larger ideas, bring others in and test ideas and conclusions.

SL.9-10.1.d Respond to different views, sum up where people agree and disagree, and adjust your view when the evidence calls for it.

D2.Civ.12.9-12 Analyze how people use and challenge laws at different levels to address public issues. In this case: Students analyze how students use FERPA to control who sees their records.

D3.1.9-12 Gather information from sources with a wide range of views, using origin, authority, structure, context and corroboration to choose them. In this case: Students select the federal FAQ and the school’s own notice as authoritative sources.

Codes of ethics

- **AACRAO Ethics and Practice:** Standards of professional practice
- **AACRAO Ethics and Practice:** Principles of professional ethics

Codes of ethics, continued

- **Credo for Ethical Communication:** “We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings...” (one of nine unnumbered principles)

Heat map

- ■ □ **Opener (page 101):** Medium
- □ □ **Key terms (pages 102 and 103):** Low
- □ □ **Look at the evidence (pages 107 and 108):** Low
- □ □ **Key idea (pages 109 and 110):** Low
- ■ □ **Sort the evidence (page 111):** Medium
- □ □ **Practice (page 112):** Low
- □ □ **Check your work (pages 115 and 116):** Low

Try it at your school

Find your school’s records notice.

- Search your school or district website for its FERPA or “student records” notice
- Find out what counts as directory information and how families can opt out
- Write one question about who can see a record, and ask the front office or counselor
- If you’re heading to college, look up its parent-access and authorization forms early

Who to ask: School counselor, registrar or records office, front-office staff

Try it at your school, continued

Safety: Never post screenshots of grades, IDs or forms. Talk with a trusted adult about what to share and with whom.

Sources

- U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, “What is FERPA?,” No date listed
- U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, “What is an education record?,” No date listed
- U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, “Must postsecondary institutions provide a parent with access to an eligible student’s education records?,” No date listed
- U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, “Student privacy questions,” No date listed
- American University, AU Central, “FERPA and parent-access guide,” No date listed

Case 6: What can your family see in your college records?

Rafa's parents help pay his college bill, and a family-access form asks whether they should also get information about his grades.

On your own Read What happened and underline what Rafa's dad asks for in the family chat. About 5 minutes.



Rafa and Caio sit on a sofa and look at Rafa's phone. Caio explains something with an open hand.

Your role: You're the one who reads each box on the form before Rafa signs. **New skill:** Read a form section by section before you sign.

What happened

Rafa, 18, has just started college, and his parents help pay his tuition bill. He commutes from the next block and helps at his family's shop after class. At the end of August, the college mailed Rafa a family-access form, but he has not opened the envelope yet.

On Sunday night, his parents ask about the form in the family group chat. His dad wants Rafa's login so the family can handle everything. Rafa is glad to share the bill, but he wants to read the rest of the form first.

Your question: What will this form let Rafa's parents see, and what should he ask before he signs?

Caio, an older friend who rents a room on the block, reads the form with Rafa, not for him. The form has separate sections for billing and for grades. Rafa wants to check the billing box. He wants to talk with his family before he decides about grades.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Read What happened aloud and skip the opening discussion.

💬 Say this

"Rafa's dad asks for his login. What is his dad trying to help with?" — Hear two answers. Keep the talk about Rafa's family, not students' own.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students assume paying tuition gives parents full access. **Listen for:** "They pay, so they get to see it." **Then:** Write "paying" and "seeing" as two columns. Ask which document connects them.

📖 Support

- Read What happened aloud while students follow along.
- Remind students that nobody shares their own records or family rules.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** Students may compare the case with their own family's rules about grades.

Cool-down: Say: "We're working with Rafa's family." Go straight to the form.

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example, then write your first guess in the box. About 6 minutes.

FERPA FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law about who can see student education records.

En español: FERPA (Ley de Derechos Educativos y Privacidad de la Familia)

In this case: Rafa is 18 and in college, so under the general rule the FERPA rights to his records are his, not his parents’.

Education record An education record is a record directly about a student that a school or college keeps.

En español: expediente educativo

In this case: Rafa’s grades and schedule are education records. Section 2 of his form asks whether his parents may receive information about his grades.

Consent Consent is permission a person gives for something specific, such as sharing a record with a named person.

