

# Activity 3: Computer Rules Committee

## Designing Fair Policies for School Technology (Grades 3-5)

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### ! Teacher Overview

Students form a “Computer Rules Committee” to design policies for a new school safety system. They wrestle with real trade-offs: helpful technology vs. privacy, automatic responses vs. human judgment, keeping everyone safe vs. trusting students. AI participates by explaining what it can and can’t do.

**Duration:** 35-40 minutes **Grade Levels:** 3-5 **Group Size:** Small groups (3-4) or whole class **Technology:** Teacher device for AI consultation (student devices optional)

### Learning Goals

Students will:

- Design rules that balance **safety** with **fairness**
- Consider how **different people** might feel about technology rules
- Understand that **someone has to decide** what computers do automatically
- Practice **group decision-making** about technology

### CYBER.org Standards Alignment (3-5)

- **3-5.DC.ETH:** Technology ethics and responsibility
- **3-5.DC.PII:** Privacy and personally identifiable information

### The Scenario

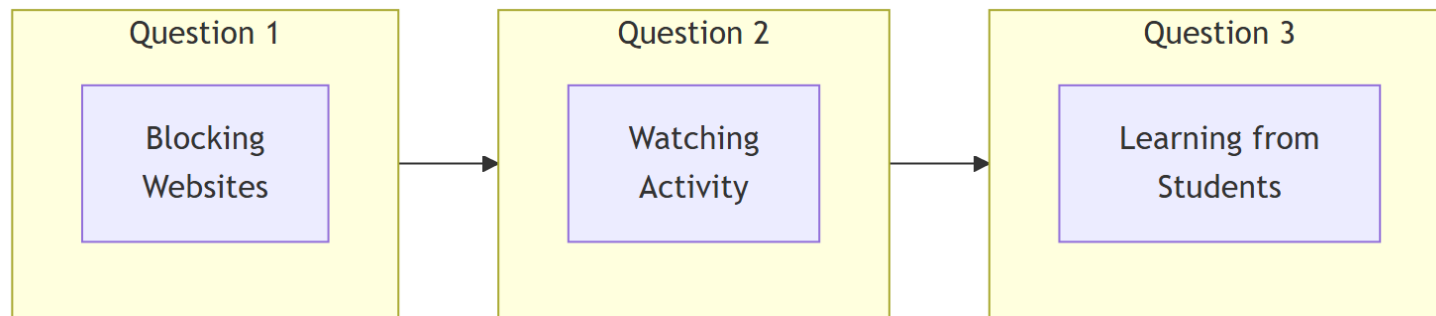
#### Welcome to the Computer Rules Committee!

**Background:** Your school is getting a new computer system called “SchoolGuard” that helps keep students safe online. But before it starts working, the principal wants STUDENTS to help decide the rules!

**What SchoolGuard Can Do:** - See what websites students visit on school computers - Block websites it thinks are dangerous - Send alerts to teachers about student activity - Learn what’s “normal” for your school and flag unusual things

**Your Job:** Decide what SchoolGuard should do automatically, what it should ask about, and what it shouldn’t do at all.

## The Policy Questions



### Policy Committee Process

#### Question 1: Blocking Websites

**The situation:** SchoolGuard can automatically block websites it thinks are dangerous or inappropriate.

**But consider:** - What if it blocks a website you need for a project? - What if it thinks a game site is “dangerous” but it’s actually educational? - Should students be able to ask for sites to be unblocked?

#### Options:

Option A	Option B	Option C
Block everything SchoolGuard thinks is bad	Block dangerous sites, but let students request unblocks	Only block if a teacher agrees

**Your committee’s decision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why we chose this:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Question 2: Watching Student Activity

**The situation:** SchoolGuard can watch what students do online and tell teachers if something seems wrong.

**But consider:** - What if a student is researching something personal (like their parents’ divorce or a health question)? - What if SchoolGuard misunderstands and thinks something normal is “wrong”? - Would knowing SchoolGuard is watching change how you use the computer?

#### Options:

Option A	Option B	Option C
SchoolGuard watches everything and alerts teachers automatically	SchoolGuard watches but only alerts teachers for serious safety concerns	SchoolGuard doesn’t watch individual students at all

**Your committee's decision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why we chose this:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Question 3: Learning from Students

**The situation:** SchoolGuard can learn what's "normal" at your school and get better at spotting problems.

**But consider:** - To learn, it has to remember what students do - Is it okay for a computer to remember your activity? - What if SchoolGuard learns something wrong?

**Options:**

Option A	Option B	Option C
Yes, SchoolGuard should learn and remember	SchoolGuard can learn but must forget after one week	SchoolGuard shouldn't learn about specific students

**Your committee's decision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why we chose this:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Ask the AI (10 minutes)

**Teacher prompts the AI** (or groups take turns):

"You're SchoolGuard, a school safety system. Students are deciding what rules to give you. For each question, tell us: What are you GOOD at doing? What CAN'T you understand? What do you think is fair?"

