Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Student Privacy and Data Security Measures

This SOP establishes **student privacy and data security measures** to protect sensitive student information from unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, and destruction. It outlines protocols for data collection, storage, sharing, and disposal, ensuring compliance with relevant privacy laws and institutional policies. The SOP emphasizes staff responsibilities, secure data handling practices, use of encryption, regular access audits, and incident response plans to safeguard student records and maintain confidentiality across all educational platforms and systems.

1. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff, faculty, contractors, and third-party vendors who process or access student data within the institution.

2. Definition

- **Student Data:** Any information that identifies or can be used to identify a student, including but not limited to academic records, personal details, and identifiers.

3. Responsibilities

- All personnel must adhere to privacy, confidentiality, and data protection requirements.
- IT and Data Security teams are responsible for implementing and maintaining technical safeguards.
- Management ensures staff receive adequate training and information regarding privacy protocols.

4. Data Collection

- Collect only data strictly necessary for educational and administrative purposes.
- Inform students of the types of data being collected and the intended use.
- Obtain required consent in line with applicable laws.

5. Data Storage & Access Control

- Store student data in secure, access-controlled locations (encrypted drives, approved cloud services, etc.).
- Limit access to authorized personnel based on role and necessity.
- Change default passwords and enforce strong authentication protocols.
- Conduct regular audits of data access logs.

6. Data Sharing

- Share student data only with authorized individuals or entities and only as necessary.
- Execute data sharing agreements with external parties.
- Require secure transfer methods (e.g., encrypted email, SFTP).
- Maintain logs of data sharing activities.

7. Data Disposal

- Dispose of physical and electronic student data with approved, secure destruction methods (shredding, secure wipe, etc.).
- Document data destruction with appropriate records.

8. Incident Response

- Immediately report any suspected or actual data breaches to the Data Security Officer.
- Follow the institutional incident response plan for containment, investigation, notification, and remediation.
- Document all incidents and corrective actions taken.

9. Training and Awareness

- Provide mandatory training on data privacy and security for all staff and relevant personnel.

- Promote ongoing awareness through regular briefings and updates.

10. Compliance

- Ensure alignment with applicable laws and regulations (e.g., FERPA, GDPR).
- Conduct regular reviews and updates of this SOP to ensure continued compliance.

11. Review and Amendments

- This SOP shall be reviewed annually or as required following changes in regulations, technology, or institutional policy.

Document Control

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