



# Impact of Computing

February and March Digital Citizenship Focus for Middle and High School

Technology and the internet continue to provide new opportunities for both students and adults to communicate and interact socially. Whether students are texting their study group, flirting on social media, or voice-chatting on game platforms, middle and high schoolers can learn to communicate in safe and healthy ways.

Families 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.

## Vocabulary

Cyberbullying Trolling Hate Speech Civil Discourse Grooming Code-switching

### Essential Skills: Realize the Impact of What You Post

1. Give them the right words.

Students learn about appropriate verbal and physical communication from watching you. But online conversations can be invisible. Occasionally, narrate as you're writing texts or social media comments what your kids are in earshot.

2. Learn about their words.

Tweens and teens have unique communication styles -- especially online. As much as possible, keep an eye on what they're saying and doing online to understand the norm in their worlds. Don't police everything they say, but keep an ear out for aggressive trash-talking, hate speech, rude images, or anything hurtful. If you see stuff that crosses the line, speak up. Students need to understand that their words have consequences.

3. Empathize with the pressure to overshare.

Tweens and teens might feel pushed into sharing an inappropriate photo for different reasons; a dare, fear of damaging a relationship, or just because “everyone else is doing it.” But this one is non negotiable! Tell them that you understand how bad it can feel to disappoint a friend. Then help them imagine how much worse it would feel if a private picture were shared with their whole school.

4. Develop their instincts.

Help kids learn to trust their guts so they can detect creepy, risky, or otherwise unsafe online situations. Playact a few scenarios: What if someone asks to take a conversation private? What if someone asks for your phone number? What if someone invites you to a private chat room? Be aware that some kids (even “good” kids) will explore iffy stuff online out of curiosity. But the minute they feel uncomfortable, they need to shut things down.



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## TOP 10 THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU POST



#1 remember the golden rule

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#2 don't brag

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#3 avoid TMI

#3 Avoid TMI



#4 think about the reader

#4 Think about the reader



#5 keep relationship details to yourself

#5 Keep relationship details to yourself



#6 don't be cryptic

#6 Don't be cryptic



#7 quit complaining

#7 Quit complaining



#8 curate your photos

#8 Curate your photos



#9 change your settings

#9 Change your settings



#10 post smart

#10 Post smart

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