



Notification of Parent, Guardian, or Emergency Contact for Alcohol and Controlled Substance Violations

Category: Academic
Responsible Office: Student Life
Responsible Executive: Vice President for Student Life

Date Established:
Date Last Updated: 5/14/2026

Policy Summary

This policy establishes the framework under which the University at Buffalo may notify a student's parent(s), guardian(s), or designated emergency contact(s) when a student under the age of 21 is involved in certain alcohol- or controlled substance-related violations or medical emergencies.

This policy promotes student health and safety, ensures transparency regarding notification practices, and clarifies how the university exercises its discretion under the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* and applicable New York State law.

Policy Statement

The University at Buffalo (UB, university) is committed to protecting student health and safety while respecting student privacy in accordance with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) and [New York State Education Law §6438-d \(Beau's Law\)](#).

When a student under the age of 21 is involved in certain alcohol- or controlled substance-related violations or incidents, the university may notify a student's parent(s), guardian(s), or emergency contact(s). Notification decisions are made by authorized university offices and are guided by considerations of student health, safety, and welfare, as well as compliance with applicable federal and state laws.

Incidents Subject to Notification

A parent, guardian, or emergency contact may be notified when a student under the age of 21 is involved in one or more of the following, including but not limited to:

- Violations of institutional rules or policies related to the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance
- Violations of federal, state, or local laws involving alcohol or controlled substances
- Alcohol- or controlled substance-related medical emergencies, including:
 - Hospitalization
 - Overdose
 - Other situations presenting a serious risk to the student's health or safety

Notification Authority and Process

- Notification determinations are made only by designated university offices, which may include units within the Division of Student Life (e.g., Student Conduct, Dean of Students Office), University Police, or other authorized officials.
- Individual faculty or staff members do not contact parents, guardians, or emergency contacts unless specifically authorized.
- Notifications are made on a case-by-case basis, considering the totality of the circumstances.

Student Notification

When feasible and appropriate, students will be informed that a parent, guardian, or emergency contact has been or may be notified. This notification to the student may be withheld if it would compromise health or safety or interfere with an ongoing investigation.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All notifications under this policy are handled with sensitivity and respect for student privacy in accordance with applicable privacy laws. Information shared is limited to what is necessary to address health, safety, or welfare concerns. All disclosures made pursuant to this policy are documented in accordance with FERPA requirements.

Training and Awareness

The university provides regular training to employees regarding:

- FERPA requirements and exceptions;
- This policy and its requirements; and
- Appropriate reporting and escalation procedures.

Background

[FERPA](#) permits institutions of higher education to disclose personally identifiable information (PII) from an education record of a student without consent when there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of the student or others, and the disclosure is to parties who need to know in order to respond to the threat.

[New York State Education Law §6438-d \(Beau's Law\)](#), effective July 1, 2026, requires institutions to publicly display their policy for notifying a parent, guardian, or emergency contact when a student under the age of 21 is involved in certain alcohol- or controlled substance-related violations or incidents.

The university exercises its authority under FERPA and NYS Education Law in a manner that limits disclosures to information reasonably necessary to address the circumstances presented.

Applicability

This policy applies to all enrolled students who are:

- Under the age of 21; and
- Involved in alcohol or controlled substance-related incidents which occur on or off campus and are addressed through university processes.

Definitions

Controlled Substance

In NYS, a controlled substance is defined as a drug or other substance that is regulated under federal, state, or local law, including but not limited to substances listed in schedules I through V of the [Controlled Substances Act \(21 U.S.C. § 812\)](#).

Emergency Contact

A person designated by the student in the university's student information system (HUB) as a contact to be notified in urgent or emergency circumstances. An emergency contact may or may not be a parent or guardian.

Guardian

A person legally appointed by a court or otherwise recognized under applicable law to act in place of a parent with respect to the care, custody, or welfare of a student. As used in this policy, “guardian” is distinct from “parent” and refers specifically to a court-appointed or legally recognized guardian.

Parent

A parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian.

Personally Identifiable Information

Information contained in an educational record that identifies or describes a student, including but not limited to, student name, name of a student’s parent or other family members, address of a student or student’s family, any personal identifier such as a student’s social security number or identification number, person number, or any personal characteristics or other information that would make a student’s identity easily traceable.

Personally identifiable information is divided into two categories:

Directory Information – student information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. UB has designated the following as directory information: student name, current address, telephone number, email address, major field of study, dates of attendance, degrees, and awards received.

Confidential Information – student information that may not be disclosed without the prior consent of the student to whom the information pertains, including directory information that the student designates as non-disclosable.

Responsibility

Students

- Become familiar with this policy and their rights and responsibilities under FERPA.
- Ensure that accurate parent, guardian, and emergency contact information is maintained in HUB.
- Understand that violations of university policy or law involving alcohol or controlled substances may result in parental or emergency contact notification.

Units Within the Division of Student Life (e.g., Student Conduct, Dean of Students Office)

- Maintain documentation of all disclosures made pursuant to this policy
- Make notification decisions on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with applicable law
- Provide educational programming for students regarding this policy
- Provide training resources to university employees with responsibilities under this policy

University Police

- Notify Student Life or other authorized offices when a student under the age of 21 is involved in an alcohol- or controlled substance-related incident that may trigger notification under this policy.
- Coordinate with authorized university offices, as appropriate, when a student is involved in an alcohol- or controlled substance-related medical emergency.

University Employees

- Complete required training regarding FERPA requirements, applicable exceptions, and this policy.
- Refer inquiries regarding parental or emergency contact notification to an authorized university office.
- Refrain from independently contacting a student's parent, guardian, or emergency contact unless specifically authorized to do so.

Contact Information

| Contact An Expert | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|
| Contact | Phone | Website |
| Dean of Students Office | 716-645-2982 | Email the Office - Student Life Guide - University at Buffalo |
| Student Conduct | 716-645-6154 | Email Student Conduct - Student Life Guide - University at Buffalo |
| University Police | 716-645-2222 | buffalo.edu/police.html |

Related Information

University Links

[Access to Student Information – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)

[Dean of Students](#)

[Freedom of Information Law](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Student Conduct](#)

[University Police](#)

Forms

Related Links

[Controlled Substances Act \(21 U.S.C. § 812\)](#)

[New York State Education Law §6438-d \(Beau's law\)](#)

[New York State Freedom of Information Law](#)

[United States Department of Education Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)

Presidential Approval

Satish K. Tripathi, President

Date