

## Communication Procedure

This procedure pertains to all situations involving a Mason LIFE student where there exists an educational based need to contact a parent/guardian for programmatic concerns noted by Mason LIFE staff. While this notification link <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/ferpa-compliance> outlines the university FERPA Compliance policy # 1122, the process below reflects the specific needs of the Mason LIFE community and will be followed each time. This procedure includes all Mason LIFE (ML) students, parents/guardians, ML staff and administrative personnel.

General categories when ML staff will initiate contact with families:

- Medical: Pain or illness not typical for student
- Finances: Commuter or transportation access
- Procedural Processes: Related to work or recreation where additional authorization is required (e.g. sports physical, TB testing)
- Behavior that significantly impacts the educational success of the student despite additional program support. These behaviors may put the student's well-being, enrollment status, and/or safety at risk.
- Safety: On/Off campus requiring additional agency involvement (e.g. emergency first responder, fire and rescue, and any other law enforcement agency)
- Formal Processes: Title IX, GMU PD and or Student Conduct

The mission of Mason LIFE is to promote self-advocacy development, so to the extent possible, student-family interaction is the preferential form of sharing information. Therefore, where possible, the Mason LIFE student will be the primary responder to family/student concerns with the assistance of the Mason LIFE support staff.

Where possible, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Administrative Staff will notify student of the need to discuss a concern with parent/guardian
2. Student and staff will sign FERPA waiver (if necessary)<sup>1</sup>
3. Student will contact parent/guardian
4. Student will introduce the topic of concern to the parent/guardian as noted on the FERPA paperwork. Student may request assistance from staff and explaining the reason for the call.
5. Student, staff, and family discuss the topic of concern

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<sup>1</sup> In certain situations, as permitted by FERPA, Mason Life staff may contact families without the consent of the student.

6. Staff will document conversation, store the consent form using the approved confidential protocol, and complete all follow up in an appropriate manner
7. Staff will communicate outcomes by sharing pertinent information with appropriate staff

In situations where the student refuses to participate or it is not possible for the student to participate, Mason LIFE staff may contact families directly without involving the student.