



Back-to-School Basics

Information Privacy Bulletin Board

The New York State Consumer Protection Board (CPB) reminds parents and guardians to make safeguarding their child's personal identifying information a priority. Identity theft does not only happen to adults. Young people's identities are being stolen by identity theft predators everyday. Thus, the beginning of the school year is the perfect time to teach your children what is considered their personal identification information and how and why it should be protected, especially online. Here are some tips to help set the example:

- Only label books, backpacks and lunches with your child's full name and any other information on the inside! Using initials on the outside is okay, but names, even just first names, on the outside can create an unsafe situation for your child
- Be careful in providing identifying information to after-school activities and sports clubs upon registration. If asked for a Social Security number, inquire as to why they need this and insist on using another identifier
- Check with your child's school for releases to use pictures of a student's likeness in their material. If you do not want your child's photo posted online or in printed materials, you have the right to say "No"
- Inquire about elementary and secondary in-school collection of a student's personal information. Under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, parents/guardians of minors generally have the right to inspect upon request the materials used in connection with any survey created by a third party before it is administered in school (20 USC § 1232h). Schools must advise parents/guardians and adult students about, and allow them to decline participation in, a survey which collects information on political affiliation or beliefs, religious practices, income levels and other subjects
- Talk to your child about using the Internet safely.
- Make time to regularly check your child's online socialization networks. Some of these are MySpace, Facebook and Xanga. Be aware that any information your child posts can be seen and utilized by identity theft predators or worse
- Carefully evaluate any offers at a store or online requiring a child's name, date of birth (DOB) or other identifying information for registration. Decide whether the offer is good enough to risk a security breach of your child's information
- Read the privacy policies that accompany any solicitations either by mail or online. Many companies sell their consumer information to other vendors so you will not know who has your information
- Review all websites on which your child participates approving the submission of any personal information. The federal *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act* (COPPA) (15 USC § 6501 et. seq.), requires commercial websites to obtain a parent's or guardian's permission before collecting any personally identifiable information from a child under the age of thirteen (13) years.
- Register your child's cell phone with the *National Do Not Call Registry* at 1-888-382-1222 so he/she is not solicited by savvy telemarketers who may encourage them to give out their personal information

Check out more tips on the CPB website: www.nysconsumer.gov