



Mr Suhaimi Salleh, President of LBKM says complying with the PDPA has given donors and beneficiaries greater confidence that their personal data is protected.

## CHALLENGES

For decades, LBKM had no official policy on how to handle personal data. With the enactment of the PDPA, it had to shore up its data protection measures by developing a formal data protection policy.

## STEPS TAKEN

- Appointed data protection officer
- Engaged consultancy firm to conduct PDPA readiness and security audit
- Provided option on donation forms for donors to consent (or indicate that they no longer consent) to receiving fundraising letters
- Improved physical and electronic security of bursary/scholarship applications and donation forms

## BENEFITS

- Instilled confidence among donors and beneficiaries that their personal data is protected
- Beneficiaries are more likely to contribute to LBKM knowing that their personal data is secure

# DATA PROTECTION IS 'COMMON SENSE'

## Non-profit organisation LBKM has rolled out a slew of measures to safeguard the personal data of donors and beneficiaries

As a bursary and scholarship-disbursing organisation, Lembaga Biasiswa Kenangan Maulud (LBKM) plays a key role in helping needy students achieve academic success.

Since its inception in 1965, LBKM, a non-profit organisation funded almost entirely by donations from the public and corporate sponsors, has awarded more than 24,000 bursaries and scholarships to students – from primary to postgraduate level.

Each year, it receives about 1,800 bursary

and scholarship applications, along with their personal data such as contact information, academic records, identity card numbers and family incomes. LBKM uses the data to process, assess and disburse bursaries and scholarships to qualifying students.

Prior to the enactment of the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA), LBKM had no official policy on how to handle personal data. That said, its employees have always been practising good data management habits when handling the personal data of its donors and scholarship and bursary applicants.

"Those who handle the applications know that all personal data should be kept confidential," says Mr Suhaimi Salleh, President of LBKM. "We also keep the application forms and supporting

documents like school results under lock and key. Not even the President gets access to the data, unless there are specific queries related to an applicant."

With the PDPA, LBKM recognises the importance of developing a formal data protection policy. This will also go a long way to give employees clarity on good data management practices and build the trust of donors and bursary applicants.

LBKM thus took steps to understand the law and to beef up its data protection measures.

## 'COMMON SENSE' RULES

LBKM started its compliance journey by first appointing its data protection officer, Mr Muhd Hassim Ahmad. He attended three data protection workshops organised by the

National Council of Social Service and the Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC) to familiarise himself with the new law.

At around the same time, LBKM engaged a local consultancy firm for \$4,000 to conduct a PDPA readiness and security audit, and to identify gaps in its data management practices.

With help from the firm, LBKM also developed a data inventory map detailing how personal data is collected and used, as well as trained its staff on the basics of personal data protection.

"Many of the data protection rules are common sense," Mr Suhaimi says. For example, the PDPA requires organisations to avoid retaining documents containing personal data, if doing so is no longer necessary. LBKM now shreds all application forms and academic certificates of applicants a year after they are received.

However, it still retains the contact details of scholarship and bursary recipients in a password-protected computer system. The purpose: to get in touch with recipients down the road to ascertain the impact of LBKM's financial assistance on their lives as a measurement to assess their schemes.

In addition, LBKM keeps the personal data of some 1,300 donors and sponsors to support accounting and reporting functions. It also sends them letters on sponsorship and fundraising opportunities.

"For the regular donors and sponsors whose personal data we collected prior to the enforcement of the PDPA, we have continued to send them our fundraising appeals," Mr Suhaimi says.

"But if they find these letters intrusive and don't wish to continue receiving them, they can indicate that they do not consent

by not ticking the consent checkbox on our new donation form that is included with each letter."

To aid business continuity, PDPA allows organisations with existing personal data collected and used before 2 July 2014 to continue using it for the same purposes for which the data was collected without obtaining fresh consent – unless an individual has indicated that he does not consent to the use.

To ensure bursary application and donation forms are secure, LBKM has taken several measures. It has relocated a key staff member who processes applications and donations near its office entrance to a deeper location in the office, plus secured computers with passwords to prevent unauthorised access. Signs were also put up to remind staff about best practices in data protection.

As an added measure, LBKM board members and external panels who review and assess bursary and scholarship application

documents can only do so at LBKM's office. Previously, they had received the documents via snail mail, which meant there was always a risk of losing the documents through the postal system.

In addition, Mr Suhaimi says LBKM has also put in a process to track all feedback on their data management practices and investigations accordingly, so that the organisation can continue to review and refine its processes.

"Data protection will always be a work-in-progress; we will fine-tune our measures along the way," he says. "More importantly, complying with the PDPA has given our donors and beneficiaries greater confidence that their personal data is protected."

"And with that confidence, we hope our donors will continue to donate to LBKM, and our bursary and scholarship recipients who have benefited will also give back to LBKM's future fundraising efforts."

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