

LET'S BE RESPECTFUL ONLINE

Lesson plan on:

Internet safety and ethical online behaviours.

Adaptation tips to suit different contexts and realities:



- Suitable for children who have access to the Internet inside and outside of school, and children who are starting to use or are already using the Internet to communicate.
- Consider amending aspects of the lesson plan that do not fit your environment.

Learning objectives:



By the end of this lesson, the children should be able to:

- Recognize the similarities and differences between online and offline communication.
- Demonstrate examples of respectful and disrespectful online communication.
- Identify age-appropriate strategies of ethical and respectful online and offline behaviour.
- Recognize how ethical and respectful online and offline behaviours can help build just and peaceful societies..

How to use this lesson plan:



The lesson plan is divided in three parts: **Start**, **Learn** and **Reflect**. There are also **Guidance** boxes to help you deepen your knowledge of the specified topics. In addition, there are **Family** activity and **Extension** activity boxes that suggest optional activities and ways of further exploring the topics of the lesson.

Lesson overview:



It might be difficult for children to realize that online communication has some specific challenges. The absence of body language and tone of voice often make it harder to understand what people are trying to communicate.

The aim of the following activities is to help children understand the importance of being respectful and kind towards themselves and others. In particular, we will look at how online communication can easily generate misunderstandings and how to ensure respectful communication in the virtual world.

Young learners will identify strategies to behave ethically online, and for showing respect towards their friends and family online and reflect on age-appropriate strategies to adopt if they are exposed to rude, mean or inappropriate behaviour online.

Key question:

How can we communicate respectfully online?

Age:

9 - 12

Values:



Respect

Skills:



Conflict resolution



Critical Thinking



Empathy

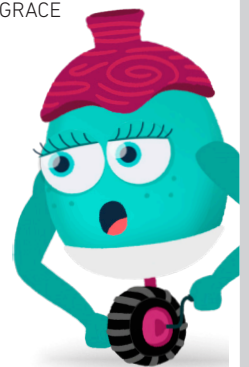
Time:



Preparation and materials:

- Prepare two posters with the following headings: **Classroom Respect Rules** and **Online Respect Rules**.
- Flipchart or blackboard.
- Marker pen.
- If possible, The Zorbs [video Log Off and Cool Down](#) or the corresponding [comic book](#), both available on the the [GRACE website](#).

In addition, check out the [colouring book](#) and [children's book](#), both available on the GRACE website.



Start



1. Ask for four volunteers. Give the volunteers the following scenario and explain that they should not share it with the rest of the class:
Pablo is being bullied by a group of students.
2. Invite them to take 1-2 minutes to get ready to act out the scene as a group, using a frozen image. Everyone should play one of the characters in the scene and the whole group should act out a statue-like image of what is happening in the scene.

The only rules are:

- no one should talk, make any sound or move.
- no one should use objects or props to set the scene.
- they should create the scene as quickly as possible, without much preparation.



If possible, make sure that the rest of the class does not see the volunteers preparing (e.g. let them work behind the flipchart or blackboard).



Guidance box: frozen image and image theatre

A frozen image is a tool within image theatre.

It can be used to explore challenging situations with children.

Children present a scenario in the form of a statue. The statue is used for group reflection on the topic under discussion. Alternatively, it can be used as a starting point to engage the children and bring forward shared problem-solving strategies.

The frozen image is a great resource because it allows the communication of emotions without using words and the discussion of topics that children might feel ashamed to talk about.

3. While the volunteers are preparing the scene, explain that you are going to look at how to be respectful, especially when online. Invite the children to explain what they think the word respect means to them.
4. Invite the volunteers to come to the front of the classroom and present their frozen image.
5. Ask the rest of the children:
 - “What do you think is happening here?”
 - “What do you think these people are doing?”
 - “How do you think each person is feeling?”
6. Encourage the children to discuss the importance of facial expressions and body language in communication. If students are struggling, ask them how they guessed what was happening and how they understood how the different people were feeling.

Note: If it is possible to watch The Zorbs [video](#) *Log Off and Cool Down* or read the corresponding [comic book](#) with the children, you should follow all the steps below. If it is not feasible, skip step 2.

1. Invite children to talk about the following:

“What are some of the differences between saying something out loud to someone and writing it in a text message?”
2. Show the children The Zorbs [video](#) *Log Off and Cool Down* or the corresponding [comic book](#). After watching the video or reading the comic book, use the following questions to start a discussion.

“What do you think this story is about? What is it trying to teach us?”

“Why did The Zorbs give so many different meanings to the message from Ryan?”

“What would you have done if you were Sentimo?”

“What do you think would have happened if Sentimo had answered Ryan with an angry message?”
3. Explain that, just as we need to be respectful towards others when we talk to them in person, it is important that we are respectful online. When we are online, we have to work harder because there is no body language, facial expressions and tone of voice to help us interpret what people are saying to us. We have to look for other clues, such as who is around or what the environment is.
4. Invite the children to form small groups (4-5 children). Explain that, within their groups, they should take five minutes to agree on one example of disrespectful online behaviour. They should be prepared to present their example to the rest of the class.
5. Invite each group to present their example. After each presentation, ask the class to reflect on the following:

“Why is this disrespectful behaviour?”

