

LESSON GUIDE

CYBERSECURITY BASICS

Digital Citizenship: Rules, Laws, and Regulations

The Rules of the Digital Playground

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, students will learn that just like there are rules on the playground to keep us safe, there are some rules that should be followed to keep you safe on the internet.

Students will:

- Understand that policies and laws help keep people safe online, just like rules help on a playground.
- Identify examples of age-appropriate online rules and policies.

Guiding Question: How can rules and policies keep me safe on the digital playground of the internet in the same way rules keep me safe on the actual playground?

Suggested Grade Levels: 3 - 5

Technology Needed: No

Approximate Time Required: 30 - 45 minutes

Standards:

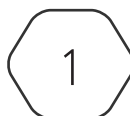
CYBER.ORG Cybersecurity Learning Standards

- 3-5.DC.LAW – Explain how certain policies and laws are created to guide online interactions.

CSTA Compatibility Standards

- 1B-IC-18: Discuss computing technologies that have changed the world, and express how those technologies influence, and are influenced by, cultural practices.

This content is based upon work supported by the US Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency under the Cybersecurity Education Training and Assistance Program (CETAP).



Lesson Background

Background Information:

With students increasingly online, this lesson seeks to start a conversation with students that there are things you shouldn't do while on the internet because they are either harmful for the student, harmful for the student's friends, or even illegal. If students can embrace these rules the way they embrace the rules of playing on the playground, we could start to build a culture where kindness extends into our online lives as much as we want it to extend into our offline lives.

Materials Needed:

Materials per Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Guide• Slides• Online Rules I Have, Who Has Game cards (printed and cut)• Index cards
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Cyber Terms:

Term	Definition
internet	the global collection of all networks and their connected devices
consequences	good or bad things that happen because of something you do
Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)	companies with businesses online cannot collect personal information of children under 13 without parental consent
bullying	when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose, over and over, and makes the person feel bad or unsafe
cyberbullying	the use of digital devices to be mean to a person repeatedly

The Rules of the Digital Playground

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Lesson Launch (3 - 5 minutes)

Display slide 1

- **Display** the cover slide as students enter and you begin to introduce the lesson.

Display slide 2

- **Display** the guiding question and lesson objectives.
- **Say:** "Today we will discuss how rules and policies keep us safe on the digital playground of the internet in the same way that rules keep us safe on the playground."
- You **say** or **students say:** "Today we will:
 - Understand that policies and laws help keep people safe online, just like rules help on a playground.
 - Identify examples of age-appropriate online rules and policies."
- **Ask:** "What questions do you have?"

Lesson Note

Consider asking a few students to volunteer to read the objectives.

Student answers may vary depending on grade level and background knowledge.

Display slide 3

- **Ask:** "What are the rules for our playground/outdoor space/commons area?"

Students may say, "Listen for teacher signals, line up quickly, stay inside fence, use equipment correctly, play fairly, take turns, be a friend to everyone." Accept all reasonable answers.
- **Click** and **ask:** "Why do you think these rules exist?"

Students may say, "We could get hurt." or "The rules exist to keep us safe while we have fun with our friends."
- **Click** and **ask:** "What happens if you break the rules for our playground/outdoor space/commons area?"

Students may say, "If we break the rules, we may not get to play for the day, or you'll call our parents, or we'll have to go to detention." Answers may vary.
- **Click** and **say:** "The **internet** is a lot like a playground. It is a global collection of all networks and their connected devices. It's like a gathering of kids on the playground. Everyone is there with a purpose. On a playground, that purpose is to play and have a good time. On the internet, people can be looking to

play and have a good time too, but they can also do work or look for information to answer questions or provide information to answer questions. So, the internet has rules too, and breaking those rules can lead to consequences.”

- **Ask:** “What is a *consequence*?”

Students may say, “A consequence is something good or bad that happens because of something you do. If you break a rule, the consequence could be something bad like being kept inside from recess. If you help a friend, the consequence could be that they give you a high-five or a hug.”

