Incorporate digital citizenship

Digital citizenship refers to the responsible and equitable use of any type of digital tool, such as computers, tablets, smartphones, or any other internet accessible devices, to engage online with society at any level.

So, what does it mean to be a good digital citizen? How do we define digital citizenship? In an article by Susanna Clavello "On Helping Students Navigate the Digital World in the Midst of Information Chaos," she explains that "the digital world is where students spend a great deal of time looking up and sharing information, creating content, and interacting with others. Educators must understand the impact of this media on students' identity and behavior and help them become literate in the chaotic and confusing web of information." Families and educators must provide a clear definition of what digital citizenship looks like and be vigilant in promoting and encouraging our students to become conscientious digital citizens.

ISTE standards 1 and 3 specifically address the need for students to be purposefully and regularly taught how to become good digital citizens and states that to produce these "good digital citizens" we must mentor students in safe, legal, and ethical practices with digital tools and the protection of intellectual rights and property. Digital citizenship education should be provided to all students that use "smart devices" with access to the internet, regardless of the age of the student.

SUMMARY

All students require digital citizenship skills to fully participate in their communities and make informed decisions online and in life.

- Remind students of digital citizenship best practices often, especially when introducing a new technology tool
- Review FERPA/privacy regulations/privacy statements when choosing technology tools
- Ensure technology tools have been reviewed and approved by the district technology department
- Embed authentic digital citizenship tasks throughout lessons and learning activities

Why it matters

- According to the U.S. Department of Education, "…students must be active, creative, knowledgeable, and ethical participants in our globally networked society." Teaching digital citizenship in school and at home is the only way our students will be equipped to meet the challenges they will encounter when accessing the internet. This can only be done successfully when our students understand the "rules" for proper use and collaboration across digital streams that incorporate the principles of empathy, equity, and safety.

- As evidenced by "The Commonsense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens, 2019", as tweens and teens participate in the media environment, they are developing their identities, learning about relationships, and communicating with both known and unknown others. Young people's online identities are routinely tied to their real names, identities, and offline relationships.

- Families and educators play a crucial role in guiding students' observations and decisions while navigating the internet. Families and educators should help students learn how to guard their identities and privacy online, what is acceptable or not acceptable to share, how to communicate with others, how to search for and make sense of information and news, and how to participate in our interconnected world. Early on, students develop habits of media use in their everyday lives they will carry into adulthood.

What it looks like in practice

PRINCIPALS SEE

Teachers taking time to incorporate digital citizenship into their plans

Opportunities to promote digital citizenship schoolwide

Teachers recognizing teachable moments to stress the importance of being a responsible digital citizen

TEACHERS SEE

Students completing safe and accurate searches while completing classwork

Students using digital etiquette/empathy when responding to peer's work

Students maintaining the security of their passwords

Plagiarism checks to ensure students are not copying and pasting

FAMILIES SEE

Students having appropriate interactions on social media

Students viewing age-appropriate material while online

Students having respect for intellectual property such as music, videos, images, and other copyrighted materials

Students putting research in their own words (avoiding plagiarism)

What you can try --

>> Use Turnitin.com or Google Originality Reports to recognize plagiarism and identify students who may struggle with synthesizing information to put in their own words.

>> Explore **Commonsense.org's** digital citizenship curriculum for grades K-12. This curriculum can be incorporated into SEL activities, research opportunities, or lessons created specifically to address digital citizenship.

>> Assign the **Everfi** digital literacy course to 6th-9th grade students. This course can be completed in 15–20-minute segments over the course of 1 or 2 weeks.

>> Regularly review digital etiquette rules and ensure students are following those rules when participating in discussion boards or providing feedback to their classmates.

REFERENCES

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Be Internet Awesome with Google   Videos for helping kids be safe, confident, explorers of our world.
https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us/

Bright Bytes: Technology and Learning Success   BrightBytes partners with leading research organizations to ensure data-driven insights are evidence-based and supported by credible and quantifiable research.
https://www.brightbytes.net/resources-archive/tag/Technology+%26+Learning+Success

Essential Elements of Digital Citizenship   As you embed digital citizenship lessons into your curriculum, you'll feel more comfortable empowering your students to be active, vocal, digital citizens who use their voice to do good in the world and promote the causes they care about.
https://www.iste.org/explore/digital-citizenship/essential-elements-digital-citizenship

ISTE Standards   The ISTE Standards provide competencies for learning, teaching and leading in the digital age, providing a comprehensive roadmap for the effective use of technology in schools worldwide.
https://www.iste.org/iste-standards

NetSmartz Online Safety for Children   Interactive videos and activities that help children navigate the internet and identify unsafe people and places.
https://www.missingkids.org/NetSmartz

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