

HOW TO PROTECT KIDS' PRIVACY ONLINE

■ Federal Trade Commission ■

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Whether playing, shopping, studying or just surfing, today's kids are taking advantage of all that the web has to offer. But when it comes to their personal information, who's in charge? The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, enforced by the Federal Trade Commission, requires commercial website operators to get parental consent before collecting any personal information from kids under 13. COPPA allows teachers to act on behalf of a parent during school activities online, but does not require them to do so. That is, the law does not require teachers to make decisions about the collection of their students' personal information. Check to see whether your school district has a policy about disclosing student information.

Here's a look at the basic provisions of the law and what they mean for you and your students.

Website Operators	Teachers
<p>▶ MUST get a parent's consent.</p> <p>In many cases, a site must obtain parental consent before collecting, using or disclosing personal information about a child. Consent is not required when a site is collecting an email address to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ respond to a one-time request from a child.◆ provide notice to the parent.◆ ensure the safety of the child or the site.◆ send a newsletter or other information on a regular basis as long as the site notifies a parent and gives them a chance to say no to the arrangement.	<p>▶ May act in place of a parent in deciding whether to give consent.</p> <p>Consent from a parent authorizes the website to collect personal information from your student. Subject to your school district's policies, you may act on behalf of the parent in giving consent, but COPPA does not require you to do so. If you or the parent do not consent to the collection, use or disclosure of the student's personal information, the student's participation in an online activity may be limited to areas of the site where personal information is not necessary.</p> <p>You can give consent and still say no to having your student's information passed along to a third party.</p> <p>A parent or teacher's consent isn't necessary if the website is collecting a child's email address simply to respond to a one-time request for information.</p>
<p>▶ Must get new consent when information-collection practices change in a "material" way.</p> <p>Website operators need to notify parents and get consent again if they plan to change the kinds of information they collect, change how they use the information, or offer the information to new and different third parties. For example, new consent would be required if the website decides to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ send information from children to marketers of diet pills instead of only marketers of stuffed animals, as covered in the original consent.◆ give a child access to a chat room if the original consent covered only sending a newsletter.	<p>▶ May decide whether to approve information collection from students based on new uses for the information.</p> <p>Website operators will let you know about the need for new consent by sending you a new notice and request. They will do this when they are changing the terms-of-use of the information in a "material" or significant way.</p>

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<p>▶ Must allow parents to review personal information collected from their children. To do this, website operators must verify the identity of the requesting parent.</p> <p>▶ Must allow parents to revoke their consent, and delete information collected from their children at the parents' request. Parents can revoke their consent and ask that information about their child be deleted from the site's database. When a parent revokes consent, the website must stop collecting, using or disclosing information from that child. The site may end a child's participation in an activity if the information it collected was necessary for participation in the website's activity.</p>	<p>▶ May ask to see the information students have submitted. The site will ask you to verify your identity to ensure that your student's information isn't given out improperly.</p> <p>▶ Understand that you may revoke your consent at any time and have your student's information deleted. To stop a website from collecting additional information from your student, you can revoke your consent. You also may ask a site to delete any personal information it has already collected from your student.</p>

Many school districts are adopting Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) to educate parents and students about Internet use and issues of online privacy and safety, and seek parental consent for their children's use of the Internet. For example, an AUP may tell parents about the privacy policies of online services with which a school has contracts and students' use of non-contract websites. It may include cautions against children disclosing personal information to websites — such as their full name, home or email address, and telephone number. Or it may tell parents that the school has established classroom email accounts rather than individual accounts if email communication is necessary between students and online services.

The bottom line for teachers: Look around. Many websites do not require children to provide any personal information to participate. Other sites limit their collection to personal information that is necessary for the activity.

If you want more information about privacy online or if you suspect a violation of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule, contact the FTC, toll-free, at 1-877-FTC-HELP (TDD: 202-326-2502); or online at www.ftc.gov/kidzprivacy.