

# Federal Privacy Laws

## That Apply to Children and Education

This table identifies federal policies that safeguard and protect the confidentiality of personal information. Although this list is not exhaustive, it highlights key federal policies related to education records, health information, and the online activities of children. For detailed information about each law, just click on the title.

Many federal education laws contain additional protections for privacy and confidentiality explicitly for the programs that they authorize; always review program-specific guidelines in conjunction with the groundwork laid in these laws.

LEGISLATION	DESCRIPTION
<b>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)</b>	The foundational federal law on the privacy of students' educational records, FERPA safeguards student privacy by limiting who may access student records, specifying for what purpose they may access those records, and detailing what rules they have to follow when accessing the data.
<b>Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)</b>	PPRA defines the rules states and school districts must follow when administering tools like surveys, analyses, and evaluations funded by the US Department of Education to students. It requires parental approval to administer many such tools and ensures that school districts have policies in place regarding how the data collected through these tools can be used.
<b>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)</b>	HIPAA establishes privacy and security rules regarding access to protected health information in certain kinds of health records, including health plans, health care clearinghouses, and health care providers.  It is important to note that where health information about a student appears in an education record, FERPA governs the protection of the data, not HIPAA.
<b>Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)</b>	COPPA regulates how commercial entities may collect and use information collected online from children under age 13, including the rules about parental consent.
<b>Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)</b>	CIPA requires K-12 schools and libraries receiving federal discounts for internet access to implement internet safety policies that prevent students from accessing inappropriate and/or harmful materials and that protect against the unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of minors' personal information.
<b>Privacy Act of 1974</b>	The Privacy Act of 1974 applies to federal agencies that maintain information about individuals. It seeks to safeguard individual privacy and prevent the misuse of personal information maintained by federal agencies, such as employment histories and financial transactions. Federal agencies do not collect individual-level data of K-12 students.

For a more in-depth discussion of these laws, see the Data Quality Campaign's (DQC) *Complying with FERPA and Other Federal Privacy and Security Laws and Maximizing Appropriate Data Use* (March 2013).

For the latest information on these and other federal laws, visit DQC's [Federal Policy](#) page.