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Media Statement

### **Children Deserve Privacy Learning Online**

The Privacy Foundation has found privacy issues in the rollout of education software, following the shift to online learning. This is the finding of an [issues paper](#), released today.

“The Privacy Foundation want to ensure that children’s information is used only for their education and their best interests”, says Dr Marcin Betkier. Yet, the paper finds more work is required. Potential problems include:

**1. A lack of oversight**

Decisions about educational software are undertaken by schools, who do not have the power or expertise to negotiate with software providers. They often simply accept the terms and conditions. It appears the Ministry of Education does not complete any specific checks for privacy risks and compliance with the Privacy Act 2020. There seems to be no specific policy that covers privacy of this software. There should be a screening mechanism to ensure the educational software is safe for children.

“There must be clarity who is responsible for safety of this software”, says Dr Betkier.

**2. Commercial use of children’s personal information**

Currently the information collected across children’s software and devices could be used for commercial purposes.

“We found no sufficient protections against commercial use of children’s information. Children’s data should only be used for their education and schools’ legal obligations.

**3. Consent is an improper authorisation mechanism for education software**

Educational software should contain privacy safeguards by design. Children and their parents have no real choice of software and, like anyone, they may not fully understand the consequences. Educational software providers and authorities must take great care to ensure that the software is not privacy-invasive from day one.

The full issues paper is available at <https://www.privacyfoundation.nz/campaigns/>

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