

COPPA (15 U.S.C. §§6501–6506)

COPPA is a U.S. law protecting online privacy of children under 13 by requiring parental consent and limiting data collection.

COPPA

What it is

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) is a United States federal regulation that helps organizations protect the online privacy and personal information of children under the age of 13. Its primary purpose is to establish privacy requirements and restrictions for websites, applications, and online services directed at children or knowingly collecting information from them.

COPPA is administered and enforced by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). It applies to operators of commercial websites and online services, including mobile apps and advertising networks, that either target children under 13 or collect their data. The regulation addresses areas such as consent management, data collection limitations, parental access, and requirements for security controls to safeguard children's information.

At a glance

PUBLISHER Federal Trade Commission (FTC)	TYPE Regulation	VERSION Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)
EFFECTIVE April 21, 2000	DOMAIN Privacy	FAMILY Global Privacy Regulations
REGION United States	INDUSTRY Cloud & Technology Providers	ADOPTION MODEL Regulatory Compliance
IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY Moderate		

Source: <https://www.ftc.gov/legal-library/browse/rules/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule-coppa>

Why it matters

- **Strengthen data protection measures** Support responsible collection, use, and storage of children's personal information through clear management practices and security safeguards.
- **Enhance regulatory alignment** Enable organizations to demonstrate compliance with U.S. federal requirements governing children's privacy and online data collection activities.
- **Increase parental trust** Facilitate transparency and parental control over children's information, promoting confidence among parents and guardians.
- **Improve risk management** Reduce the risk of legal penalties and reputational harm by adhering to mandated consent, access, and data usage requirements.

How SmartSuite supports COPPA

Data Inventory for Children’s Data

Document what data is collected, why, where it’s stored, and who can access it.

Consent and Notice Workflow

Track parental notice and consent processes with evidence of execution.

Access, Deletion, and Request Handling

Run request workflows with deadlines, responses, and an audit trail.

Vendor and Third-Party Oversight

Manage vendor controls and contracts for any service processing children's data.

Security Safeguards and Monitoring

Track protective controls, monitoring tasks, and proof of ongoing effectiveness.

Compliance Reporting

Report readiness, open gaps, and evidence coverage for internal reviews.

Common framework mappings

APEC PF

CCPA/CPRA

GDPR

ISO 27701

LGPD

NIST Privacy Framework v1.0

PIPEDA

Official resources

COPPA Rule Overview

Provides an outline of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule and its implications.

ftc.gov/legal-library/browse/rules/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule-coppa

COPPA FAQs

Describes common questions and detailed answers about COPPA compliance for businesses.

ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule-six-step-compliance-plan-your-business

COPPA Information for Operators

Provides guidance for website operators on complying with COPPA's requirements.

ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule-six-step-compliance-plan-your-business

FTC Consumer Education Materials

Outlines educational materials available to consumers about children's online privacy.

consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0031-protecting-your-childs-privacy-online

Frequently asked questions

What is COPPA used for?

COPPA is designed to protect the online privacy and personal information of children under the age of 13. It establishes requirements for websites, mobile applications, and online services that are either directed to children or knowingly collect information from them.

Is COPPA mandatory for organizations?

Yes, COPPA compliance is legally required for operators of commercial websites and online services that target children under 13 or knowingly collect their information. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enforces COPPA, and noncompliance can result in significant penalties.

Who does COPPA apply to?

COPPA applies to organizations operating websites, applications, or online services directed at children under 13, as well as to entities that knowingly collect, use, or disclose personal information from children in this age group. This includes ad networks and third-party service providers involved in data processing.

What are the key compliance requirements under COPPA?

Key COPPA compliance requirements include providing clear privacy notices, obtaining verifiable parental consent, limiting the collection and retention of children’s data, enforcing data confidentiality and security controls, and providing mechanisms for parental access and deletion.

How do organizations implement COPPA controls?

Implementation involves conducting data inventories, age-gating users, configuring consent management processes, updating privacy policies, and setting up secure storage and retention schedules. Organizations must also establish workflows to manage parental requests and monitor third-party vendors.

How does COPPA compare to other privacy regulations?

COPPA is focused specifically on protecting children's privacy, whereas other laws like GDPR or CCPA address broader data protection for general users. However, practices like consent management, data minimization, and privacy policies are shared across these frameworks.

What are the ongoing compliance activities for COPPA?

Ongoing compliance includes continuous monitoring of consent records, periodic staff training, regular risk assessments, updates to privacy policies, third-party management, and maintaining records for potential FTC audits or investigations.

How would SmartSuite support COPPA?

SmartSuite streamlines COPPA management through centralized risk tracking, a library of COPPA-aligned controls, evidence collection for parental consent, and audit-ready reporting dashboards. Its automation features help monitor compliance status, enforce data retention policies, and support quick remediation for privacy incidents.

License included / downloadable: Yes COPPA is a U.S. federal law and is publicly available through official FTC publications.

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/coppa-childrens-online-privacy-protection-act