



# Legal and Ethical Behavior

October and November Digital Citizenship Focus for Middle and High School

In today's 24/7 digital world, we have instant access to information online. Responsible technology use is imperative for maintaining a safe learning environment and preparing students to be capable users of technology in the workforce. In the digital age that we live in, students must understand that even though the Internet seems like a space where individuals can say or post anything without any repercussions, there is a human and possibly legal consequence for what they post online. Modern technology affords us many conveniences that were inconceivable in the not-so-distant past. However, we do not currently have technology with the ability to tell us what's true, untrue, or reliable — human intelligence is still the best tech around to do that.

## Vocabulary

Copyright  
Fair use  
Intellectual Property  
Netiquette  
Phishing  
Piracy  
Plagiarism

Resources related to Legal and Ethical Behavior:

This post from [Common Sense Media](#) gives important information students should know about safe online behavior.

This [Media Smarts](#) post provides tips for promoting ethical online behaviors in students.

This link from the [Federal Trade Commission](#) has printable information as well as links to other sources.

## Essential Skills

For our students, digital life is real life. It is where they build friendships, take a stand on issues, and do so much more. It is important that students of all ages understand the importance of respecting other people's feelings and property.

- 1. What is and is not acceptable behavior online.**
  - a. Ask yourself if you would say it in real life before you post something.
  - b. How react appropriately to online drama.
  - c. What to do if they witness or are the target of online bullying.
- 2. Are you watching, listening to, and playing things online that show respect to the people that made it and own it?**
  - a. Just because it is online does not mean that you can take it and use it.
  - b. Plagiarism and piracy are not victimless crimes.
- 3. Identifying online scams and fake information.**
  - a. Just because something is online does not mean it is true.
  - b. Do not jump to conclusions. Look at multiple sources, not just one.
  - c. Check your biases and your emotions. News and sites that are unreliable strive for an extreme reaction.