

Protecting privacy and personal data

Empowering students to safeguard their
own privacy and the privacy of others



For teachers



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Being online

Access and Inclusion

Children have the right to feel safe and have their privacy protected when they are online.

-  Make sure that your students use only school-approved online tools and platforms for class activities.
-  Don't take or disseminate photos or videos of students unless you have prior written consent from their parents or, depending on their age, from students themselves.

Learning and creativity

Children need to understand how to use the internet creatively without jeopardizing their privacy by giving away too much personal data.

-  Get your students to create a picture, drawing, or text for the school blog.
-  Before publishing their creations, help them set up a checklist to be sure they are not giving away any private data.

Media and Information literacy

Media and information literacy includes knowing what personal information is, and how we can use online technologies without sacrificing our privacy.

-  Discuss the meaning of personal and sensitive data with your students.
-  Are they aware of the personal data they may be disclosing when they create accounts or online profiles to access their favourite platforms?

Well-being online

Ethics and Empathy

The protection of personal data also includes safeguarding the privacy of the people we communicate with, both offline and online.

-  Discuss with your students the importance of netiquette, which means using the internet fairly and ethically, respecting other people and their privacy.

Health and well-being

When platforms or companies collect personal data, users have the right to know how their data is being used. We all have the right to have our personal data erased when it is no longer needed for the agreed purpose, or if it is being used unlawfully.

-  Ensure that all personal data of students and staff are processed in your school in compliance with [data protection regulations](#).
-  Unauthorized access to or leakage of data could jeopardise the privacy and well-being of both students and staff.

e-Presence & communication

It's important that children learn to maintain a healthy e-presence, and are fully aware of which personal data they need to protect in their online actions and communication.

-  'Think before you post': discuss with your students what this really means.
-  What we publish online may be accessed and misused by almost anyone, so we need to be very careful not to reveal private information about ourselves and others.



Rights online

Active participation

*Children should be informed about their privacy rights in a manner **appropriate to their age and level of maturity**. Their ability to exercise their rights and act autonomously does not override the parents' power to exercise those same rights on behalf of their child, and to provide support during the process.*



Have your say: get your students to talk about ways they can protect their privacy, data and online rights.



Ask them to create funny memes or posters about protecting personal data, and post their creations on the class or school wall.

Rights and responsibilities

As young people are often the most avid users and early adopters of online technology, they should be encouraged to express their opinion about online rights and responsibilities. What do they know and think about the GDPR?



Schools have a responsibility to show GDPR compliance and teach students what this means in terms of privacy and data protection.



Work with school staff and/or older students to create a child-friendly poster about the rights and responsibilities the GDPR provides for. Discuss the topic in class, and display the poster in a publicly accessible place in the school.

Privacy and security

Children should learn to be wary when on- or offline services request personal data from them.



Get informed about your school's Privacy Policy to be sure that you have taken the correct security measures to prevent malicious attacks and data leakages that could jeopardise students' personal information.

Rights online

Consumer awareness

To navigate wisely on eCommerce sites, consumers need to understand how to check the trustworthiness of a website, and how to disclose a minimum of personal data.

-  We all receive tempting phishing emails in our mailbox at one time or another, often with an offer to win a prize that is “too good to miss”.
-  Show some phishing examples in class, and remind students never to open such emails, even if they look like they come from friends or family. It’s better to be sure than sorry!

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Other Council of Europe publications on Digital Citizenship Education

- ▶ Educating for a video game culture – A map for teachers and parents (2021)
- ▶ Digital citizenship education - Trainers’ Pack (2020)
- ▶ Digital Citizenship Education – Lesson plans for educators available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/new-materials>
- ▶ Digital Citizenship Education Handbook (2019)
- ▶ Bullying: perspectives, practice and insights (2017)
- ▶ Internet Literacy Handbook (2017)

Further information available at:
www.coe.int/education

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