

Dear colleagues

Privacy Awareness Week (PAW) will be celebrated in Queensland this week (14 – 20 May). The theme of PAW this year is *Value personal data — it's worth protecting*.

With access to, and use of, personal information increasingly gaining public, and media, attention, PAW provides a timely opportunity to remind ourselves of the responsibilities we, as public servants, have in dealing with personal data.

A range of guidance is available for public servants on the appropriate use and disclosure of information — starting with the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service. Standard 4.4 provides:

"The public has a right to know the information that is created and used by the government on their behalf. This right is balanced by necessary protections for certain information, including personal information.

Information privacy legislation protects against the misuse of personal information and we have an obligation to ensure the lawful collection and handling of personal information.

In addition, we will:

- a. treat official information with care and use it only for the purpose for which it was collected or authorised*
- b. store official information securely, and limit access to those persons requiring it for legitimate purposes, and*
- c. not use confidential or privileged information to further personal interests.*

We will continue to respect the confidentiality of official information when we leave public service employment."

The Code of Conduct requirements refer to *Information Privacy Act 2009* obligations, which include privacy principles about storage, security, use and disclosure of personal information.

I encourage you to take the time to think about, and discuss with your colleagues, what this means in your role. What personal information do you collect, how is that information used and who has access to that information? Remember,

inappropriate accessing or use of personal information can be a disciplinary, or even criminal, offence.

You should protect information by:

- Locking your workstation when you leave it unattended
- Physically securing hard-copy documents
- Securing information taken from departmental apps such as OneSchool
- Protecting the identities and privacy of students, families, colleagues and yourself by not disclosing personal information.

You can find out more about information privacy and the appropriate use of personal information from the [Office of the Information Commissioner](#) and the [Crime and Corruption Commission](#) or by reviewing your agency's policies and procedures.

If you have any questions or would like further information, contact the department's privacy team via [email](#).

Regards

Tony Cook
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