En español: consentimiento

In this case: Rafa’s form asks for consent in two separate sections, one for billing and one for grades. He can say yes to one and no to the other.

Who is involved



Rafa

First-year commuter with a family-access form

“My parents help with the bill. The college mailed this form, and the family chat already wants to know if I signed it. I haven’t even opened it.”



Caio

Reads the form with Rafa, not for him

“I can sit with Rafa while he asks. Being the older friend doesn’t make this my decision.”

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page. Skip this page. Define FERPA and consent aloud in one minute.

💬 Say this

“Which key term tells you whose rights these are?” — Wait for FERPA. Then ask when the rights transfer.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students think FERPA protects only children. **Listen for:** “FERPA is for kids.” **Then:** Reread the key idea: the rights transfer to the student at 18 or on starting college.

📖 Support

- Pair students who share a language to explain each term in their own words.
- Show a timeline: middle school, high school, 18 or college.
- **Cognates:** consent (consentimiento), privacy (privacidad), authorization (autorización), exception (excepción), information (información), academic (académico), federal (federal), education (educación).

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

🔑 Answer key

Any first guess is fine. Students return to it on the My take page.

Your first guess

Before you look at the evidence, what do you think Rafa's parents are allowed to see?

My first guess is ___, because ___.

➤ My first guess is that his parents can see his grades and his bill, because they pay tuition.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a vertical margin line on the left side, creating a narrow left margin. The paper has rounded corners on the left side.

This page continues page 102. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 102.

Reading passage

Helping with the bill is not the same as seeing grades

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 5 minutes.

Words to know

- **FERPA:** FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law about who can see student education records.
- **Education record:** An education record is a record directly about a student that a school or college keeps.
- **Consent:** Consent is permission a person gives for something specific, such as sharing a record with a named person.
- **Decision-maker:** A decision-maker is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice.

The story: A login request on Sunday night

Rafa, 18, is a few weeks into his first year of college. He commutes from the next block, helps at his family's shop after class and relies on his parents to help pay tuition. At the end of August, the college mailed him a family-access form. The envelope is still sealed.

On Sunday night, the family group chat catches up with him. His mom asks whether the tuition form came, because they want to help with the bill. His dad offers a shortcut: "Send us the login and we'll take care of everything." The offer is generous and practical, and it would hand over far more than a bill.

Rafa does not want a fight. He wants to understand what he is signing. He asks Caio, an older friend who rents a room on the block, to read the form with him. Caio is clear about his role. He will sit with Rafa while he asks questions, but being older does not make this his decision. When someone suggests sending his parents a photo of the form, Caio points out the trade-off. A photo is easier to send, and it is also easier to lose control of.

Your role is to read each box on the form before Rafa signs.

Stop and think. Caio says a photo of the form is easier to send and easier to lose control of. What does he mean?

⌚ Pacing

Reading: about 5 min (628 words). Short on time: read it aloud together, pausing at each Stop and think.

❓ Stop and think

1. **After "The story: A login request on Sunday night":** Caio says a photo of the form is easier to send and easier to lose control of. What does he mean?
2. **After "Separating the parts of the form":** What is the smallest amount of access that would give Rafa the help he wants from his family?
3. **After "What FERPA does and does not say":** Someone says, "Parents can never see college records." How would you revise that claim?

Separating the parts of the form

Case 5 taught you to read a document line by line before deciding what it means. The form rewards the same patience. Section 1 covers billing and payments: the named person could view account statements and make payments. Section 2 covers academic records: the named person could receive information about grades, enrollment and academic standing. Section 3 says the authorization stays in effect until Rafa changes or withdraws it in writing. Each of the first two sections has its own yes-or-no box.

That structure changes the decision. Rafa does not face a single choice between trusting his family and shutting them out. He faces two separate choices, and each has its own trade-off, a word you learned in Case 4. Saying yes to billing gives his parents what they asked for. Saying yes to grades may be fine too, but Rafa wants to talk with them before he decides.

Case 4 also gave you the term **decision-maker**, the person or group with the power to make a particular choice. On this form, the decision-maker is Rafa. **Consent** is permission a person gives for something specific, such as sharing a record with a named person. For college records, consent is written and names the record, the person and the purpose.

