Talking Safely Online

Essential Question

What's the difference between Internet friends and in-person friends?

Lesson Overview

Students learn that, while people can develop rewarding friendships online, they should be cautious with online-only friends and never reveal private information without asking a parent or trusted adult for permission. They discuss the difference between online and in-person friendships, explore an online chat scenario, and complete and sign a checklist for safe online chatting.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to ...

- compare and contrast online-only friends and in-person, face-to-face pals.
- analyze why private information should not be given to anyone online without the permission of a trusted adult.
- debate how to respond if an online-only friend asks them personal questions.

Materials and Preparation

- Chalkboard or white board
- Copy **The Right Answer Student Handout**, one for each student.
- Copy the **Chatting Safety Checklist Student Handout**, one for each student.

Family Resources

- Send home the **Talking Safely Online Family Tip Sheet (Elementary School)**.

Note: The latest research indicates that pre-adolescent children are generally not the targets of online predators, and that the news media-driven idea that predators piece together private information to abduct children is not supported by evidence. In this lesson, we discuss the safety risks associated with giving out our private information online, but we also address the risk of identity theft. It is never too early for children to learn about identity theft. Children often are targeted because they have clean credit histories and their parents are unlikely to be alerted that someone is using their child's identity. Children who learn about identity theft also can help protect their parents' identities online.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Standards Alignment –

Common Core:

grade 3: RI.1, RI.4, RI.10, R.4a, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.3, SL.4, SL.6, L.3a, L.6

grade 4: RL.10, RI.3, RI.4, RI.7, RI.9, RI.10, RF.4a, W.9b, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.4, L.3a, L.6

grade 5: RL.10, RI.3, RI.4, RI.7, RI.9, RI.10, RF.4a, W.9b, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.4, SL.6, L.6

ISTE: 2b, 5a

Key Vocabulary –

uncomfortable: anxious; uneasy

monitor (noun): someone who closely observes and controls a situation, like a referee

monitor (verb): to observe closely

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1

introduction

Warm-up *(10 minutes)*

INVITE students to share their experiences chatting online, instant messaging, and posting on message boards.

EXPLAIN that sometimes kids might chat online with people they have never met in person.

CHALLENGE students to explain the differences between communicating with friends they know from school and their neighborhood and communicating with people they have never met in person.

EXPLAIN that although kids can have fun chats with online-only friends, they should recognize that they don't know these friends as well as they do in-person ones. Therefore, they need to be cautious in what they share.

ASK:

Can you ever really know if an online-only friend is male or female?	No, because in some cases people purposefully may change their identity.

Can you know for sure how old an online-only friend is?	No. Since all communication is online, it is easy for someone to reveal only part of his or her identity.

REMIND students that they should talk to online-only friends with caution, and never reveal private information that could put them in danger in any way. Never give online-only friends private information about yourself, such as your address or phone number, without first asking permission from a parent or guardian.

teach 1

You're in Charge *(10 minutes)*

DISTRIBUTE the **The Right Answer Student Handout**.

HAVE students read the scenario about Sita and CJcool11, and then answer the handout questions individually.

Note: Students will refer back to this handout in Teach 3.

teach 2

Stay Safe *(10 minutes)*

ASK:

Why may it be easier to share school problems with an online-only friend than an in-person, face-to-face friend?	It may be easier because online-only friends are not from school, so they might be able to see both sides of an issue, as they don't have to worry about what the others in your school will think.

REMIND students that they can't know for sure that an online-only friend is really a kid or someone they can trust. Make sure they know it's easy to hide your real identity when you're online.

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ASK:

Have you ever pretended to be someone you are not? If so, when?

Answers may include Halloween, school plays, jokes.

EXPLAIN to students that online-only friends might sometimes pretend too. They might not really be who students think they are. That's why it's important for students to never share their private information with online-only friends without asking a parent or guardian first. They wouldn't give private information to a stranger without asking, and it's important for them to treat online-only friends the same way.

Note: If students ask why, you can explain that there are criminals who trick people into giving out private information about others. Then they use that private information to pretend to be them. This is called identity theft. They might even pretend to be them in order to steal their money. Giving out certain pieces of information to strangers can also let them know where you are located. This could be dangerous.

ASK:

What's private information?

Answers may include address, phone number, passwords, etc.

EXPLAIN that private information includes (write the following on the board):

- full name
- age
- home address
- phone number
- name of school
- email address

- birth date
- passwords
- credit card number
- mother's maiden name
- family members' workplaces
- photos in which you can be recognized

REMIND students that if an online-only friend asks for any of this private information, they should tell a trusted adult.

DISCUSS with students that the best way to talk safely to online-only friends is on a website that's just for kids. Most of these sites have adult monitors that check the chat and messaging. A monitor is like a referee at a game. Monitors keep track of the chat to make sure that everyone keeps the chat on topic, uses good manners, and stays safe.

teach 3

Check It Out *(10 minutes)*

DISTRIBUTE the **Chatting Safely Checklist Student Handout**.

