

The Importance of Teaching Digital Citizenship

We're taught how to function in the world from a young age—table manners, general civilities, how to interact with others... the rules of living as contributing members of society. With the swift rise of the internet, and children's younger and younger age accessing digital devices these days, sometimes we forget that navigating online is not as simple as powering up a tablet and launching a video game.

The lack of early digital education can sometimes lead to cyber-bullying, or, less worrisomely, your everyday basic "rudeness" online. That's why teaching digital citizenship from a very young age is so important.

Tech Integration in the Classroom

Tech integration in education isn't a new development. Teachers and administrators have been quick to embrace all the benefits that the digital classroom can bring to students. Digital citizenship, however, wasn't viewed as an issue until recent years—after the social media boom.

Modern teachers need to understand the importance of digital citizenship and how to [incorporate it into early education](#). Primary school teachers can keep their students informed and safe in cyberspace while integrating technology by following a few guidelines:

- Keep parents informed about all web activity in the classroom.
- Ensure that parents understand what their kids are doing online.
- Include parents in their child's online activities.
- Inform parents that things only get posted after your approval.

By getting parents involved and on board early on, you can ensure your students behave properly online at home as well as in the classroom.

How to Cultivate Standup Digital Citizens

As a teacher, it's your job to [encourage students](#) to use the internet properly, safely, and politely. Make them understand that what they say anonymously can still come back to them, and that "hiding" behind their keyboards to bully others can have serious, real-life consequences.

Addressing the 21st century skill of digital citizenship helps students communicate and collaborate responsibly online—a valuable skill that will serve them well in the future. Being a standup digital citizen in the online community includes:

- Reporting cyber bullying.
- Learning how to keep private information safe.
- Creating secure passwords.
- Learning what not to share on social media.
- Understanding intellectual property rights.
- Staying safe from malware and viruses.
- Mastering "netiquette" and online grammar.
- Creating a respectable cyberspace "voice."

Teach your students to treat the internet as they would real-life interactions and that respect for others is just as imperative online as it is offline. Teaching digital citizenship is more than just a lesson in common courtesy; it's a critical step in creating a healthy, positive, and safe cyber-environment for our children for years to come.