 **Stop and think.** What is the smallest amount of access that would give Rafa the help he wants from his family?

What FERPA does and does not say

FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law about who can see student education records. An **education record** is a record directly about a student that a school or college keeps, such as grades, transcripts or schedules. Under the general rule, the rights transfer from parents to the student at age 18 or when the student enters college at any age (U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, no date listed). The Education Department publishes a plain guide for these “eligible students” (U.S. Department of Education, March 8, 2023).

Helping pay tuition does not, by itself, give those rights back to a parent. FERPA does have exceptions. A college may share records with parents if the student is a dependent for federal tax purposes, or in a health or safety emergency. The Education Department says this sharing is allowed, not required, so each college decides how it handles these cases.

Why do these rules matter so much? Student records now live in large software systems. A breach at the company PowerSchool exposed millions of student records (Education Week, January 9, 2025). Knowing which record, which permission and which office to ask is how Rafa keeps family support from turning into giving away every login.

This page continues page 104. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 104.

❓ Stop and think. Someone says, “Parents can never see college records.” How would you revise that claim?

Sources

Real source | U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office | No date listed

What is FERPA?

Real source | U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office | March 8, 2023

An Eligible Student Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Real source | U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office | No date listed

Must postsecondary institutions provide a parent with access to an eligible student's education records?

Real source | Education Week | January 9, 2025

What Schools Should Know About the PowerSchool Data Breach

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. On the left side, there is a vertical margin line, creating a narrow left margin. The top-left corner of the page is rounded. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 104. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 104.

Look at the evidence

On your own Read the form and the notice, and fill in both boxes for each one. About 10 minutes.

Evidence A | College form

Parent and family access authorization, mailed to Rafa on August 28

Section 1, Billing and payments: allow the person named below to view account statements and make payments. Yes or No. Section 2, Academic records: allow the person named below to receive information about grades, enrollment and academic standing. Yes or No. Section 3: this authorization stays in effect until the student changes or withdraws it in writing.

Look closely: Which section covers billing, and which covers grades? Circle each yes-or-no box.

What it shows

➞ Billing and grades are separate sections, each with its own yes or no.

What it leaves out

➞ What the college may share without Rafa's consent, and where he sends a change.

Evidence B | College notice

Annual FERPA notice on the registrar's page

Students have the right to inspect their education records, to request corrections and to consent to disclosures, except where the law allows disclosure without consent. Questions go to the Office of the Registrar.

Look closely: Which phrase tells you the law has exceptions? Underline it.

What it shows

➞ The rights belong to the student, but the law allows some sharing without consent.

What it leaves out

➞ Which exceptions this college uses, and whether any of them fit Rafa.

Case 6 | Look at the evidence | Grades 9–10 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 8 min. Students fill in only the What it shows boxes.

💬 Say this

“Put one finger on the billing section and one on the grades section. Could Rafa say yes to one and no to the other?” — Wait for “yes, they are separate.”

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students read the notice as a promise of total privacy. **Listen for:** “So nobody can ever see his grades.” **Then:** Point to “except where the law allows disclosure without consent.”

📖 Support

- Give each document on its own half-page with the section headings enlarged.
- Read the notice aloud and pause at “except.”
- **Cognates:** consent (consentimiento), privacy (privacidad), authorization (autorización), exception (excepción), information (información), academic (académico), federal (federal), education (educación).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask what Section 3 lets Rafa do later, and why that matters for the choice he makes today.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

What is still missing from the evidence?

Notes

Key idea: education records

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics, then answer the question in the box. About 8 minutes.

FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law about who can see student education records. It gives parents, and later students, rights over those records. An **education record** is a record directly about a student that a school or college keeps. Grades, transcripts and schedules can be education records, on paper or stored digitally. Under the general rule, the rights transfer to the student at age 18 or when the student starts college, at any age. The law calls that student an “eligible student.”

Helping pay tuition does not, by itself, give those rights back to a parent. **Consent** is permission a person gives for something specific, such as sharing a record with a named person. For college records, consent is written and says which record, to whom and for what purpose. Rafa’s form asks about billing and about grades in separate sections. He can say yes to one section and no to the other. He can also change his choice later in writing.