Interactive Story: The Case of the Digital Playground (10 minutes)

Display slide 4

- **Say:** “We are going to meet a student named Alex. Listen to Alex’s story and be ready to answer questions about some of the situations Alex finds himself in.”
- **Say:** “Alex loves spending time on the playground at school. Alex knows all the playground rules and does his best to play safely while on the playground. One day, a classmate mentions a cool new game app. Alex is excited to play but quickly realizes that the internet has its own set of rules – just like the playground.”

Display slide 5

- **Say:** “Alex tries to sign up for the new game app, but a pop-up says, ‘You must be 13 or older to create an account.’ Alex is only 10. ‘Why can’t I sign up?’ Alex wonders.”
- **Click and ask:** “Why do you think the app has age restrictions?”

Students may say, “The app could have things in it that young kids shouldn’t see.”

- **Click and ask:** “How might this rule keep Alex safe?”

Students may say, “If Alex follows the rule, he won’t be exposed to anything he isn’t meant to see and won’t give away information he is too young to consent to others knowing about him.”

- **Click and say:** “Age restrictions protect younger users from content and interactions they might not understand or be ready for. Age restrictions are also put into place because children under the age of 13 are considered too young to make decisions about who can know what about you. If you see a restriction like this when signing up for a game or app, it’s best to follow the rule.”
- **Ask:** “What do you think could be the consequence if Alex decided to break this rule?”

Students may say, “Alex could get in trouble with his family. If the site finds out that he is not actually 13, they could delete his account and ban him from ever making a new one.”

Display slide 6

- **Say:** “Alex finally finds a different game app that’s for kids. While playing, Alex sees another player sending mean messages to everyone in the chat. Instead of replying, Alex clicks the ‘Report’ button

Lesson Note

The ***Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)*** is a US law that regulates how companies can collect personal information from children under 13 years of age. This law is covered more in depth in the 6-8.DC.LAW lesson Keeping You Safe Online.

and tells a parent.”

- **Click and ask:** “What should Alex do if the behavior continues?”

Students may say, “Alex could leave the game for a little while and come back later when, hopefully, the mean player is offline.” or “Alex could start a new game the mean player is not a part of so he doesn’t have to see the player’s mean messages.” or “Alex could get the help of a parent to email or chat with the game’s support staff to provide more details about how the mean player is abusing their platform.”

- **Ask:** “This person that Alex has encountered could be a cyberbully. What is **cyberbullying**?”

Students may say, “Cyberbullying is using digital devices to be mean to a person repeatedly.”

- **Ask:** “What is the difference between cyberbullying and **bullying**?”

Students may say, “Cyberbullying is done with a digital device. Bullying is when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose, over and over, and makes the person feel bad or unsafe. Bullying takes place in person or by spreading rumors to other people. It doesn’t involve digital devices.”

- **Click and ask:** “Why do you think games have a ‘Report’ button?”

Students may say, “Games have a ‘Report’ button so that you can report issues with players or glitches in the game. Game makers want people to have a good experience with their product, so they make it easy to report problems.”

- **Click and say:** “Reporting tools help stop harmful behavior and keep online spaces safe and respectful.”

- **Ask:** “What do you think could happen to Alex if he hadn’t decided to press the ‘Report’ button, but decided to try to stop the mean player by himself?”

Students may say, “If Alex had decided to try to stand up for himself and the other players in the chat, the mean person could start picking on him specifically.” or “If Alex had decided to try to stand up for himself and other players in the chat, the other players could join in and help him and run the mean player off.” or “If Alex had decided to try to stop the mean kid by being mean himself, others could have reported both he and the mean kid and they could both wind up blocked.”

