THE MINI-BILL OF PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION RIGHTS

This ‘bill of rights’ lists the basic rights all children and youngsters enjoy under EU law.

You have a right to privacy. We all have a right to privacy since we were born. ‘All’ includes babies, children and teenagers. Grown-ups have a right to privacy too.

You have a right to the protection of your personal data. Nobody can process other people’s data without respecting some rules, like processing as little data as possible, and always keeping them secure. By processing data, companies and organisations can gain important benefits, but they also get more and more power. The rules help us to protect our data and ourselves, and to keep them in check.
All your personal data deserves protection. It does not matter if the data are already public, maybe because one day you accepted to share them. It does not matter if the data were never ‘top secret’, or do not look particularly intimate. Whenever somebody processes data about you, they have to comply with the rules. Even boring, ordinary data could cause trouble.

You have the right to know who has data about you, what they use them for, and how they do it. You are entitled to have some control on what happens to your data, and this is only possible if you are informed of who is using the data, why, and how. So those who wish to process your data have the obligation to tell you about all this.

You have the right to receive clear information. You should always be able to understand what they are telling you. They are obliged to be transparent, so don’t let them be obscure. If something is not clear, dare to ask!

You have the right to know exactly what data they have. Let’s imagine they explained what they wanted your data for, and how they will use it. Or maybe they forgot. Or maybe it was really, really obscure. In any case, you can ask them what they know about you, and they are obliged to tell you.

You have the right to correct any inaccurate data about you. It could sometimes be a big problem if people have wrong information about you. It could lead them to the wrong conclusions, and they could take wrong decisions about you. If you notice they have the wrong data, you can ask them to correct them, and they are obliged to do it.

You have the right to be heard. Sometimes, organisations or companies are obliged to process some data about you. But often they have no good reason why, so they will just ask if you let them use the data nevertheless. Adults and more aged teenagers have the right to consent to this kind of practices. If you are a younger child or teenager, it is probably not you but your parents who can consent, or not consent. However, before they do anything, they should consult you and see what you think.

You have the right to complain. If somebody is not respecting the rules, let them know you are aware of your rights. If they do not get it, ask somebody to help you, and insist! Data protection authorities have been set up in each country to help people with all issues related to the protection of their personal data, they can also provide guidance and assistance.
Now you know your basic rights, make sure you…

… use them! You will become a master of your privacy and data protection rights only if you exercise them. People are collecting data about us every day, so make it a habit: think about who collects what and why they do so, how they use the data, and for what purpose.

… use them wisely! These rights are given to us so we use them to make sure our data are protected, not to compensate reckless behaviour. The best way not to lose track of your personal data is to make smart decisions before sharing any.

… and always remember that other people have exactly the same rights too. Make sure you respect everybody, for instance by not sharing pictures showing other people, or information about them, without asking them first. Be kind and polite, also online.