

Tips for Keeping Student Information Secure

College students have a right to privacy, and though we might not realize it in our small college, much of the information students provide to us is confidential. Further, it seems more and more lately, we are hearing about identity theft and the irreparable damage that can be done when someone finds access to non-public financial information about others. One of the ways that EWC is working to prevent access to our students' non-public information is by complying with both the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA). EWC has adopted an Information Security Program that outlines the ways that EWC is safeguarding students' information.

Many of the small choices that each of us make everyday about how to conduct ourselves at work can have a large impact on how secure our students' information is while we are at work and while we are away. This tip sheet is a quick guide to help all of us be more aware and responsible about keeping student information secure. Implementing most of these tips only would require that you make a few small changes to how you normally conduct yourself at work.



Be the key that protects our students' privacy.



Change your screen saver settings so that once your screensaver is activated, your computer requires that you input your password to get back into the system. Set your screen saver to activate after 30 minutes of inactivity. You can also lock your computer using the Task Manager. (Time required: 25 seconds)



Rearrange your desk so that your computer monitor cannot be viewed by visitors. If you need someone to see what is on your monitor, you can always invite them around to where you sit or you can turn your monitor. (Time required: 5 minutes – 2 hours)



If you regularly work with non-public information and do not have a storage area in your office or department that you may use, work with your supervisor to either purchase a locked filing cabinet or make arrangements to share space with a co-worker. (Time required: 1 – 2 hours)



If you need to share an electronic file that contains student information with a co-worker, try to avoid emailing the file. When possible, store the file on one of the shared network drives (but NOT in one of the Public Folders that can be seen by any EWC employee) and note the location in the email that you send to your co-worker letting them know you need them to review the file. (Time required: the same amount of time as attaching the file to your email.)



Get into the habit of changing your passwords at least twice a year. Use an Outlook recurring appointment with reminder to help you remember when it's time to change. (Time required: 5 minutes two or three times per year)



Always use passwords that are complex in nature. Use a combination of uppercase/lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. (Time required: 2 minutes)



Avoid having Windows or other programs like Internet Explorer "remember" your passwords. You may think the offer is convenient, but you don't always know if the database the passwords are stored in is secure. This also forces you to remember your passwords and makes it more a part of your lifestyle.



Don't write your password on a sticky note that you place on your monitor, under your keyboard, or in your top desk drawer. If you have to write down your password, keep it hidden in a secure location. (Time required: 1 minute)



If you are working with non-public information, clean off your desk at the end of the day and return such information to locations where they can be locked overnight (i.e. locked filing cabinet, locked desk drawer, locked vault or locked closet). (Time required: 10 minutes)



Choose where you save electronic files wisely. Your C: drive on your computer is not backed up unless you manually back it up. All network drives are backed up nightly and taken to off-site for storage. Choosing to save a file to a folder that you create on a network drive that is backed up regularly, like the H: (or "home") drive requires no extra time on your part. For files that are very important, save them in multiple locations (C: and H: drives, and burn to CD-ROM or jump drive). (Time required: no extra time)



Make a habit of shredding any piece of paper with any student information on it. If a shredder is not available to you on a daily basis, create a "To be shredded" file in your locked storage that you can take to a shredder once a week or once a month, as needed. Recycle all other paper. (Time required: 5 minutes to create a folder and 10 minutes to shred its contents regularly)



For a complete copy of the GLBA Information Security Program, please contact Ron Laher at 307.532.8218 or ron.laher@ewc.wy.edu.

**REMEMBER, IT IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY
TO PROTECT OUR STUDENTS' PRIVACY.**