

PRIVACY CHALLENGE

Protecting Privacy at School



Looks like you'll have to go, son. That new web app you use at school has first born child in the Terms & Conditions.

Why is this important?

Schools house troves of personal information belonging to students, their parents/guardians, staff, volunteersthe list goes on. Yet schools are often the places where personal information is the most difficult to protect.

Don't believe it? Think about the number of times you've overheard a conversation about a student or parent that you did not need to be privy to. Think about the number of times you have seen documents left at the printer, a computer logged in and unattended, papers in the recycle bin that contain personal information, a

list of student logins/passwords posted on a wall, an office sign-in sheet listing the reasons students arrive late or leave early, or student information on a teacher's desk....

3 Things to Know About Privacy at School

1. School staff are stewards of personal information; they don't own it. Personal information belongs to the students, parents/guardians, etc., from whom it was collected and is about.
2. Student personal information includes things such as marks, birthdates, passwords, OENs, contact information, as well as notes educators write about them--even notes that educators write for themselves.
3. People have a right to request access to their own personal information. This includes notes teachers write to themselves about students in personal journals, on a scrap of paper, in an app, and in email.

Resources

OCT Professionally Speaking on Student Privacy:

http://professionallyspeaking.oct.ca/march_2008/privacy.asp

Challenge: Take 5! For about five minutes, look around your work environment and record how many pieces of personal information you see in public spaces. How would you remedy this?

12 Ways to Protect Privacy



1. Keep students' grades and login/password information private and secure.
2. Write grades, comments and evaluations on an inside page where they are not immediately visible to others.
3. Keep your desktop clean.
4. Remember to log out.
5. Be mindful of when/where you are conversing about students and parents/guardians.
6. Position your monitor away from prying eyes.
7. Retain any personal information that you used for the current year plus one more year.
8. Shred, not recycle, anything you wouldn't put on a postcard.
9. Keep notes and emails professional.
10. Do not leave detailed personal information on voicemail.
11. Get consent before using student personal information in ways that do not fall under normal classroom activities and that a reasonable parent would not expect.
12. Understand that you only have the right to access as much personal information as you need to do your job and no more.