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School councils and privacy in the school community.

As a school councillor you may occasionally access personal information of students, staff, and others in the school community. There are legislative requirements that prescribe how an individual's personal information can be collected, used and disclosed, stored and accessed. Personal information includes health information.

Personal Information is any information that identifies an individual; it may be student enrolment information, student health information or parent information. For example, school councillors may receive the personal information of applicants to the principal class or view contractor's personal details. Schools, and school councils, have a responsibility to ensure the personal information they possess is used for the purposes it was collected and is adequately secured.

What do I need to do as a school councillor?

- **Ensure you have only that personal information required to undertake your role as a school councillor.**
 - Ask yourself, do I need all the available information, or just a part of the available information to undertake my role?
- Ask yourself, is the information I'm accessing relevant to my role or the task I'm going to do?
- **Don't disclose any personal information that you may have accessed in your role as a school councillor.**
 - Only use personal information for the purpose it was disclosed to you in your role as a school councillor.
- **Ensure that personal data is appropriately secured, particularly if it is taken off the school premises, e.g. material emailed to you.**
 - If emailing personal information off site place the personal information in a word document and password protect the document. Don't include the password in the email!
 - Don't store school material on your home computer without password protection.
 - If taking personal information on a lap top or a memory stick out of school, ensure all documents containing personal information are password protected.
- **If in doubt about the handling of personal information, seek advice from the principal.**
 - Individuals can complain to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or the Victorian Privacy Commissioner if they feel their privacy has been breached.
 - If you have a question or concern about handling of the personal information in the school, speak to the principal or call the Privacy Officer at Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on 9637 3601.

Responsible management of personal information is everyone's business.