

Issues with online communication

Year Learning Activity



Description

Students discuss the positives and challenges of using technology to communicate. They also reflect on their own and other people's online behaviour.

Learning focus

- Develop awareness and understanding of safe practices in the use of technology as a means to communicate with others.
- Develop critical thinking skills to reflect on their own online behaviour.

Key understandings

- Reliable and trustworthy health information sources (such as websites and brochures) are available to provide help and information about chatting online safer.
- People can use strategies to make informed online choices.
- Making informed choices can make us safer.
- Help our friends make appropriate online choices.

Materials

1. Internet access
2. Student Activity Sheet: *THINK and protect yourself and others online* [one per student]
3. Student Activity Sheet: *Digital me* [one per student]

Teaching and Learning Activities

Before you get started

- Communicating online is an increasingly accessible and socially acceptable form of communication for young people. In fact, it is the predominant form of communication for young people today. It is important that the positives of online communication are highlighted as strongly as the potential issues. The most important lesson for young people is that they learn to be responsible with technology and know how to use it safely. Refer to the background notes on [Cyberbullying](#) and [Cyberstalking](#) for more information on this topic.
- It is possible that a student has been involved in a traumatic experience relating to online communication. It is important that teachers are familiar with the [Dealing with disclosures](#) teaching notes and have a risk management strategy in place. Note: A student can talk to the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 in confidence.

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- It is important that messages about safe online behaviours are repeated at home. A *Responsible Use Policy* could be developed and placed in a prominent position in the home.

Whole Class

This activity provides students with an example of a trustworthy internet site and outlines a range of safe/healthy and unsafe/unhealthy online behaviours. Students are encouraged to think critically about these online behaviours and reflect on their own online behaviours.

1. Ask:

- *Who uses the internet at home?*
- *What is your favourite online activity?*
- *Who uses the internet for chatting?*
- *What services do you use to communicate with people online? Any social networking websites? (Facebook/Snapchat/Instagram/Instant Messaging)*
- *Who has a mobile phone with a camera?*
- *Who shares their photos on social media?*
- *Do you ever use free WiFi?*
- *What activities do you complete using free WiFi?*
- *Where do you access free WiFi?*
- *Do you think about whether your WiFi is secure?*
- *What are some issues that might arise if you do not use a secure WiFi network?*
- *What is privacy?*
- *What are the rules about privacy at your house?*
- *What happens when someone in your family does not respect your privacy?*
- *How do you know if a website protects your privacy?*

2. Have students form small groups. Show students each story in the [#Game On cybersafety video clips](#) [22:58min] and at the completion of each episode ask them what issues about online behaviours were being addressed in this episode. Discuss as a whole class.

3. Students summarise the safe/healthy and unsafe/unhealthy online behaviours displayed by each of the characters in #GameOn. Make a class summary on the whiteboard. Ask:

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- *What were the main unsafe/unhealthy online behaviours highlighted in this video? Why?*
- *What were the main safe/healthy online behaviours highlighted in this video? Why?*
- *If you were a friend of one of the characters in #GameOn, how could you encourage them to make safer/healthier choices online?*
- *Is having access to reliable information about cyber safety, like in this video, likely to help you make more informed choices to keep you safer online? Why/why not?*
- *How else could this information be made available to all young people, other than on the internet? (e.g. young people living in rural/remote areas, young people who don't speak English well)*
- *How do you become online friends with someone you have never met before?*
- *How do you know that you can trust the online friends that you have never met?*
- *What are the differences between online friends and in-person friends?*
- *Why should you be cautious about making friends with people online?*

4. Have students perform a [thumbs up thumbs down](#) voting strategy using the following questions.

If you had an online friend who was not an in-person friend, would you answer this question if they asked you:

- *What is your favourite colour?*
- *Where do you go to school?*
- *Do you have a pet?*
- *Do you like playing computer games?*
- *Which suburb do you live in?*
- *How many people in your family?*
- *What is your favourite song?*
- *What do you like to do on the weekend?*
- *What sport do you play?*
- *Who is your favourite actor?*

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- *Do your parents take you to school?*
- *What do you want to do when you grow up?*
- *How old are you?*

Ask:

- *What sort of information do people need to think very carefully about before putting it online, sending it to others, or letting others know? (any information that gives away a person's personal information such as their full name, date of birth, address, school, email addresses, online profiles, passwords, bank details and family and friends' personal information. Also, photos provide important personal information, and should not be posted online without careful thought. Once something has been put online, the owner loses control of it, and it could stay online forever). Whiteboard these.*
 - *How would you feel if this information about you was displayed at your local shopping centre? How is giving this information to an online friend very similar to this?*
5. Discuss the safety skills outlined in the Student Activity Sheet: *THINK and protect yourself and others online.*

Independent or Small Group

People's digital perspective of online behaviour is based on the types of technology they use and the frequency of use. Encouraging individuals to reflect on their own online behaviour is likely to make them more accountable and safer online.

1. Ask:

- *How many hours do you think is an appropriate number of hours to spend online on a weekday?*
- *How many hours do you think is an appropriate number of hours to spend online on a weekend?*
- *Does your family have rules about how much time you spend online on weekdays/weekends?*
- *Do you think these rules are fair?*
- *Why do you think these rules might be in place?*

2. Provide each student with a copy of the Student Activity Sheet: *Digital me*. Have students complete the section 'Your estimated 'digital you'' independently.

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- Using the [think-pair-share](#) strategy, have students share their reflections with a partner and add any omissions that the sharing may have revealed.
3. Ask students to complete the section 'Your actual 'digital you' section over one day before next week's lesson.
- Next lesson: Using the [think-pair-share](#) strategy, have students share their reflections with a partner of their actual online use.
4. The Australian Government recommends that 5-18 year olds should limit their recreational screen time to two hours per day¹. Ask:
- *Do you think you spend more time online than the experts recommend?*
 - *Do you think you should change your online behaviour?*
 - *What pressures are on young people to engage in online behaviour?*
 - *How do you think you can respond to this pressure in a positive way?*
 - *How can you look after yourself and your friends when you are using your mobile phone or the internet?*

Reflection

1. Explain that to get the most from the digital world that they live in, students need to be aware of their own behaviour and engage in positive ways with others.
2. Having spent time thinking about their own digital use and exploring safe/healthy and unsafe/unhealthy online behaviours, students now choose two digital devices that they use regularly and complete the following task:
 - Design a *Responsible Use Policy* for your device. A responsible use policy is a set of rules that explains the do's and don'ts of behaviour for using a particular device (include safety tips and recommended daily use times).
 - Suggest students pin their responsible use policy in clear view in their bedroom or use a magnet to secure it to the fridge for other family members to see.

¹ Department of Health and Ageing. *Australia's Physical Activity Recommendations for 5-12 year olds*. Commonwealth of Australia, 2004a.

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[The Office of eSafety Commissioner](#) website offers:

- an online reporting for [image-based abuse](#), [cyberbullying](#), [offensive and illegal content](#)
- information sections for [parents](#)
- free [classroom resources](#)
- guidance for [policy writing](#) and implementation

Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

Teaching Note

[Dealing with disclosures](#)

Teaching Resources

[Digital me](#)

[THINK and protect yourself and others online](#)

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