

How do I teach internet safety to students?

Project Prevent and Address Bullying (PPAB)

for students with disabilities

For Educators

Northern Illinois University | School Psychology Program

It can be difficult to know **which internet content is appropriate for children** and **how to teach children to act responsibly online**. As an educator, you are in a unique position to help your students practice healthy online behaviors. The following guidelines can help you ensure the safety of your students in the digital world.

Monitoring your students

- At the beginning of the year, provide training in technological etiquette and safety for students prior to allowing access to school-owned technology.
- Encourage students to have open and honest conversations with their parents about internet use. It is helpful for students to feel comfortable approaching their parents about what is happening online and ask questions about what they or their friends are doing online.
- Stay informed on trending websites or apps and make sure inappropriate content is inaccessible in the classroom.
- Monitoring is important because children may have difficulty thinking through the consequences of what they do on the internet. If students create posts or share content online for a class activity, look for teaching opportunities if you discover something inappropriate, unkind, or unwise.

Privacy in the digital world

- Discourage your students from sharing private information online, such as their address, phone number and school name. Remind them to think about what may be revealed in pictures (e.g., a picture in front of their street address or their location being tagged through Location Services).
- Provide guidance to your students about interacting with strangers online.
 - On social media sites, only connect with people you know.
 - Online gaming often involves talking to strangers and parents should monitor closely.
 - Tell your students that a stranger should never tell them to keep online contact a secret, and to tell a parent if this ever happens.
- Explain the importance of privacy controls and how to use them. Show your students how to make themselves harder to find online and how to hide aspects of their profiles from strangers.
- Discuss the importance of using strong passwords and only sharing passwords with their parents.



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Being a good digital citizen

- The lessons learned about citizenship offline should carry over to the internet. For example, we treat others with respect in person and in online spaces.
- Remind students that anything they post online is permanent. If they say anything mean or damaging to themselves or others, their post can be shared or screen shot even if they try to delete it.
- Help your students be aware that not everything on the internet is authentic, and encourage students to question sources and ask for your or their parents' help when needed. Create activities that help students discriminate between real and fake information.
- Model and reinforce appropriate digital behavior. Praise positive behavior as you see it occurring and be aware of how your own online presence can influence your students.

Resources

Here are some websites that provide internet safety resources:

Website	Content and uses
FBI Safe Online Surfing https://sos.fbi.gov	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has games for third- through eighth-graders.
Net Smartz Netsmartz.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides lesson plans, videos, presentations and a section for special needs resources.
Common Sense Media Commonsensemedia.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides games and videos.• Reviews apps, providing information on a variety of factors such as educational value, ease of play, violence, language and more.

It is important to note that there are many benefits to the internet. Encouraging your students to be **technology savvy** and to **use digital tools for learning** will help your students to become lifelong learners. Additionally, it is important to teach your child to behave in the same respectful and responsible way both on and offline.

Find additional handouts on our website at go.niu.edu/PPAB



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