**3 Basic Digital Citizenship Standards All Educators Should Know and Teach**

Educating students about online interactions and safety is important, but so is educator understanding of what it means to be a digital citizen.

by Meghan Bogardus CortezT

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Teaching students digital citizenship can be a baseline of their understanding of how to stay safe online — from cyberbullying to phishing to navigating the plethora of online news options.

“Teachers have long understood the importance of instilling good citizenship in their students, focusing on social etiquette and how to treat people with respect in the course of their daily lives,” reads an article on Edudemic. “Today, though, it’s just as important that students understand what kinds of behaviors are acceptable online.”

When it comes to making sure students are being the best digital citizens, educators can turn to a blend of guidance and tech tools.

1. **Your Students Look to You for Media Literacy**

The internet is vast and the information that students read may not always be reliable. In today’s news climate, media literacy and digital literacy go hand in hand.

In “News and America’s Kids: How Young People Perceive and Are Impacted by the News,” a recent Common Sense Media survey, it was found that students prefer to get their news online versus traditional media.

However, the survey also revealed that while students want to get their news online, most are hearing it from an adult like a teacher or parent, and they are trusting that source the most, with 48 percent trusting teachers a lot more than news organizations (25 percent).

With students getting their news from educators and trusting it implicitly, media literacy becomes even more important.

“We need students to read across multiple sources and compare, not just find one source and go with it,” says Ian O’Byrne of University of Connecticut’s New Literacies Research Lab in an EdTech article.

Adults seem to be setting a good example for students in this, with the survey indicating that 76 percent of people will look for additional sources to determine the validity of a suspicious news story.

2**. Educate Students of the Consequences of Digital Actions**

When it comes to using digital tools, ISTE recognizes that there are certain rules of etiquette (and laws) that teachers need to make sure their students are aware of and following.

In a blog post, teacher Erin Flanagan writes that she ties her lessons on digital citizenship into earning a license to use classroom technology, but it shouldn’t just be a one-time discussion.

“I have learned that if you do a lesson in the beginning of the year where students are earning a device license, be sure to include plans for students to renew their licenses throughout the year to make it more meaningful,” writes Flanagan.

In both its digital citizenship standards and 2016 Standards for Students, ISTE points to managing digital identities— knowing that information you put online is permanent — and understanding that actions online have consequences as the foundation of digital etiquette.

Another key part of digital etiquette is understanding copyright laws and plagiarism when using online sources for school projects. ISTE points to teaching students to use sources like Creative Commons to find fair use images.

Teachers can also take advantage of the popular classroom tool, Chromebooks, and have students install Chrome browser extensions to help check for plagiarism, like Plagly, and to learn how to properly cite sources, like EasyBib.

3**. Understand the Privacy and Security Standards Tech Tools Must Follow**

Privacy is perhaps the biggest component of digital citizenship that educators and administrators must be aware of. There is an alphabet soup of regulations that schools must follow to make sure student data is protected when tech tools are used.

Thankfully, there are a variety of guidelines and tech tools that help comply with these laws.

To ensure that student and teacher data is kept private, EdTech reports that Bristol Warren Regional School District in Rhode Island uses the Data and Privacy Dashboard from the Future Ready Schools Framework. This tool helps the school make sure sensitive data is protected, but tech tools can still be used.

“The IT staff used to be able to police information security, making sure technologies were in place to protect the network infrastructure and enforcing access and password policies. But, as we implement more education technology and services that gather sensitive data, we have to make sure that everybody in our community is aware of the security issues for themselves and our children,” the district’s technology director, Rose Muller, tells EdTech.

Even once educators know what they need to do to keep students safe online, enforcing these policies can be daunting. This is where tech comes in.

The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) warrants schools to be vigilant about the kinds of websites that students can access on classroom devices. Web filters from GoGuardian and Barracuda can help educators to block suspicious and inappropriate sites, and Chromebooks have a lot of built-in features to help with this as well.

When it comes to giving students freedom to explore the internet, GoGuardian offers Chromebook management software that can help teachers maintain control and remain aware of what students are looking at.