HAVE students read, discuss, complete, and sign the checklist.

HAVE students revisit their responses to **The Right Answer Student Handout**.

ASK:

Would you change your advice to Sita? If so, how?

Answers will vary.

DISCUSS possible answers with students. Point out that Sita and CJcool11 are online-only friends, not in-person, face-to-face friends. Therefore, Sita needs to be cautious in what information she shares with CJcool11.

REMIND students that they never should share private information about themselves without first asking a parent or a trusted adult. Also, they never should answer questions that make them feel uncomfortable.

EXPLAIN that when Sita's online-only friend asks her "Where is your school?" she could answer "I'd rather not say," or "That's private information." Point out that Sita doesn't have to answer at all. She can just log out of the chat room or website, or block the person who is asking the questions.

REMIND kids that when people persist in asking any question that makes them feel uncomfortable, they can ask a trusted adult to help them report these people to the website owners.

closing

Wrap-up *(5 minutes)*

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives. You may want to ask students to self-reflect in writing for one of the questions, using journals or an online blog/wiki.

ASK:

How are online-only friends and in-person, face-to-face friends different?	Even when you share personal thoughts with an online-only friend, this person is as much a stranger as someone you meet on the street for the first time. You know in-person friends much better. Just seeing them in school or around your neighborhood gives you a lot of information about them.
What kind of information should you not share with online-only friends?	Never give out private information without first asking the permission of a parent or guardian. Students should recall some of the examples of private information listed in Teach 2.
What should you do when someone you don't know asks for private information?	Don't respond, then tell a parent or guardian about it.

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4

Talking Safely Online

You're ready to chat or talk with others online once you can check that each statement below is true.

☐ My parents say it's okay for me to chat and message online.

☐ I will only chat and message on kids' websites that have monitors (people who review what is being said).

☐ I will check in with a trusted adult before replying to, clicking on a link from, or IMing someone who is not a face-to-face friend.

☐ I will pick chat and messaging screen names that do not include private identity information.

☐ I know what kinds of information are private.

☐ I will not give out private information when talking online.

☐ I will not answer questions that make me uncomfortable.

☐ I will leave the site and tell a trusted adult if someone bothers me online.

☐ I will never meet someone in person who I first met online without bringing a parent or guardian with me.

Signature _____   **Date** _____

Use Common Sense!

Remember not to share these types of private information:

- Full name
- Street address
- Name of school
- School address
- Email address

- Phone numbers
- Passwords
- Cell phone number
- Photos in which you can be recognized or contain personal identifying information

- Mother's maiden name
- Parent's place of work

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1

Talking Safely Online

Sita likes to visit a website where kids can post messages about school, their favorite TV shows, and current events. She really likes a kid who uses the screen name CJcool11. When Sita shares a problem she has at school, CJcool11 always has good ideas for handling the problem. Even though she has never met CJcool11 in person, Sita thinks of CJcool11 as a friend.

One day, while messaging, CJcool11 and Sita compare their two schools.

Sita types, "My school principal is so strict. We have to walk through the halls in straight lines!"

CJcool11 answers, "My school isn't so strict. What's the name of your school?"

This question gives Sita a bad feeling. Sita feels uncomfortable about giving that information to CJcool11.

She types back, "Uh, my school's name is too hard to spell."

CJcool11 types, "So where is your school?"

Why do you think Sita gets a bad feeling when CJcool11 asks for the name of her school?

_____

_____

What should Sita answer?

_____

What makes this answer a good one?

_____

_____

Use Common Sense!

If things get creepy or uncomfortable when you're chatting online, take action.

- Log out of the website or messaging service
- Tell a parent or trusted adult
- Ignore the person, or block that person from chatting with you

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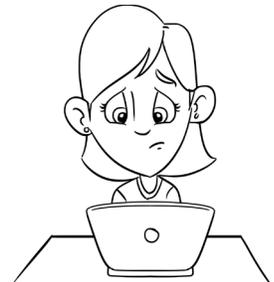
1

Talking Safely Online

1. Circle the examples of private information below.

    a) Your full name

    b) Sports you like

    c) Your email address

    d) Your street address

    e) The name of your pet

    f) The place you went on vacation

2. Sally is talking with Steven62, her online friend. Steven62 asks, "Is Sally your real name? What's your last name?" Sally feels uncomfortable. She:

    a) Should tell Steven62 the truth

    b) Should lie and say her real name is Susie Roberts

    c) Should not tell her name, and she should go tell a trusted adult

    d) Should tell Steven62 her real name only if he tells her his real name

3. Read the scenario below and then choose the best answer.

True or False: Lila has an online friend name Clara. Clara asks what Lila's favorite animal is. She also asks what her favorite color is. Lila shouldn't answer Clara because this is private information.

    a) True

    b) False

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Talking Safely Online

ASSESSMENT
TEACHER VERSION

1. Circle the examples of private information below.

a) Your full name　　　**d) Your street address**

b) Sports you like　　　e) The name of your pet

c) Your email address　　f) The place you went on vacation

Answer feedback

The correct answers are **a**, **c**, and **d**. Your full name, your email address, and your street address are all examples of private information. You should never tell these things to online friends or online strangers without the permission of a trusted adult.