FERPA also has exceptions, which are situations in which a college may share records without the student’s consent. A college may share records with parents if the student is a dependent for federal tax purposes. It may also share them in a health or safety emergency. The U.S. Department of Education says this sharing is allowed, not required, so Rafa should ask his records office what his college does.

Professional standards

Real source | American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

AACRAO Ethics and Practice: Standards of professional practice

“Protect the legitimate privacy interests of all individuals and maintain appropriate confidentiality of institutional and student education records”

In plain words: College registrars who belong to AACRAO agree to protect students’ privacy and keep education records confidential.

Question: Rafa’s form separates billing from grades. What would the registrar need before sharing his grades with his parents?

Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

 Short on time: skip this page. Assign the key idea as reading for the next class.

Say this

“The AACRAO code asks registrars to protect privacy. What would a registrar need before sharing Rafa’s grades?” — Wait for “his consent in Section 2.”

Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the AACRAO code as the law. **Listen for:** “The registrar would go to jail.” **Then:** Say: “The code binds AACRAO members. FERPA is the federal law on education records.”

Support

- Read the quotation aloud. Point out the label: a real source, quoted word for word.

Stretch

- Use the second AACRAO row. Ask what a clear, complete answer to each of Rafa’s three questions would include.

Heat check

 Low.

Professional standards, continued**Your answer**

Before sharing grades, the registrar would need ____.

➤ Before sharing grades, the registrar would need Rafa's written consent in Section 2. Saying yes to billing is not enough.

In the news

Real source | U.S. Department of Education (YouTube) | November 7, 2013

Student Privacy 101: FERPA for Parents and Students

The Education Department's own short explainer of FERPA rights and when they move from parents to students.



Real source | U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office | No date listed

Must postsecondary institutions provide a parent with access to an eligible student's education records?

Answers the case question directly, including the exception for students claimed as tax dependents.

Notes

This page continues page 109. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 109.

Sort the evidence

On your own Fill in the diagram to show who decides each question, which rule applies and who can ask. About 8 minutes.

Who actually decides each question: Rafa, the rule or the college? Mark where paying the bill and seeing grades split into two separate decisions.

Who may see Rafa's grades?

Who decides

Rafa, the eligible student, through written consent

Under which rule

FERPA: rights transfer to the student at 18 or on entering college

Who lives with it

Rafa's family, who help pay tuition

Your way in

➡ The registrar or records office explains which form and which exceptions apply

Who may see and pay the tuition bill?

Who decides

Rafa, the eligible student, through written consent

Under which rule

Who lives with it

Rafa's family, who help pay tuition

Your way in

Whose perspective is missing?

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

The view that is missing is _____. I would ask _____.

➡ The registrar's view is missing. I would ask which exceptions this college uses and how Rafa changes his choice later.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 Say this

“For each question on the diagram, who decides: Rafa, the rule or the college?” — Model the grades question together.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students name the parents as the deciders. **Listen for:** “His parents decide because they pay.” **Then:** Point to the diagram: his family can ask, and Rafa decides through written consent.

📄 Support

- Let students label each box Rafa, rule or college before they write sentences.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** The missing-perspective question can turn to students' own families.

Cool-down: Keep answers about the characters. No student describes their own family arrangements.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose who holds Rafa's rights and explain why, then fix the two marked lines. About 6 minutes.

Rafa is 18 and in college, and his parents help pay his tuition. Under the general FERPA rule, who holds the rights to his education records?

☒ A Rafa does.

☐ B His parents do, because they help pay the bill.

☐ C His parents do, until Rafa signs a form that says otherwise.

Why I chose it

✎ A. The rights transferred when Rafa turned 18 or started college. B mixes up paying with permission, and C wrongly makes a form the trigger for the transfer.

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

Rafa, ① your parents are paying so they can probably see everything, that's how it works at most schools. My parents could always see my grades on the portal in high school. FERPA is a privacy law but it's mostly for kids. ② Once you're 18 it doesn't really matter anymore. If you want to keep your grades private you should just not give them your password. Honestly just ask your parents what they want to see. They're helping you a lot so it's probably fair for them to know how you're doing.

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 1

✎ Your parents can help pay, but seeing grades is a separate section of the form.

