

A LETTER TO FAMILIES ABOUT ONLINE MANNERS



Your son or daughter is taking part in classroom lessons about Internet manners from the CyberSmart! Student Curriculum. He or she is learning that the Internet is a powerful tool for communicating information, ideas, and opinions. Even young people can use the Internet to reach thousands—and possibly millions—of individuals around the world. Such an awesome opportunity comes with an equally awesome responsibility.

CyberSmart! lessons teach students that ethical behavior and good manners are as important in cyberspace—the online world—as in the face-to-face world. It's part of meeting the challenge to "Be CyberSmart!"

What is an acceptable use policy?

An acceptable use policy is a document prepared by your school district stating the rules that all users of school computers and Internet accounts must abide by and the consequences for breaking them. Often, students and their parents are asked to sign a contract agreeing to adhere to the school policies before students are permitted to use their school network.



Here's what we teach, at age-appropriate levels, about online manners:

- Understand the power and responsibilities of using the Internet, including adherence to their school's acceptable use policy.
- Respect the intellectual property of others, and understand when copying is and is not permissible.
- Apply ethical standards to respect the computer property of classmates, the school, and other people.
- Use good manners when chatting, messaging, and using e-mail.

Here's what families can do:

Parents are a child's first and best teachers of the right way to treat others. Here's what you can do to support these lessons at home:

- Make sure your children understand that you expect the same standards of behavior online as you would in face-to-face situations.
- Discuss with your children news stories about right and wrong uses of the Internet.
- Go over your school's acceptable use policy with your children before signing the contract.
- Ask your children to share with you what they learned in class about good manners, respect, and their responsibilities when they are online.