

Protecting Students' Online Privacy

Our students log into websites and apps all the time — including for learning tools in our classrooms. But how do we know if the tools we ask kids to use actually protect their privacy? Whether we're using a popular formative assessment app or the latest digital creation platform, it's important to consider what these tools are doing with students' information and data. Sure, online privacy is a complex topic. But there are a couple of simple yet effective things teachers can do — right now — to help protect their students' online privacy.

Tips for Protecting Students' Privacy in the Classroom



- **Look for the “s” in any website’s URL.**
 - The “s” in “https” means that the website is encrypted and probably a lot more secure.
 - Look for “https” with all websites your students use in class, especially for any site where kids log in or share information.
- **Look for the privacy policy.**
 - Privacy policies can be pretty overwhelming. But it’s a good idea to check them out.
 - It’s also important to make sure they’re there to begin with. You’d be surprised at how many websites have policies that are hard to find or, worse yet, don’t even exist! No policy? Consider that site a no-go.
- **Not sure about a tool? Check with an expert.**
 - If you see anything suspicious about an app or a website, it’s best to check with your school’s (or district’s) tech or privacy experts.
 - Don’t know any experts? Common Sense can help! Our **privacy evaluations** take an extensive look at popular edtech tools. We read the policies and surface the need-to-know info for teachers.

More Resources for Protecting Students' Privacy



- **Common Sense Education’s Privacy Initiative:** www.commonsense.org/education/privacy
- **Electronic Frontier Foundation: Student Privacy:** www.eff.org/issues/student-privacy
- **Electronic Frontier Foundation: Tools from EFF’s Tech Team:** www.eff.org/pages/tools
- **Mozilla Observatory:** observatory.mozilla.org/
- **Mozilla: A Healthy Internet Is Secure and Private:** mozilla.org/en-US/internet-health/privacy-security/