“How do you think you would feel if you witnessed this behaviour?”

“What do you think you would do if you witnessed this behaviour?”

“What would you change to make it respectful?”
6. After all groups have presented their examples, invite the class to reflect on the following statement:

“Never do or say anything online that you would not do or say offline.”
7. Invite the class to question whether they think this sentence is true or false and why they think so. Engage the class in a discussion on what might make us behave differently online and offline, and why it is crucial to be honest, kind and respectful towards others regardless of whether we are online or offline. Ask the children:

“What does respect mean?”

You can help the children by giving an example of respect: for example, using kind words towards others, even when you feel upset is a sign of respect. Respect means being considerate of other people's feelings, wishes and rights. Ask:

“What happens when we are not respectful towards others? How do they feel? How do we feel?”

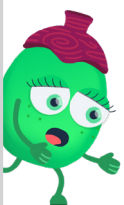
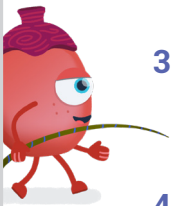
“How do respect contribute to create peaceful relations with others?”

8. If needed, discuss as a class why people are more likely to be less respectful and kind online. Ask the children:

“Why are people sometimes less respectful online?”

If needed, explain that people have the feeling of not being seen online. Because of this feeling and the fact that they cannot see who they are communicating with, they feel less empathetic and think that their actions will have no consequences. Explain that, despite these feelings, the person on the other side of the screen will be just as hurt by disrespectful behaviour online as they would be in person. Stress the importance of being respectful and ethical online. Explain that being respectful is a core value to build inclusive, just and peaceful communities.

9. Conclude by reiterating the importance of always referring to a trusted adult when they encounter something that makes them feel uncomfortable or scared, or that they do not understand.



Reflect



1. Show the children the two posters: Classroom Respect Rules and Online Respect Rules. Invite each child to pick one rule for respectful communication in the classroom and one for respectful communication online. Invite the children to use positive language when possible: for example, to say "always be kind to others" instead of "don't be mean".
2. When the lists of rules are finalized, review them together and display them in the classroom. Refer to the lists throughout the school year.

Guidance box: classroom and online respect rules

This is an example of classroom and online rules that can help you start a discussion on the topic with the children. Feel free to adapt this list to your needs and to integrate any of these points into the posters created by the children (if you feel that they have missed any crucial ones).

Classroom Respect Rules

1. Always be kind and polite to others.
2. Talk to your parents or a trusted adult if someone is mean or rude to you.
3. When talking, take turns.
4. Listen to what others have to say.
5. Do not interrupt.
6. Speak instead of shouting.
7. Use appropriate language: always be kind and respectful.
8. Don't make fun of people.
9. Respect your classmates' privacy.
10. Be welcoming to new students.
11. Help others when they need support.
12. When people do not understand what you say, take time to explain calmly.
13. If something is making you feel angry, before you react, take a deep breath and step away from the situation for a few minutes. If needed, involve an adult to help you solve the conflict.

Online Respect Rules

1. Always be kind and polite to others.
2. Use emoticons or smiley faces, but make sure that you are as clear and specific as possible to express what you mean.
3. Talk to a trusted adult if someone is mean or rude to you online. Never respond to mean messages; you might start a fight online.
4. Be careful with capital letters: always use small letters, unless you are trying to express excitement or enthusiasm. Remember that typing in ALL CAPS means you are yelling.
5. Use respectful language online, just like you would offline.
6. Respect other people's privacy. Do not post information or pictures without consent or spread rumours about other people online.
7. Do not forward spam. It is not fun and it could damage the computer through viruses embedded in the emails.
8. Do not share secrets online, including passwords, your parents' banking or credit card details and personal information or data.
9. Never do or say anything online that you would not do or say offline.

Reflect



Extension activity

This could be a good moment to introduce the topic of cyberbullying. When someone is mean or rude online, when someone uses bad words, spreads rumours or is threatening online, this is cyberbullying. Children are very vulnerable to cyberbullying. Having open conversations is an excellent first step towards problem-solving.

Invite the children to reflect on the following questions:

"What is bullying and what is cyberbullying?"

"How much of a threat do you think it is? How bad is it? Why?"

"Do you think that some people are more likely to be bullies than others? Why?"

"Do you think that some people are more likely to be bullied than others? Why?"

"What would you do if you knew someone was being cyberbullied?"

Always reiterate the importance of going to a trusted adult if the children feel that they or someone they know is being bullied.

If you need extra support or you want to read more about bullying, check out these resources:

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it>

<https://cyberbullying.org/what-is-cyberbullying>