Rewrite phrase 2

✎ Once you're 18 or in college, the FERPA rights to your records are yours.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Do the choice and the first fix only.

💬 Say this

"Rafa is 18 and in college. Who holds the rights to his records?" — Vote before any discussion.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students pick the paying-parents option.

Listen for: "They're paying, so it's theirs." **Then:** Ask what the form would be for if his parents already held the rights.

📄 Support

- Read the options aloud before students choose.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

✎ Answer key

A revised version: Rafa, under the general FERPA rule, the rights to your education records are yours now, because you're 18 and in college. Paying tuition doesn't automatically give your family access to your grades. At schools like the one in the guide, parent access for paying the bill is separate from permission to see academic records. You can decide what to share. Talk with your family about what help you actually want, then ask the records office which form covers that, what it allows and how to change it later. There are exceptions, so ask them which ones your college uses.

Grades 9–10

Your task

On your own Read the steps and fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 8 minutes.

Write Rafa a one-page guide separating paying the bill from seeing grades.

Use: The university parent-access guide excerpt and the Department of Education FAQ.

You'll make: One-page guide, 200–250 words

Time: 50 minutes

- 1 Reread Evidence A and B. Mark the billing section and the grades section.
- 2 Fill in the organizer: what billing access covers and what academic access covers.
- 3 Write one or two sentences on who holds the FERPA rights now.
- 4 Add one sentence that says exceptions exist, without guessing which one applies.
- 5 List three questions Rafa can ask the records office.
- 6 Write your guide, 200 to 250 words, in the Your draft box.
- 7 Check your guide with the questions on the Check your work page.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

Billing access covers

➤ Viewing account statements and making payments (Section 1)

Academic access covers

➤ Information about grades, enrollment and academic standing (Section 2)

Three questions for the records office

➤ 1. Which record would be shared? 2. Who would get it? 3. How do I change my choice later?

Case 6 | Your task | Grades 9–10 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 6 min. Read the steps aloud. Students fill in the two access boxes only.

💬 Say this

“Before you write, sort the form: which section is paying, and which is seeing?” — Draw the two-column organizer on the board.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Guides merge billing and grades. **Listen for:** “If they pay, they can see his grades.” **Then:** Point to Sections 1 and 2. Ask what each yes-or-no box controls.

📄 Support

- Two-column organizer: billing access, academic access
- Model first paragraph
- Glossary

📋 Standards

Common Core: RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.2; W.9-10.5; SL.9-10.1.c; SL.9-10.1.d.

C3 Framework: D2.Civ.12.9-12; D3.1.9-12.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

➤ Answer key

A strong response:

- Accurately states the transfer rule
- Separates billing from grades
- Names the records office as the next step
- Flags exceptions honestly

Your draft

On your own Write your draft in the boxes, using your planner from the page before. About 20 minutes.

Your guide, 200 to 250 words

 **Paying the bill and seeing grades: a guide for Rafa.** You're 18 and in college, so under the general FERPA rule, the rights to your education records are yours now. The U.S. Department of Education says the rights transfer at 18 or when a student starts college. Your parents helping with tuition doesn't give those rights back to them. Your form keeps two choices apart. Section 1 covers billing: viewing account statements and making payments. Section 2 covers grades, enrollment and academic standing. You can say yes to Section 1 and no to Section 2. Section 3 says you can change or withdraw your choice later, in writing. Usually your family would need your consent to see grades, but the law has exceptions. For example, a college may share records with parents if the student is a dependent for federal tax purposes. It is allowed, not required, so ask which exceptions your college uses. Before you sign, ask the records office three questions. Which record would be shared? Who would get it? How do I change my choice later? Then talk with your family about the help they want.

Pacing

Full chapter: 20 min.

 Short on time: 18 min. Students write the first two paragraphs in class and finish at home.

Say this

“Find any sentence with “never” or “always.” Is it true every time?” — Partners circle absolute words in each other's drafts.

Watch for

Misconception: Guides promise total privacy. **Listen for:** “No one can ever see your grades.” **Then:** Point to the notice: “except where the law allows disclosure without consent.”

Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. Attributes the transfer rule to the right source.
2. Separates paying from permission.
3. Flags an exception without claiming it applies to Rafa.
4. Gives Rafa a specific question for the office.

