

FTC Clarifies that COPPA Does Not Apply to Schools or State-Administered Testing

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In a recent post on the [FTC's Business Blog](#), an FTC official clarified the application of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which requires entities covered by the law to notify parents and obtain their approval before collecting personal information from children. The post clarified that COPPA only applies to operators of commercial websites and online services, and because schools are generally part of local government, they would not fall under the definition of a commercial operator. Acknowledging that schools may use third-party sites and services in the classroom that would be regulated under COPPA, the post also notes that schools can act as an intermediary and essentially "pass through" parents' consent to operators to collect their children's information for strictly educational—but not commercial—purposes.

TIP: This post is a reminder that operators of websites and online services potentially used in the classroom should keep in mind that parental consent can also be obtained as a pass-through (i.e., parents provide the consent to the schools).

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