DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP WEEK 2021

Digital Citizenship Week 2021 is October 18-22. This is a great time to remind your students how to be a good digital citizen, both at school and at home. Common Sense Media provides an introduction to digital citizenship, including an introduction video at https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship-week.

ELEMENTS OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP:

Dr. Mike Ribble defines nine elements of digital citizenship. Each of them is equally important, although depending on your student's age, some of them are more relevant and easier to teach than others. Each element is described below, along with an idea or tip to share with your students.

DIGITAL ACCESS: *Everyone should have equal access to technology.* Remember that students may not have the same access to technology at home as they do at school. Inform students and parents about options they have for tech at home – most libraries have devices available to the public, and sites like everyoneon.org provide low-cost options for devices and internet access.

DIGITAL COMMERCE: *People can buy and sell things online, but it is the consumer's responsibility to make sure the seller is reputable.* Encourage students to look for the lock icon in the browser that shows the website's use of HTTPS, a secure browsing protocol. Remind them to read product reviews and return policies before purchasing.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION: *Before using technology to communicate, you should think about the purpose of your message.* Remind students to THINK before sending a message or writing a comment: is it True, is it Helpful, is it Inspiring, is it Necessary, is it Kind. If the answer to any of those questions is no, they should stop and reconsider whether they need to share it.

DIGITAL ETIQUETTE: *Members of a digital society are expected to follow certain guidelines.* Along the same lines as digital communication above, it is important to remind students to think about what they are putting online. Once something is on the Internet, they no longer have control over it. Their digital footprint or tattoo is permanent, and even when they delete something, it could be preserved in the form of a screenshot or archive that could be seen by a future employer. In addition, it is important that students consider their audience when posting – who needs to know what you ate for breakfast or that you are buying pony stickers for your bedroom wall?

DIGITAL HEALTH & WELLNESS: *Technology needs to be balanced with other, offline activities.* Use of technology does not come without health risks. Among other things, eye and wrist injuries can result from extended use of technology. Students need reminded that they need to take breaks frequently and do other activities. There are also many studies showing that the light emitted by cell phones and tablets can hinder a person's ability to sleep, so both children and adults should stop using devices at least an hour before going to bed [3,4].

DIGITAL LITERACY: *Technology is ineffective unless users are taught how and when to use it.* Technology is constantly changing, and students need to be able to learn and adapt with those changes. Give them time to just be free to experiment with a device or app. Make sure that you know how to use it though – they are sure to ask questions. You can turn this into a teaching moment too: after answering the question once, you can make that student the expert and direct other students to him or her. You can also gauge each student's level of comfort with digital literacy (and your own) with sites like https://www.getdigitalskills.org/. Students fill out the questionnaire to find out which digital skills they have mastered, and which skills need improvement. They will also receive customized resources for furthering development of digital skills based on their questionnaire results.

DIGITAL LAW: *Just like in the real world, users of technology are responsible for what they do online.* Remind students that, just like printed material, copyright applies to online articles, pictures, and other intellectual property. When searching, students should find images licensed with the Creative Commons license and should summarize or paraphrase text found online.

DIGITAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES: *Every digital citizen has the same freedoms and obligations.* Every person has the right to free speech and privacy on the internet. However, with that right comes the responsibility to monitor what you say and do online. One way to do that is by checking facts before you share them. Sites like www.snopes.com provide a searchable index of potentially questionable stories and their level of factualness. Remind students that, before sharing anything, they should make sure that the information is true.

DIGITAL SECURITY: *Each person needs to take precautions to make sure they stay safe online.* Share policies for creating secure passwords (at least 8 characters, mix of upper-case and lower-case letters, numbers, and symbols) and show students https://howsecureismypassword.net to let them test their passwords. Remind students (and parents) to never share their passwords or real identities with anyone they don't know, especially when online.

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Sources:

[1] Ribble, Mike. "Nine Elements of Digital Citizenship." *Digital Citizenship*, 2017, www.digitalcitizenship.net/nine-elements.html.

[2] Gegan, Wade. "9 Elements of Digital Citizenship Poster." *Fractus Learning*, 31 May 2018, www.fractuslearning.com/digital-citizenship-poster/.

[3] Brooks, Rita. "How Technology Impacts Sleep Quality." American Association of Sleep Technologists, 8 Feb. 2018, www.aastweb.org/blog/how-technology-impacts-sleep-quality.

[4] Rosen, Larry. "Relax, Turn Off Your Phone, and Go to Sleep." *Harvard Business Review*, 31 Aug. 2015, www.hbr.org/2015/08/research-shows-how-anxiety-and-technology-are-affecting-our-sleep.

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