



It's Cool to Be Kind

February and March Digital Citizenship Focus for Elementary

Technology and the internet continue to provide new opportunities for both students and adults to communicate and interact socially. While it is a great way to spread inspiring and uplifting information, it is sadly a very easy tool to use in spreading shocking, hateful commentary and opinions. Unfortunately, the internet itself makes no distinction between kindness or cruelty.

FAMILIES, you have a powerful part to play in influencing how students interact online! It is important for students to learn how to express kindness and empathy as well as how to respond to negativity and harassment. Research shows that rather than just telling children not to be negative online, effective bullying prevention addresses the underlying causes of those negative behaviors. Helping students talk through situations can help build skills to support friends, defuse drama, and “take the high road” when they encounter a situation online.

Vocabulary

Cyberbullying
Conflict
Bystander
Upstander
Block
Mute
Report Abuse

How to continue the discussion at home:

- **Defining** what a positive behavior means in your family both offline and online.
- **Understanding** what positivity looks like and how to express it online and through devices.
- **Identifying** situations where it's better to wait to communicate face-to-face than to text or post online - and when to ask a parent or older sibling for help.

Family Activity: Mind your tone

Students use different types of communication for different kinds of interactions. Messages sent through chat features or texts can be interpreted differently than they would be in person or over the phone. This activity is to help students interpret the emotions behind text messages to practice thinking critically and avoiding misinterpretation and conflict in online exchanges.

1. Get two or more of the phones in your family and open up your text messages or a messaging app. Start a conversation between two family members. This can either be about a real situation or made up - something you are going to do this weekend, something that happened at school, someone who asked for a family members help, etc.
2. Read the conversation aloud in a specific tone of voice - happy, sad, angry, etc.
3. Talk about what you noticed while listening to the messages. How did you feel when you heard it? What do you think someone outside your family would think or feel? How could those texts have been worded differently?
4. Next, have two different family members read the same conversation aloud but in a different tone. After reading out loud, talk about how it came across to everybody while listening to it.

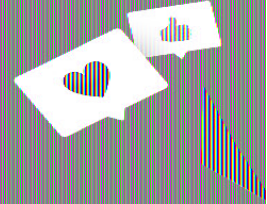


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Be Internet Kind

Tips to help you be kind online



Tip 1

Follow the golden rule!

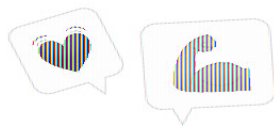
Treat others how you want to be treated, both online and in real life. **Example:** Report the harassment. Tell someone for help, like a parent, teacher, or school counselor.

Tip 2

Be an Upstander!

An Upstander fights bad behavior and stands up for kindness and positivity. **Example:** Report the harassment. Tell someone who can help, like a parent, teacher, or school counselor.

Tip 3



Do simple actions to turn negative interactions into positive ones.

Example: If someone posts something negative about a friend, get a bunch of friends to create a "pile-on" post lots of kind comments about the person being bullied (nothing mean about the aggressor, because you don't want to be an example, not retaliating)

Tip 4

Make good decisions when choosing what to post and how to deliver it.

Example: Don't type something online if you wouldn't say it in real life.

Tip 5

Spread kindness online.