CyberSmart!

Safety with Cyberpals

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

Overview

Students learn that they can develop rewarding online relationships, but should never reveal private identity information to a person they know only in cyberspace.

Objectives

- Compare cyberpals and face-to-face friends, explaining that a cyberpal is still a stranger
- Recall that private information should not be given to anyone in cyberspace without permission of a parent or teacher

ISTE® National Technology Standards

- Performance Indicator # 3

Site Preview

- No Internet site is used in this lesson.

Online Resources

- Visit sites providing background information on Cyberpals.

Materials

- Activity sheets (2)

Introduce

- Ask students to share their experiences chatting online.
- Discuss some differences between chatting (or instant messaging) with friends they know from school and people they have never met face to face.

Teach 1

- Distribute Activity Sheet 1.
- Have students complete the sheet and then share their responses. NOTE: Postpone discussion until students have read and applied the information on Activity Sheet 2.

Teach 2

- Distribute Activity Sheet 2.
- After students read "It's Okay to Chat," **ask:** *Why might it be easier to share school problems with a cyberpal than a face-to-face friend?* (It may be easier to share because cyberpals are not face to face and they don't have to worry about what the other kids in school will think.)
- After students read "Choose Chat Rooms Just for Kids," point out that monitors may also be called "hosts," or "moderators."
- After students read "A Cyberpal Is a Stranger," ask them if they have ever pretended to be someone they are not. Point out that cyberpals might pretend sometimes, too.

Teach 3

- Have students return to their responses on Activity Sheet 1 and make changes or additions.
- Discuss possible answers with students. (Safe responses for Sita: "I can't tell you. It wouldn't be safe," or "That's private. Let's not go there.") Students should also explain that a good response follows safety rules.

Close

- **Ask:** *How are cyberpals and face-to-face friends different?* (Even when you share personal thoughts with a cyberpal, this person is still a stranger. You know face-to-face friends much better. Just seeing them in school or around your neighborhood gives you a lot of information about them.)
- **Ask:** *What should you do when a cyberpal asks for private information?* (Never give private information without first asking permission of a parent or guardian.)

Extend

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

- Have students review the lesson and then form role-playing pairs. In each pair, one cyberpal asks for private information and the other cyberpal answers with creative, but safe, replies.

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