

Digital Citizenship: 8th Grade

Parent/Youth Follow-Up Discussion

Dear Parents: The following is a suggested discussion for you to have with your 8th grader as a follow-up to the online safety ed program on digital citizenship. This is a very important topic and one that I'm sure you will want to make sure your child well understands. Taking the online course is a first step. It's also important that you discuss this subject with your 8th grader so as to make sure he/she has learned the concepts and to be able to give your input. We invite you take the course yourself if you find that you need to explore more of these topics yourself so as to better discuss them with your middle-school youth.

To start the discussion, ask your child how these statistics make him/her feel about the issue of responsible Internet use and the importance of learning more about it:

- Teens spend an average of one and a half hours each day going to social networking sites, playing computer games, and watching videos.
- 95% of youth between the ages of 12-17 are online, most of them are multi-tasking—many are adept at chatting, texting, posting, and watching videos while doing homework.
- Two-thirds of 8-18 year olds have cell phones and they send an average of 118 text messages a day.
- One study found that 7-8th graders spend one and a half hours each day sending text messages on their cell phones.
- 44% of online teens admitted that they have lied about their age to access a website or sign up for an online account.
- A quarter of college admissions officers search for applicants on social networking sites.
- 88% of teens have seen someone be mean to someone else, but the majority ignore it rather than defend the victim.

Privacy:

What does it mean to be in control of your privacy in the digital era?

What is the difference between offline privacy and online privacy?

Digital Footprint:

What is your digital footprint? Why is it important?

Respect:

What does it mean to respect yourself online?

What does it mean to respect others online?

Why is it important?

Responsibility:

What does being a responsible online citizen mean?

Are the rules of good digital citizenship different than good citizenship in the offline world?

Why or why not?

Credibility:

What does credibility mean? Is it the same as trustworthy? If not, how is it different?

How do you judge someone's credibility based on their online profile?

Does someone's profile tell you what you need to know in order to judge their credibility?

What other information do you need in order to assess someone's trustworthiness?

Social Media:

What are the different types of social media? How are they used and why?

What are the advantages of social media?

What are some disadvantages?

What are some ways that you can help encourage responsible and respectful use of social media?

Protecting Boundaries:

What is the difference between public and private information online?

How do other people's actions affect your privacy and digital footprint?

How can you protect other people's privacy and reputations online?

Sexting:

What are the motivations of a person in a sexting situation?

Why might sexting lead to big problems?

What can you do to avoid posting something that you might later regret?

How can you help a friend not to make a mistake that could be impossible to erase?

Mobile Apps and Facial Recognition:

What are the pros and cons of mobile apps and facial recognition technology?

What are some examples of how they are useful and ways in which they can be harmful?

Cyberbullying:

Have you ever been the victim of cyberbullying or know someone who has?

How is bullying online different from bullying offline?

How do you think that cyberbullying is a problem? Why or why not?

What are some ways to stand up for victims of cyberbullying?

Harassment:

What is harassment?

Are sexting and cyberbullying types of harassment?

Online Risky Behaviors:

What are some online risky behaviors?

Do you think people who engage in risky behaviors offline are more likely to take risks online?

Why or why not?

Hackers:

What are the motivations of someone in a hacking situation?

How does hacking occur?

How can you avoid hacking situations?

Is it a good idea to share passwords with someone? Why or why not?

Website Credibility:

What does credibility mean?

How do you determine if the information you find online is fact or fiction?

Have you ever encountered a fake website? If so, what clues told you that it was not a credible site?

Plagiarism:

What is plagiarism?

How can you use information you find online in your research paper in a responsible way?

What is the difference between plagiarism and illegal downloading?

Whether or not it's legal, do you think it's okay if someone uses your Facebook photos in an ad without your permission?