- **Say:** “Alex had other options, but using the provided reporting tools and letting your parents know that something upsetting is happening to you online are the best options for keeping you safe while online. Being able to stand up for yourself or others is an important skill to stop bullying and cyberbullying, but it’s important to know that there is more than one way to do that. Pressing the ‘Report’ button is a strong way to stand up for yourself and others, even if it’s not as direct as talking to a bully in person.”

Display slide 7

- **Say:** “While playing the game, Alex decides to share a fun picture of the family’s new puppy. Later, a stranger comments, ‘Cute dog! What’s its name?’ Alex gets a little nervous and realizes his profile is set to ‘Public’. With a parent’s help, Alex changes the settings to ‘Friends Only’.”
- **Click and ask:** “What could happen if Alex didn’t change the privacy settings?”

Students may say, “More people Alex doesn’t know could comment on his photo.” or “People who don’t know Alex could go through his profile to see what else they could learn about him.”

- **Click and ask:** “How do privacy settings protect your personal information?”

Students may say, “Privacy settings let you decide who can see information about you or what you post.”

- **Click and say:** “Privacy settings control who sees your information and can protect you from sharing too much online. Sometimes it can be hard to figure out where to go to change these settings. A parent or another trusted adult is a good place to start if you need help finding and changing these settings. They are also good people to ask about whether you should post something even if your privacy settings are set correctly.”

Display slide 8

- **Say:** “By following these online rules, Alex enjoys the game safely and learns how to make smart decisions online! So, let’s see what you are picking up so far.”
- **Ask:** “What are some of the similarities we are seeing in our playground/outdoor space/commons area rules versus the rules Alex is discovering about the internet?”

Students may say, “While some of the rules are different, like take turns using equipment, our playground rules and the rules Alex is learning about the internet are all designed to keep us safe.”

- **Click and ask:** “Alex ran into a rule restricting him from creating an account at a game website because of his age. What could be a rule for the playground/outdoor space/commons area here at our school? How would it keep students safe?”

Answers may vary, but a rule about students being close in age before being allowed to play together comes to mind. This rule could help ensure that all students are safe while playing because it won’t allow Kindergarteners to play with 5th graders, for example. This would keep the Kindergarteners from being injured and would ensure that the 5th graders still have fun without having to be extra careful of the Kindergartners!

Lesson Note

This question-and-answer helps to ensure that students remember that rules in real life and rules for the internet are both designed to make sure they have a good experience doing something they enjoy!

Online Rules I Have, Who Has Game (10 minutes)

Display slide 9

- **Say:** “We are going to look at some scenarios that could happen to you while you are exploring the internet. We will match those scenarios with some rules that we can use to stay safe and have fun when on the internet.”
- **Explain that:**
 - Students will be grouped into pairs.
 - Each pair will receive an Online Rules I Have, Who Has card.
 - Each partner within the pair will decide if he/she wants to read the I Have or Who Has portion of the card.
 - You, the teacher, will **select** a partner group to read the **WHO HAS** portion of their card **ONLY!**

- o A different partner group will have the I Have rule that goes with the first group's Who Has scenario. The partner in this group who chose to read the I Have section will read that part. The other partner will read their Who Has section.
- o This pattern will continue until all 16 scenarios have been read.
- o Game play is over when scenario 16 is read and its rule tracks back to the I Have section of the very first group's card.
- Feel free to **interrupt** game play to **discuss** any scenario and rule that the students don't seem to understand. It could be even more fun to interrupt and discuss any scenario and rule that the students seem to disagree with!
- Once game is finished, **ask**: "Did any scenarios surprise you?"

Student answers may vary.

- **Ask**: "Why is it important to understand these rules before going online?"

Students may say, "It's important to understand these rules so that the internet can be fun as the playground. Rules provide safe ways to do things so that you don't get hurt and can focus on having a good time."

- **Ask**: "What would happen if people didn't follow these rules?"

Students may say, "Not following these rules can be just as dangerous as or worse than not following the playground rules. The scenarios covered people's feelings getting hurt, violating rules about using other people's pictures or music, downloading malware, and even strangers knowing things about you! Being on the internet is a lot like being outside on the playground: if you don't know how to be safe, you shouldn't be out there!"

