



School Gives Parents Secure Web-Based Access to Student Data with Thawte SSL Certificates

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Located in Hong Kong, the Independent Schools Foundation (ISF) is a charitable organization that is dedicated to providing diverse educational opportunities for primary and secondary school students. In 2003, the ISF established a private, non-profit school – the Independent Schools Foundation Academy – to provide an inquiry-based learning environment offering a Chinese and English bilingual immersion education for students in Foundation Year (K) through grade 12.

Challenge

BUILD TRUST WITH PARENTS SO STUDENTS CAN THRIVE

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy prides itself on its innovative approach to education, providing an environment where students are immersed in both English and Chinese to prepare them for success in today's fast-paced global society.

The ISF Academy also takes an inventive approach to communicating with parents, giving them instant access to student records and important school announcements online. "In 2008, we created a web-based portal where parents can log in to check report cards, get homework assignments, find out about upcoming school holidays, and everything else in between," says Adams Fung, IT Manager at the ISF Academy.

Since the portal houses so much sensitive information, Fung knew that it had to be highly secure. "Accessing student data online is incredibly convenient, but parents needed to understand that their children's information would remain confidential before they felt comfortable using the portal," he says.

In order to instill confidence in its web-based student information system, the ISF Academy needed to find an SSL certificate solution that offered highly visible security backed by a well-known brand name that parents would recognize and trust.

SOLUTION SUMMARY

Industry:

- Education

Key Challenges:

- Secure online student information portal and web-based payment processing system cost effectively
- Build trust with parents, allowing them to feel comfortable accessing sensitive data online
- Offer highly visible security that parents recognize immediately

Solution:

- Thawte® SSL Web Server Certificates with EV

Results:

- Allowed The ISF Academy to provide a secure online information portal and payment system
- Green address bar¹ gives parents a clear signal that data is protected, building trust in the school
- Enabled parents to take an active role in children's education, helping to ensure student success



1. Extended validation SSL certificates trigger a green address bar in high-security browsers.

Solution

THE GREEN BAR GIVES PARENTS IMMEDIATE CONFIDENCE

When his team began building the Academy's student information portal, Fung researched several security solutions but selected Thawte based on his prior experience with the company. "We did our due diligence and looked at other providers, but I knew that Thawte offered excellent name recognition at a great price, and I was confident that the certificates would also be very easy to manage," he says.

Because Fung wanted to provide a highly noticeable cue that the portal was secure, he selected Thawte SSL Web Server Certificates with EV (extended validation). "Not every parent knows what to look for to make sure that a website is protected, but the green bar is impossible to miss," he says. "With Thawte EV, parents can immediately see that the portal is secure, giving them even more confidence that their children's sensitive information is safe."

The ISF Academy also uses Thawte SSL certificates to secure online credit card transactions, allowing parents to pay school application fees quickly and easily. "Protecting parents' financial data is just as important as safeguarding student information, and with Thawte SSL certificates we can easily do both," says Fung. "Thawte SSL certificates are easy to install, so we've been able to move more of our services online and offer parents a fast, secure way to manage their accounts on the web."

Results

CONVENIENT, SECURE ACCESS TO STUDENT DATA – ANYTIME

By using Thawte SSL Web Server Certificates with EV to secure its online information portal, the ISF Academy has been able

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**—Adams Fung, IT Manager,
The Independent Schools Foundation Academy**

to give parents convenient online access to vital student data, a service that helps parents stay up to date on their children's homework, academic progress, school announcements, and events. "When parents take an active role in their children's education, students are more likely to succeed," Fung says. "With Thawte, we've been able to do more than just secure information online. We've also been able to build trust and open the lines of communication with parents, creating an environment where students can thrive."

Future

THE FIRST CHOICE FOR SECURING SITES

As the ISF Academy continues to expand the number of web-based services it offers to parents, faculty, and staff, the organization plans to continue using Thawte to provide strong security. "In the future, if we have any system that needs to be secured, Thawte will be our first choice," says Fung. "We've always delivered world-class education, and with Thawte, we can provide world-class security to match."

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