**Example AI responses to discuss:**

**On blocking websites:** > "I'm good at recognizing known dangerous sites quickly—much faster than a human could check. But I make mistakes with new sites or sites that look suspicious but are actually fine. I once blocked a science website because it had 'chemical' in the name! I think I should be able to block the really dangerous stuff fast, but someone should check my work on the uncertain ones."

**On watching students:** > "I can spot patterns humans might miss—like if someone is being cyberbullied or looking at worrying content. But I can't understand context. A student researching 'depression' might be doing a health assignment, supporting a friend, or experiencing personal struggles. I honestly can't tell the difference. A human needs to make that judgment."

**On learning:** > "Learning makes me better at my job. But I understand why that feels uncomfortable—it means I'm remembering what you do. I think you should decide how long I remember things, and you should be able to ask what I know about you."

### Consider Different Perspectives

**Discuss:** How would these people feel about your rules?

Person	What they might think
<b>A shy student</b>	who researches private things
<b>A teacher</b>	trying to keep students safe
<b>A student</b>	who was cyberbullied
<b>A parent</b>	who wants their child protected
<b>A student</b>	who values privacy

Did this change any of your decisions?

## Present Your Policies

Each group shares:

1. Our three decisions
2. The hardest choice we made and why
3. One thing SchoolGuard told us that changed our thinking

## Reflection Questions

1. **Was it easy or hard to make these rules?** Why?
2. **Did different people in your group want different things?** How did you decide?
3. **Should students get a say in real school technology rules?** Why or why not?
4. **What would happen if SchoolGuard made its own rules?** Would that be okay?

## Assessment Rubric

Skill	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Strong (3)
<b>Considered trade-offs</b>	Chose without discussing pros/cons	Discussed some trade-offs	Thoughtfully weighed multiple perspectives
<b>Included different viewpoints</b>	Only considered own perspective	Considered 1-2 other perspectives	Considered many different people's needs
<b>Understood AI's role</b>	Didn't consider AI capabilities/limits	Some understanding of AI's role	Clear understanding of what AI can/can't do
<b>Group collaboration</b>	One person decided	Some group discussion	True group decision-making

## Assessment Connection

This table shows how activity elements connect to the [Human-AI Collaboration Rubric](https://ryanstraight.github.io/nicek12-2025-materials/) criteria:

Rubric Criterion	Developed Through	Evidence Source
<b>AI Partnership Framing</b>	“Ask the AI” consultation about SchoolGuard’s perspective	Student responses to AI perspective sharing
<b>Complementary Strengths</b>	AI explains “What I’m GOOD at” vs. “What I CAN’T understand”	Written “Why we chose this” explanations
<b>AI Limitation Awareness</b>	SchoolGuard acknowledging its own limitations	“One thing SchoolGuard told us that changed our thinking”
<b>Synthesis Quality</b>	Balancing AI capability with human values in policies	Final policy decisions and rationale

## Variations

### For 3rd Grade

- Do as whole class instead of small groups
- Reduce to 2 policy questions
- Focus on “fair vs. unfair” framing

### For 5th Grade

- Let groups design their own additional policy question
- Have groups debate different policy options
- Research real school technology policies

## Low-Resource Option

If no AI access, use these printed AI perspective cards:

**SchoolGuard says about blocking:** “I’m fast but not perfect. I can block bad sites in milliseconds, but I sometimes block good sites by mistake. Last week I blocked a Wikipedia page because it mentioned ‘hacking’—but it was about the history of computers! I need humans to check my uncertain decisions.”

**SchoolGuard says about watching:** “I see patterns, not meanings. I might notice a student looking at sad things online, but I can’t know if they’re sad, researching for class, or helping a friend. Only a human can understand the difference and know what to do.”

**SchoolGuard says about learning:** “Learning from data makes me smarter, but you should decide how much I remember. Some schools have me forget everything each week. Others let me remember longer. There’s no perfect answer—you have to decide what feels right for your school.”

## Teacher Notes

### Key Concepts to Reinforce

- **People make the rules for AI** — computers don’t decide on their own

- **Trade-offs are real** — more safety might mean less privacy
- **Different people have different needs** — good rules consider everyone
- **AI has limitations** — it can see patterns but not understand meaning

### Connections to Real Life

- School content filters that students experience daily
- Parental controls on home devices
- Social media content moderation

### Preparation

- ☐ Decide: small groups or whole class
- ☐ Test AI access OR prepare perspective cards
- ☐ Create voting/recording system for decisions
- ☐ Prepare to facilitate respectful disagreement