Lesson Note

This activity has scenarios that address topics like copyright and intellectual property. These topics are delved into more deeply in 3-5.DC.IP lesson Fair Sharing is Caring!

Cyber Career Spotlight (5 - 7 minutes)

Display slide 10

- **Say**: "Just like there are teachers and parents in your world who give you the rules for being safe on the playground, and now on the internet, there are people in organizations who are in charge of knowing what the rules are for keeping that organization safe and making sure everyone follows those rules. This person is a Privacy Officer."
- **Say**: "A Privacy Officer is a cybersecurity professional who develops and oversees an organization's privacy compliance program and staff. This can include establishing the rules and making

Lesson Note

If you have not used the Cyber Career Spotlights in class before, you might want to frontload any new vocabulary (median salary, job growth, skills, etc.) before discussing the specific card.

sure they are followed, but it can also mean the Privacy Officer decides what happens when someone doesn't follow the rules. That doesn't necessarily mean the rule breaker will get lunch detention, but the Privacy Officer does have to decide what to do about any private information that was made public."

Display slide 11

- **Say:** "Look through this cyber career profile with a partner and find two things that interest you."
- **Allow** students 5 minutes to explore the Privacy Officer career profile.
- You may **download** the Cyber Career Profile Card and Poster for Privacy Officer at <https://cyber.org/career-exploration/cyber-career-profiles>.
- **Ask:** "What was interesting to you and your partner(s)?"

Student answers may vary but may include comments about salary, degrees required, or specific job duties.



Putting It All Together (5 - 10 minutes)

Display slide 12

- **Say:** "Today, we've talked about how the rules and policies that guide our online interactions aren't just words—they're tools that help keep us safe, respectful, and responsible. Whether it's reporting something harmful, protecting your personal information, or thinking twice before you share, these guidelines aren't there to limit you but to empower you."
- **Ask:** "What is one online rule you think is really important? Why?"

Student responses will vary. Accept all reasonable answers that explain why the student chose the rule.
- **Ask:** "How do you think these rules make the internet safer for everyone?"

Student responses will vary, but hopefully they connect that, just like the rules of the playground, rules for the internet provide a framework for how to be safe and make the most of our internet experience.
- **Distribute** index cards to students to complete the last question on the slide as an exit ticket.
- **Say:** "Remember, every choice you make online reflects who you are, just like in the real world. So, as you go forward, think about how you can use what you've learned today to make the internet a better place for yourself and everyone else. Because online, just like anywhere else, your actions matter."
- **Allow** students time to complete and then turn in their exit tickets.

Extension (optional)

Decide as a class which of the rules from the Online Rules I Have, Who Has Game could be turned into posters to be displayed either in your classroom or the hallway. Group students together to work on creating the posters with neat text and full color. These can be large posters or just regular 8.5" x 11" sheets of paper. Check out the Online Safety Poster Rubric to help guide students in creating quality work!

Online Rules I Have, Who Has Game **Answer Key**

Start with the same **'Who has a rule for'** as your first student and track down the page (and back around, if necessary) to make sure students are aligning the correct rules with each scenario.

Who has a rule for: you and a friend are arguing over text messages, and they start saying things to make you feel bad about yourself.

I have: if someone is being unkind online, stop the conversation and tell a trusted adult. Don't respond in anger.

Who has a rule for: you find a funny video online and want to share it with your class. Before you do, you notice it uses mean words to make fun of someone.

I have: think before you share. Make sure what you post, or share, is kind and respectful to others.

Who has a rule for: you're creating a username for a new app and want to use your real name, age, and favorite hobby.

I have: create usernames that don't include personal details like your real name, age, or location.

Who has a rule for: you notice that an app you're using is asking for permission to access your location, camera, and contacts.

