

Report about the alleged prohibition of school lessons via Skype by the HmbBfDI is a false report

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Yesterday the article appeared in the online section of the Hamburger Abendblatt: "Hamburg data protection officer prohibits Skype". Among other things, it states: "Not only do many parents work from home, Hamburg's students also have to cram at home. And the approximately 22,000 teachers are also facing a challenge in the Corona crisis and have to try to teach the children and young people the current learning material from a distance. However, lessons via Skype are not possible.

Hamburg's data protection officer, Johannes Caspar, has banned this form of (distance) schooling." It also reports that parents' representatives support the Hamburg data protection officer's ban on Skype.

The Hamburg Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (HmbBfDI) states: There was neither a Skype ban nor a ban on teaching via Skype or another messenger service by the Hamburg Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information personally or by his employees. It is correct that an employee contacted the competent official data protection officer of the school authority against the background of a relevant submission. He then contacted the local school administration. Due to the advice given by the official data protection officer of the BSB, the school management decided to discontinue the Skype offer and to rely on other solutions.

Nevertheless, the Hamburg data protection officer - like his colleagues in other federal states - is fundamentally critical of the use of commercial communication platforms for school purposes from a data protection perspective. However, the clear position is that, in close consultation with the authorities for schools and vocational training, we should work to persuade the responsible bodies, but not rely on prohibitions and bans. This is particularly true in the current situation of the Corona crisis, which poses massive challenges for all students, parents and teachers. We are in talks with the school authorities on how to provide a solution as soon as possible so that students can teach online with support under the pandemic conditions. In order to show alternative communication channels in the current situation, the HmbBfDI has developed appropriate information in the last few days and will publish it tomorrow as part of a general information campaign on the subject of Corona and data protection.

Johannes Caspar, the Hamburg representative for data protection and freedom of information: "I am appalled by the reporting. Especially in this situation of high uncertainty and fear, which is being triggered in many people by the corona pandemic, journalistic diligence should be the order of the day. Anything else fuels prejudice, aids populism and is detrimental to the

truth.”

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