**Release of Protected Information of Students – Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: Why is this necessary?**

A: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law which – with some exceptions – limits educational institutions from disclosing personally identifiable information and education records without the consent of the student. Once enrolled at a postsecondary institution (like Misericordia), only the students may determine who may have access to their information, even if the students are not yet 18 years of age. The student consent process that enables the parent portal allows students to give their consent for certain individuals to have access to designated information, without requiring the student to verify their consent each time.

**Q: When is the form completed?**

A: Students complete the form once they have gained portal access after orientation. The process informs them of their rights to their rights to their educational record. The student also chooses a passcode that they share with those to whom they grant access in order to verify the identity of the person requesting access to the student’s information.

**Q: The student hasn’t completed the form yet. Why are university officials speaking with me about student bills, academics, etc.?**

A: Students are not considered enrolled until the first day of classes, so specific disclosure rules are not yet in effect. Once classes begin, parents and guardians requesting information will need to provide the password that the student provides on the form in order to discuss protected information.

**Q: What information will I need to know from the student in order to discuss information with school officials?**

The student should communicate to those to whom they grant access the *PASSCODE* they have assigned for identity authentication. In order to confirm the identity of a person requesting information over the phone, the correct password must be given. Email cannot be used for disclosing personal information, as all email systems are monitored by third parties, and free email services actively “datamine” email content, which discloses information to third parties without student consent, and thus violate student privacy rights.

**Q: What if I can’t remember the passcode, or the student never gave it to me?**

If you don’t have the passcode, we will email the student at their university email account with the passcode, indicating that we could not speak to those to whom they granted access without it. The student can then forward the passcode to the appropriate person. While university officials cannot disclose specific information without the passcode, they can answer general questions about university policies and procedures.

**Q: What offices should I contact regarding specific types of protected information?**

For questions regarding billing or financial aid, contact Student Financial Services at 570-674-6222. For questions regarding student life information, contact the Dean of Students at 570-674-6263. For questions regarding academic record information, contact either the Student Success Center at 570-674-6408 or the Registrar’s Office at 570-674-6308.