Military Recruitment in Schools

Did you know military recruiters have access to high schools students and their directory information? National PTA is concerned about the privacy of student records, and consistent with our privacy resolution, will continue to work toward building community sensitivity about the hazards involved in the collection and dissemination of information regarding students.

In accordance with section 544 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2002 and section 9528 of the No Child Left Behind (NCLE) Act of 2001, military recruiters are entitled to receive the name, address, and telephone listing of all juniors and seniors in high school.

What constitutes “directory information” is determined by each school district but may also include email addresses, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, as well as degrees, honors, and awards received.

Section 9528 also requires districts¹ to provide military recruiters the same access as postsecondary institutions or prospective employers. For example, if the school has a policy of allowing colleges or employers to come on school property and provide information to students, it must afford the same access to military recruiters.

However, districts must provide notice to parents of the types of student information that it releases, explain that parents have the right to request that the information not be disclosed, include information on how to “opt-out” of the release of such information, and any applicable deadlines. The term “opt-out” refers to a parent or student’s ability to request their records and contact information are not disclosed.

Choosing to prohibit the release of your child's information to military recruiters should not prevent the disclosure of directory information to other entities, such as colleges. However, some schools may treat military recruiter opt-out requests as an opt-out of all directory information disclosures, including colleges and prospective employers.

Since the details of opt-out policies, such as the way parents are notified and deadlines vary widely across districts and states, please contact your superintendent to find out more specifics.

Should you have any concerns about your school's policy, you and other concerned parents can work with your school principal, superintendent, and school board to modify them.

Many districts require a parent and/or student to mail a letter to your School District Superintendent in order to “opt-out.” Timing is important since in most school districts, students and parents are only able to “opt-out” during the first months of the school year.

¹ If the Local Education Agency (LEA) receives funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), all the secondary schools in that LEA are subject to the requirements in these laws.

Page 1 of 1
Sample letter:

Your Name  
Your Address

Superintendent's Name  
Superintendent's Address  
Superintendent's City, State Zip

Dear Superintendent,
Section 9528 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires schools to release our family's private information to military recruiters unless we “opt-out” in writing.

As a parent, I am exercising my right to request that you do not turn over the name, address, telephone listing, and any other school records to the Armed Services, Military Recruiters, or Military Schools of the following student.

As a student, I request my own name, address, telephone number and any other school records not be released to the Armed Forces, Military Recruiters, or Military Schools.

Student Name: __________  
Name of School: __________

Effective immediately, this serves as formal notice that NO PERSONAL INFORMATION, of any kind, shall be given, mailed, electronically transmitted, or otherwise distributed to any military recruiter or any person requesting such information for the purpose of contacting the afore mentioned student with regard to military service.

I reserve the exclusive right to determine whether or not to receive literature or telephone or personal contact pertaining to military service.

Unless withdrawn or modified, in writing, by the undersigned, this privacy directive to withhold personal information cannot be revoked or superseded, under any circumstance, and shall remain in force throughout the afore mentioned student’s tenure at this institution.

Thank you in advance for your immediate attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Signature and DATE

cc: School principal

Do not forget to follow up by phone with your school district to verify your child's “opt-out” status, as requirements vary from district to district.
Department of Defense’s Joint Advertising and Marketing Research & Studies Office (JAMRS):

In May 2005, the Department of Defense (DOD) announced that it was creating a massive database for recruiting and other “routine” purposes. The Pentagon has been building this database of information on more than 25 million children over the past three years. The database is updated daily and distributed monthly to the Armed Services for recruitment purposes.

The database contains the child’s full name, address, email addresses, home and cell phone numbers, ethnicity, social security numbers, date of birth, gender, high school name, graduation date, Grade Point Average (GPA) code, education level, college intent (if documented), military interest (if documented), field of study, current college attending, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test date, ASVAB Armed Forces Qualifying Test Category Score.

Parents and students can also “opt-out” of being included in this database but the information is not deleted but moved to a “suppression file,” where the Pentagon will retain, but not release, the information.

Below is a sample letter that includes the necessary information to effectively “opt-out,” as well as the mailing address for your letter.

Joint Advertising and Marketing Research & Studies Office (JAMRS)
Attention: Opt Out
4040 North Fairfax Drive, Ste. 200
Arlington, VA 22203

To Whom It May Concern:

Effective immediately, please remove the following individual from the JAMRS military recruitment database:

Full Name: __________________________ Date of Birth: __________
Address: ____________________________
City: _____________________________ State: _______ Zip: _______
Phone: _____________________________ (optional)

Unless withdrawn or modified, in writing, by the undersigned, this privacy directive to withhold personal information from this database cannot be revoked or superseded, under any circumstance.

Thank you in advance for your immediate attention to this request.

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________
(parent or legal guardian if individual 16 or 17; individual him/herself if 18 or over)

If not same as above:
Full Name: __________________________
Address: __________________________
City: _____________________________ State: _______ Zip: _______
Please share this information, along with your local district's policy and “opt-out” process with others who might be concerned about the privacy of student records and information.

Resources for more information:

Leave My Child Alone: A national campaign to raise awareness about family privacy and military recruitment activities. Includes sample school board resolutions and opt-out forms in English and Spanish.  www.leavemychildalone.org


National PTA Position:

National PTA seeks to increase awareness and community sensitivity about the collection and dissemination of information regarding students and believes that such records should respect the rights to privacy and be relevant to a child's education.

National PTA will continue to support legislation and policies would change current law by providing for an "opt in" policy where interested students and families can instead choose to request contact from military recruiters.  Parents and students deserve to know who has their information, and parents should be involved in the important decision to enlist in military service.  Please direct any questions or comments to Melina Wright, National PTA.