I have: be cautious about app permissions. Only allow what's necessary and check with a parent or adult first.

Who has a rule for: you accidentally click a button that posts a picture to the internet before you were ready to share it.

I have: be careful where you click and review before you share. Always double-check before posting anything.

Who has a rule for: you get a message from someone you don't know asking for your phone number. They say they're your age and want to be friends.

I have: don't share personal information online with people you don't know. Always check with a trusted adult first.

Who has a rule for: someone is being mean in a group chat, and it makes you uncomfortable.

I have: reporting tools help stop harmful or unkind behavior in online spaces.

Who has a rule for: you posted a picture of your birthday party, and someone you don't know commented on it.

I have: privacy settings let you control who can see your posts and personal information.

Who has a rule for: you get an email saying your account will be deleted unless you provide your password right away.

I have: never give your password to anyone. Official messages will never ask for personal information like passwords.

Who has a rule for: you see a classmate share a picture of their report card with all their grades online.

I have: keep personal information private, even if it seems harmless. Others don't need to see things like your grades or address.

Who has a rule for: your favorite app asks you to update your password. You think about using the same one you use for all your accounts.

I have: use strong, unique passwords for each account to keep them secure.

Who has a rule for: you find a cool picture online and want to use it for your project, but it doesn't say it's free to use.

I have: always check if something online is free to use or needs permission. Give credit to the creator when required.

Who has a rule for: while playing a game, you get a pop-up saying you've won a prize and need to click a link to claim it.

I have: don't click on suspicious links or pop-ups. They might be scams or viruses.

Who has a rule for: you notice someone posting a hurtful rumor about a classmate online, and it's spreading fast.

I have: don't participate in spreading rumors or hurtful posts. Report harmful behavior to a trusted adult or the platform.

Who has a rule for: your friend tells you about a funny song they downloaded from a website and says you should download it too so you can listen for free.

I have: only download music, videos, or games from legal and trusted sources. Downloading from unknown site can be illegal and unsafe.

Who has a rule for: you want to sign up for a game, but it says you must be 13 years or older.

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Name/s: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Online Safety Poster Rubric

Use the rubric and instructions below to create a high-quality Online Safety Poster based on the rule assigned by your teacher.

Criteria	4 - Excellent	3 - Good	2 - Needs Improvement	1 - Incomplete	Score
Clarity of Message	The rule is clearly stated and easy to understand. Visuals strongly reinforce the message.	The rule is clear, and visuals mostly support the message.	The rule is somewhat unclear, or visuals do not fully connect to the message.	The rule is unclear, incomplete, or missing. Visuals do not support the message.	
Creativity	The poster is original, engaging, and uses color and design in a highly creative way.	The poster is visually appealing and shows some creativity in design and color use.	The poster shows minimal creativity or effort in design and color use.	The poster lacks effort or creativity and appears unfinished.	
Accuracy of Content	The rule and any accompanying information are completely accurate and reflect the lesson's goals.	The rule is accurate, but minor details could be improved or clarified.	The rule contains some inaccuracies or missing information.	The rule is incorrect or irrelevant to the lesson's goals.	
Neatness & Organization	The poster is exceptionally neat, with clear and well-organized visuals and text.	The poster is neat and mostly well-organized, with minor areas for improvement.	The poster is somewhat messy or disorganized, making it harder to understand.	The poster is very messy or disorganized, making the message unclear or unreadable.	
Effort & Completion	The poster shows exceptional effort and is fully completed.	The poster shows good effort and is mostly completed.	The poster shows minimal effort or is only partially completed.	The poster shows little to no effort and is largely incomplete.	
				Total	

Instructions:

- Make sure your rule is clear and easy to read. Use large, bold text for the main idea.
- Use drawings, colors, or symbols to make your poster visually appealing and help communicate your message.
- Keep your information accurate and focus on what you learned about staying safe online.
- Take your time to make your poster neat and well-organized.