Handle With Care
Protecting Data at Every Step
January 26th to 30th, 2026

DATA PRIVACY WEEK

Welcome to Day 4 of Data Privacy Week! Today we'll unpack the last few information handling best practices we'd like to highlight, focusing on storage, retention, and secure disposal. These three actions ensure that even when data is not actively in use, or has served its purpose and is no longer needed, it is still handled with the utmost care and security.

Storage
Using secure storage methods proportionate to the classification level of the information being held is integral to the data lifecycle. Secure storage should include a combination of measures including encryption, strong passwords, multifactor authentication, and access controls (e.g. "need to know" as discussed yesterday). When carried out correctly, this practice reduces risks to personal information (PI) such as unauthorized access or use, theft, damage, and loss. This in turn upholds the College's adherence to the law and protects against harmful consequences of non-compliance like interruptions in business continuity, regulatory fines, and reputational damage to the institution.

Retention
A record retention schedule defines what information to keep, how and where it will be securely stored, and for how long based on legal requirements, industry standards, business need, and College policies. This ensures we aren't keeping information longer than necessary, which reduces storage costs and the scope of liability in the event of a breach. Knowing what we have, how it is used or processed and where it is stored enables us to maximize its value for critical activities such as disaster recovery, decision-making, research purposes, and cross-collaboration. Additionally, this approach supports our compliance and regulatory obligations, including responding to formal PI requests within the statutory timelines defined under the law.

Secure Disposal
When PI has served its purpose, and all other retention requirements have been satisfied, secure disposal is the last step in the data lifecycle. PI that no longer needs to be retained by the College must be disposed of in a way that guarantees it cannot be accessed or reconstituted. If unsure of approved disposal methods, please contact the Privacy Office for guidance.

Upcoming policy, *AD30: Information Handling and Classification*, is currently being finalized and will provide employees with formalized guidance and expectations on how we manage data. Elements including classification categories, information handling requirements, and the various roles and responsibilities integral to supporting this function will be addressed in this policy. There is also another policy in the works focusing specifically on record retention – stay tuned for more!

Thank you for following along with us this week as we shared eight information handling best practices to help you protect data at every step. Tomorrow is the last day of Data Privacy Week 2026, and we'll be wrapping up with a feedback survey to capture your valuable input. As always, if you have any privacy questions or concerns, reach out to the Privacy Office at privacy@algonquincollege.com.

And remember, Information Security and Privacy is everybody's business!