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions, mark your level in each rubric row and write one change you made. About 8 minutes.

Does your guide state the transfer rule accurately?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it keep billing and grades separate?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it name the records office as the next step?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it flag exceptions without guessing which one applies?	☒ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ No source cited.	☐ Refers to “privacy law” generally.	☐ Cites the transfer rule and the separate-access guide.	☐ Cites both and notes that exceptions exist.
Reasoning	☐ States the rule backwards.	☐ Gets the transfer right but merges billing and grades.	☐ Separates paying from permission correctly.	☐ Explains why least access is a reasonable choice.
Audience & purpose	☐ Tells Rafa what to do.	☐ Gives advice without a next step.	☐ Leaves the decision with Rafa and names the records office.	☐ Respects Rafa’s family relationship while protecting his choice.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Fixes one fact.	☐ Fixes the rule and adds a next step.	☐ Explains why each correction matters for Rafa’s decision.

Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

 Short on time: 4 min. Students answer the Check your work questions. Score the rubric yourself.

Say this

“Mark your level honestly. Then make one change and say why.” — Ask for one corrected rule or one added question for the records office.

Watch for

Misconception: Students leave an absolute claim in place. **Listen for:** “Parents can never see grades.” **Then:** Point to the Evidence row. Ask them to add that exceptions exist.

Heat check

 Low.

Answer key

How to assess: The guide is scored with the case rubric, with a specific check that the transfer rule is correct and that exceptions are flagged without being invented.

Proficient looks like:

- **Evidence:** Cites the transfer rule and the separate-access guide.
- **Reasoning:** Separates paying from permission correctly.
- **Audience & purpose:** Leaves the decision with Rafa and names the records office.
- **Revision:** Fixes the rule and adds a next step.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question, then complete the sentence frames below. About 12 minutes.

- 1 What is the smallest amount of access that would give Rafa the help he wants from his family?

➤ Billing access only. It lets his parents view statements and make payments, which is the help they asked for.

- 2 Why might Rafa want to talk with his family before he checks the box for grades?

➤ The chat shows his parents want to help. Talking first lets him explain his choice before they see a box checked no.

- 3 Someone says, “Parents can never see college records.” How would you revise that claim after reading this case?

➤ At college, parents usually need the student’s consent. But a college may share records if the student is a tax dependent.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ My claim: Rafa should approve billing now and decide about grades after he talks with his family.

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

➤ The best evidence is the form, because it lists billing and grades as separate choices.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 12 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Use question 3 as an exit ticket.

💬 Say this

“Answer with a detail from the form or the notice, not from your own family.” — Post the question numbers and hear one answer per question.

🔗 Stretch

- Ask what Rafa could share with his family in a conversation, without signing any form.
- Going further: Compare FERPA’s general rule with American University’s parent-access process. Which parts come from the federal law, and which come from one university’s forms?
- Going further: What might a student and a family member who pays the bill each misunderstand about access? Write wording that makes the separate permissions clear without promising total secrecy.
- Going further: Draw two permission guides for a sample student: a flowchart and a short conversation. Test both with a reader who does not know this case.
- Going further: Search your school or district website for its FERPA or “student records” notice. Then write one question about who can see a record, and ask the front office or a counselor. If you are heading to college, look up its parent-access and authorization forms early.
- Find your own school’s FERPA notice and summarize what it says about directory information and opting out
- Compare FERPA with your state’s student-privacy law, if it has one

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

☞ Someone who disagrees might say that parents who pay should see grades.

I would change my mind if ____.

☞ I would change my mind if the college said an exception already lets his parents see grades.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Talk about this case at home

Case 6: What can your family see in your college records?

In this case, Rafa's parents help pay his college bill, and a form asks if they should also see his grades. Your student read the form and a federal privacy rule, then explained how paying the bill differs from seeing grades.

Questions to talk about

- 1 Under the general rule, when do students start to control who sees their school records?
- 2 Why might a college form keep paying a bill separate from seeing grades?
- 3 Who at a college could answer a question about records?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.

Case 6 | Talk about this case at home | Grades 9–10 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

At home: this page takes no class time.

💬 Say this

“Bring this page home, or read it with someone you trust.” — Nobody needs to share their own records or family arrangements.