CyberSmart!

Safe Talking in Cyberspace

Download Student Activity Sheet(s) for printout in PDF Format

Overview

Students explore positive aspects of online chatting and messaging, consider a potentially uncomfortable scenario, and learn to apply safety rules that protect their private identity information.

Objectives

- Describe some benefits of chat and messaging in cyberspace
- Explain that people in cyberspace are not always who they seem to be
- Explain rules for safe chatting and messaging

ISTE® National Technology Standards

- Performance Indicators # 2 and 3

Site Preview

- No Internet site is used in this lesson.

Online Resources

- Visit sites providing background information on Chat and Message Safety.

Materials

- Activity sheets (3)

Introduce

- Have students imagine the following scenario. *At a birthday party, you meet someone new. After talking a minute, you think to yourself, "We could become friends." Later, you see that person speaking unkindly to another guest and change your mind.*
- Discuss with students that it is even more difficult to know what kind of person you are talking to in cyberspace. For this reason, it is important to know about staying safe while chatting and messaging.

Teach 1

- Distribute Activity Sheet 1 and 2. Have students complete the sheet and share their responses. NOTE: Postpone discussion until students have read and applied the information presented on Activity Sheet 3.
- Have students read the bottom half of Activity Sheet 2 and share some positive online chatting and messaging experiences. Point out that chatting and messaging are good ways to stay in touch with family and friends, to help a friend with homework, and, in the case of chatting, to talk with kids around the world about topics of common interest.

Teach 2

- Distribute Activity Sheet 3.
- Have students read, discuss, and complete the checklist.

Teach 3

- Allow students to revisit Activity Sheet 1and 2 and discuss how their answers might be changed or enhanced.

  Why Michael thought "Gamester13" was his age: The "13" in the name might have meant he was 13 years old and Michael assumed that he was a boy because he liked online games and knew a lot about them.
  Giving out team names: Michael's team name is private information because it includes the town where he lives and can be used to find him. Remind students that such information should not be given to strangers.
  What Michael should do: Students should recall the rules in the checklist on Activity Sheet 3.

Close

- **Ask:** *What are some pluses of chat and messaging in cyberspace?*
- **Ask:** *How can it happen that people in cyberspace are sometimes not who they seem to be?* (Sometimes we incorrectly assume things about them; sometimes people deliberately pretend to be someone they are not.)
- **Ask:** *What rules should you know before chatting in cyberspace?* Students should recall the rules in the checklist on Activity Sheet 2.

Extend

The following activity can be added for students who completed this lesson in a previous grade.

- Have students play a game called "That's Private!" Put students in pairs or small groups to simulate chat rooms. Pick a topic of interest to the group. Allow the chat to wander off topic, as it does in cyberspace. Have students try to "trick" others into giving out private information. Anyone who answers "That's Private!" gets a point. The first student to get three points wins.

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