What’s the deal with...

PARENTAL EDUCATION & NOTIFICATION?

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) prohibits educational institutions from disclosing information from a student’s educational record to any third party – including parents – without the student’s consent. Since FERPA’s provisions are not absolute, there are limited exceptions. The Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1998 allows colleges and universities to contact the parents of students when their behavior involves the use of alcohol and/or other drugs, provided that the student is under the age of 21 at the time of notification.

Why do we notify parents?

The George Washington University values the relationship we have with parents. We view parents as members of the George Washington community and as partners in a student’s college education. Research shows that parents who talk openly with their students, who role model positive behavior, and who set expectations for behavior can influence their children in positive ways. We encourage all parents to talk openly about alcohol and/or other drug related behaviors with their student throughout the year but especially during times of elevated risk. Encourage positive and healthy decision making by sharing information about how to Be Wiser with every choice.

But what does that mean?

A staff member of the Division of Student Affairs may contact parents via telephone, letter, and/or email when a student is found in violation of the George Washington University’s alcohol and other drug policies, if the student is under the age of 21 at the time of notification. If an underage student is transported to the hospital for the over-consumption of alcohol, parents may also be notified.

How does that affect life at GW?

The University’s parental notification policy provides for different types of contact depending on the circumstances of the incident.

- The parents of students who are transported to the hospital for alcohol or drug use are contacted via letter by a member of the Division of Student Affairs.
- The parents of students found in violation of an alcohol or drug violation are contacted via letter by a member of the Division of Student Affairs.
- The parents of students involved in other alcohol-related incidents may be contacted via letter by a member of the Division of Student Affairs.

For all other instances where a student is involved in a disciplinary process, the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities and the Office of Academic Integrity staff must receive a Consent to Release Confidential Information form (FERPA Waiver) prior to the University being able to disclose any information to a third party, including parents, about a student’s disciplinary record.

Students will be required to submit a Consent to Release Confidential Information form for every incident addressed by the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities and the Office of Academic Integrity.

What should I do if my parents get notified by the University?

Be prepared to accept the consequences of your decisions about the use of drugs and alcohol. Speak to your parents about the situation that you were involved in before they hear from a University official because it is better coming from you than another person.