2. Sally is talking with Steven62, her online friend. Steven62 asks, "Is Sally your real name? What's your last name?" Sally feels uncomfortable. She:

a) Should tell Steven62 the truth

b) Should lie and say her real name is Susie Roberts

c) Should not tell her name, and she should go tell a trusted adult

d) Should tell Steven62 her real name only if he tells her his real name

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **c**. Sally should not tell her real name, and she should then tell a trusted adult. Never ignore your feelings when something makes you feel uncomfortable. It's probably a sign that something is wrong.

3. Read the scenario below and then choose the best answer.

True or False: Lila has an online friend name Clara. Clara asks what Lila's favorite animal is. She also asks what her favorite color is. Lila shouldn't answer Clara because this is private information.

a) True

b) False

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **b**, False. You should always talk to online friends with caution, but it's okay to share some information with an online friend. Your favorite animal and favorite color are not private information.

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1

Talking Safely Online

Unjumble to find the hidden words

1. uaoltrfncmobe _____

2. ehpazitme _____

3. spetteroye _____

4. messgae _____

5. clbryulibyneg _____

6. mitnoor _____

* **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**
What kind of information should you not share with online-only friends?

* **DO YOU REMEMBER** …
What the differences are between Internet friends and in-person friends?

1. Family Activity

Come up with a clever way to remember examples of private information in the future. Pick the tune of a song, such as "Happy Birthday," "Mary Had a Little Lamb," or even the theme song from your favorite TV show. Write a song to that tune that helps you remember private information: your full name, street address, school name, school address, email address, phone number, computer password, mother's maiden name, or parent's place of work.

2. Tech It Up!

Use an audio recorder on a family member's phone (with their permission) or the GarageBand app to record your song!

3. Common Sense Says …

If things get creepy or uncomfortable when you're chatting online, take action.

~ Log out of the website or messaging service.
~ Tell a parent or trusted adult.
~ Ignore the person or block that person from chatting with you.

Common Sense on Talking Safely Online

What's the Issue?

Kids love connecting with others online. Most young people talk online only with their friends and family. But as a parent, you might be concerned that a stranger with bad intent (predator) could contact your child.

Predatory behavior is when people contact your child on the internet (mostly through instant messaging, chat rooms, or social networking sites) and attempt to "groom" your child for a relationship. These people try to win children's trust by hiding their true identities. They may try to get kids into creepy or dangerous situations by pretending to have similar interests, giving them compliments, and letting them talk about anything they want. They typically tell children to keep the friendship secret, and they may even threaten kids if they tell anybody. As the relationship develops, the predator may send pictures, ask a child to send them pictures, and then ask to meet face to face.

Why Does It Matter?

Teaching your child to be alert about how predators groom their targets is crucial to keeping your child safe. With very small kids, it is best if you are present when they are online. At this age, you may choose to block your kids from talking online, or create strict rules for them to follow about who they can talk to. For older elementary school children, you may choose to give them more freedom after first discussing how to stay safe online.

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Discuss responsible online behavior. Establish rules for appropriate instant messaging and chatting online, and explain that you're using those rules because you care about their safety. You may want to involve an older sibling who can model good online behavior and can stay involved in their younger siblings' online lives.

Establish rules for who's okay to talk to. Online talk should generally be with people your children know, like family and friends.

Set boundaries for what topics are okay to discuss. Kids shouldn't answer questions online that make them feel uncomfortable. They also shouldn't talk about adult topics with strangers.

Make sure your child feels safe telling a trusted adult. If something creepy or inappropriate happens online, kids need to know they won't get in trouble if they tell an adult they trust. Also, avoid banning them from the computer. Kids are less likely to tell parents when they experience a problem on the computer if they think as a result they won't be allowed to use it.

Remind your kids not to give strangers private information. Kids should never give out their name, address, school, phone number, email, pictures, or anything that could identify who they are.

Block, ignore, or leave. Most kids know to brush off unwanted contact. Encourage this behavior.

Look for warning signs. Does your child seem withdrawn, emotionally distant, spend endless hours online, or seem to be hiding something? The kids who get sucked into inappropriate online relationships often show warning signs. They might be hiding an online relationship they don't want you to know about. If you think this might be happening, ask your child about it!