Keeping Kids Safe in a Digital World
Northshore Christian Academy
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Digital Citizenship at NCA

Digital citizenship is made of a number of areas that can all affect your child’s well-being and preparation for life in a digital world. At NCA we believe that all of these nine elements listed below are important to discuss with students to inform and prepare them for life. Each month we focus on one area bringing a biblical perspective to each element. We hope to partner with parents and caregivers as you talk to your children about these areas.

The nine elements were created by Mike Ribble in his book, Digital Citizenship in Schools, published by the International Society for Technology in Education. They have been adapted to into the digital citizenship education we provide at NCA.

1. **Digital Access:** *full electronic participation in society.*

   Digital access has become an integral part of our society, but we need to talk about how and when it is important for our children to access it.

2. **Digital Commerce:** *electronic buying and selling of goods.*

   Whether it is in-app purchases or holding your phone up to the Starbucks drive thru window, it is important for our children to be aware of how these transactions are being made and what is really happening behind the scenes.

3. **Digital Communication:** *electronic exchange of information.*
Children need to be taught how to make appropriate decisions when faced with many different communication options. For example an email represents a communication with no facial expressions or instant feedback that can used as a cue to understand how the message was intended.

4. **Digital Literacy**: *process of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology.*

Children need to adapt quickly to changing technology and being able to process just-in-time information to be successful in an ever changing digital landscape.

5. **Digital Etiquette**: *electronic standards of conduct or procedure.*

We need to teach children in this area how to be responsible and what is appropriate use of technology.

6. **Digital Law**: *electronic responsibility for actions and deeds*

In a society in which access to everything from downloading illegal music to plagiarizing is an easy task, we need to help children understand the ethics and laws of these actions.

7. **Digital Rights & Responsibilities**: *those freedoms extended to everyone in a digital world.*

The basic rights, such as freedom of speech and privacy, are also extended to the digital world. Children need to understand the appropriate manner for which these should be used.

8. **Digital Health & Wellness**: *physical and psychological well-being in a digital technology world.*

Everything from ergonomics to screen time, it is important to be aware of what will help our children live a healthy life when dealing with technology.


We need to instruct children how to create secure passwords and understand how we protect ourselves from viruses and hacking.

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“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6
Resources and Recommendations for Parents

01 Step one for Parents: Establish an Acceptable Home Use Policy

- While they are on campus, we have the AUP (Acceptable Use Policy) to help guide and protect our students.
- NCA wants to partner with parents to help them form their own acceptable Home Use Policy. What, where, and when should your child use technology? What are the rules?

02 Step two for Parents: Establish some safeguards for your home.

There are many wonderful applications to help you filter Internet access. Here are a couple of options you may want to look at:

**Mobicip for internet access on mobile devices (Free and paid version)**
- Easy to set up and use
- Simple web-based settings and reports
- Convenient age-based settings
- Advanced content filtering
- Scans every visited site, page and content
- Doesn't slow down your device
- Across 3G, 4G, LTE, WiFi networks

**OpenDNS: www.opendns.com**
- OpenDNS is the Internet parental controls solution that empowers parents to manage Web access across every device that accesses the Internet on your home network.
- In addition to computers, this includes your kids' Xbox, Playstation, Wii, DS, iPad, and even their iPhone.
- OpenDNS is chosen and trusted by more than 1 in 3 US public schools to keep their kids safe online.
- A faster and more reliable Internet
- OpenDNS Basic is free to use for home networks

03 Step three for Parents: Get familiar with resources that can help in your decision making for appropriate shows or games:

**Common Sense Media**

Although Common Sense Media is not a Christian-based resource, they have a wealth of information so that you can make informed decisions as a parent. This nonprofit provides many details on exactly what content is in each movie, book, music, or game. The number of reviews is larger than any other source on the web. Categories are rated based on positive messages, Positive role models, violence, sex, consumerism, and drugs.

https://www.commonsensemedia.org/
Plugged In does not have the number of reviews that Common Sense does, but it provides a great Christian perspective on popular movies, music, games, and books. Focus on the Family is the organization behind this wealth of knowledge.

http://www.pluggedin.com/

Step four for Parents: Start the conversation with your kids. You can use the nine elements above to talk about technology as situations arise or as your children get older and more technology elements become relevant to their lives.

Along with thinking about those nine elements, a great starting point is Plugged In for articles and a biblical perspective on opportunities for conversations. You can subscribe to their newsletter to receive valuable information each month on what is trending.

For more on the nine elements: http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine_Elements.html

Additional Resources:

Focus on the Family - A Christian ministry, with ample resources, dedicated to helping families thrive
www.focusonthefamily.com
  Focus on the Family: Parenting Resources
  www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/protecting-your-family/page/1

FBI – Parents Guide to Internet Safety
www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/parent-guide

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: Safety and Prevention
www.missingkids.com/Publications/Safety
  A Program from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children designed to inform parents, educators, law enforcement, teens, and children about on-line safety and digital citizenship.
  www.netsmartz.org/Parents

Crosswalk.com – Christian Resources (articles, blogs, devotionals, videos, & newsletters) addressing faith, family, church and culture.
www.crosswalk.com
  Article: 3 Online Trends Parents Need to Warn Their Kids About
  www.crosswalk.com/family/parenting/teens/3-online-trends-parents-need-to-warn-their-kids-about.html
Popular Apps

Trying to keep up with your child's social media can be a full time job! Checking their phones, text, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Pinterest and more….it's all a little overwhelming for parents.

*According to a 2011 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, 95% of teens between 12 and 17 use the internet, 27% of this group uploads video, and a whopping 80% use social media sites like Facebook and Instagram on phones and the computer.

We recommend parents and caregivers closely monitor what your children are downloading, what Apps are on their phones and media devices and why. Parents can have "parental control" over their social media and devices and require that permission be given for any Apps they want to download. Parents can also download Snapchat, Twitter and other social media sites just to monitor their children’s accounts. Consider establishing a family contract regarding safety and acceptable usage of devices and social media sites. Safekids.com has examples of family contracts for different age levels of children: www.safekids.com/family-contract-for-online-safety/

**CAUTION:**

Below are some popular Apps students can purchase or download on social media. Many times they are abused by adults and students alike. If your student is using any of these Apps, we highly recommend parents regularly monitor their accounts.

SnapChat
Kik
Omegle
Tinder
Ask.FM
YikYak
Whisper
Vine
Twitter
Facebook
Instagram

New Apps arise constantly making it difficult to stay ahead of the game! Establishing open communication, family expectations, and monitoring your children’s devices and social media sites can help your children stay safe and learn to navigate the digital world in which we live.

*education.com