

# Everything You Always Wanted to Know About CIPA

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## CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act)

Enacted by Congress in 2000, the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)<sup>1</sup> requires that schools employ software or other technology to block access to inappropriate materials. Beyond blocking inappropriate material, schools and libraries must "adopt and implement an Internet safety policy that addresses...the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications... [and] unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors," among other things.

CIPA imposes certain requirements on schools or libraries that receive discounts for Internet access or internal connections through the E-rate program. These schools and libraries may not receive E-rate discounts unless they certify that they have an Internet safety policy that includes technology protection measures. "The protection measures must block or filter Internet access to pictures that are: (a) obscene; (b) child pornography; or (c) harmful to minors (for computers that are accessed by minors)." Schools and libraries subject to CIPA must also prevent unauthorized access and activities—including so-called "hacking—" as well as the unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors. Before adopting this Internet safety policy, schools and libraries must provide reasonable notice and hold at least one public hearing or meeting to address the proposal.

CIPA does not apply to schools and libraries receiving discounts only for telecommunications service. CIPA also does not require the tracking of Internet use by minors or adults.

Schools subject to CIPA have two additional certification requirements: 1) their Internet safety policies must include monitoring the online activities of minors; and 2) as required by the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, they must provide for educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response.

1 <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>