Compliance, Policy, and Security in the Education Sector

Your guide to keeping up to date with regulations in the education sector

White Paper

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Introduction

Both K-12 and higher education institutions realize that technology must be a focus if they are to survive. Students, parents and the workforce demand a digitally literate populous. As with any advancement, problems are often encountered and must be addressed head on. When it comes to education and technology there are issues of compliance, policy and security that institutions must be aware of and ready to handle in order to thrive.

In this white paper we summarize:

- **The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) -** What is it and why does it matter?
- **Compliance -** Learn how to get and remain compliant in the face of GDPR as an educational institution.
- **Policy -** Suggestions for policies to put in place in all educational settings.
- **Security -** Learn about managing security in today's digital landscape.

What is the General Data Protection Regulation and Why Does it Matter?

The General Data Protection Regulation is legislation enacted in the European Union (EU) that applies to any site with ties to the EU. Even if your site and business are US-based, you must comply with the GDPR if you have clients or collect data about those in the EU. Considering that the regulation was passed to help with security and data risks, even non-EU businesses should consider using the regulation as a set of guidelines.

The GDPR was adopted in mid-April 2016 with a compliance deadline of May 25, 2018. It protects personal data and gives internet users control over their personal data and addresses the export of personal data outside of the EU. It's important to note that it does not require national governments to pass similar legislation; it is directly binding and applicable.

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Foundations of Compliance

Becoming compliant is necessary, but where should you start? Here's how to efficiently make sure that your school is not at risk of losing funding or penalties (Vcomply).

1. **Education:** Anyone handling, sharing and collecting personal data must be made aware of all compliance matters. This includes proper procedure, sharing protocols and what to do in the event there is a breach.

2. **Communication:** Privacy information must be shared in a way that is simple to understand. It should always be clear what is being collected, how, with whom and which entities this data may be shared (including circumstances), how to correct mistakes in data collection and how to opt out of non-essential sharing.

3. **Consent:** Adults must be provided with information about data collection. Additionally, anyone on whom data is collected may not be coerced. Their consent must be specific and clear with a simple "I agree" and "I do not agree."

4. **Culture:** An environment where feedback is valued and staff is supportive in the face of mistakes is vital to stay on top of potential issues and make sure that breaches are reported immediately.

Policy Benchmarks for Education

Policies should reflect a desire to put privacy and safety first. Education intituitions should follow these tips in order to maintain a system of organization.

Policies Must Be Clear

Clear language that defines expected behaviors, procedures for handling data and procedures for handling a breach are the first step.

Everyone Must Understand Compliance Policies

When people operate in silos, problems creep up. Writing good policy doesn't support your organization's compliance unless everyone knows and understands the policy - be sure to educate everyone not just on changes but on the policies themselves. Encourage questions and accept feedback - you never know how will catch potential risks and everyone should feel like they are part of keeping data safe.

Include Record-Keeping in Your Procedures

Hold staff to a high standard and make sure that everyone is following the proper procedures to avoid threats, risks and consequences. In the event that procedures are not followed, handle this swiftly.

Remain open to change

Compliance is ongoing. Policy must be rewritten to address lapses or after new information is learned. Do not sacrifice your policy to deal with other things: this is when breaches happen.

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Digital Safety in Education

Cybersecurity threats to education are becoming more prevalent, doubling in the span of one year. Schools have considerable data on students, their parents and their finances. With more schools collecting data to encourage applicants this information is attractive to hackers. There are simple, actionable ways to keep safe: make these part of your institution's culture of safety.

Encourage Safe Behaviors

From always logging out of accounts to never saving passwords on public or shared devices, make sure everyone in your education community is aware of best practices for safety.

Be Smart About Spending

Never skimp on technological updates that affect safety. Outdated software, hardware and security protocols generally yield a far more expensive problem than staying up-to-date. Remember, too, that the costs of a breach aren't simply financial. A lack of trust and appearance of being behind the times can cost you future enrollment.

Consolidate

The more points of access, the more risk. Consolidate into one app. Not only do students love it but it's far less to manage thus safer.

Digital Safety in Education

It's time to take stock of your current compliance, digital policies and safety plan. CRA provides assistance auditing and strategizing around each of these areas, with specialists who understand the unique demands and challenges of educational settings. Allow us to build out an entire technology roadmap for your institution that is specific to your needs. Contact us for a free evaluation from one of our experienced professional today!

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Transform IT
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Corporate Headquarters

64 West 48th Street, New York, NY 10036 – 212-376-4040 – www.consultcra.com – sales@consultcra.com