

NSA Family Guidelines for Nurturing a Positive Online Learning Environment

Communicate your expectations.

- Be honest about your expectations and how they apply in an online learning context. Communicating your values clearly can help your kids make smarter and more thoughtful decisions when they face tricky situations.
- Be specific about what's off-limits — and what you consider to be unacceptable behavior.
- Online learning platforms are just that: platforms for learning. Of course, we want kids to be able to socialize with their peers as that is an important part of school too, but all behavior expectations and policies for a safe and supportive school environment are still in place even though learning has moved online.

Supervision is important.

- When children are using mobile devices or a computer, they should be supervised closely by a parent or caregiver. If kids aren't supervised online, they may stumble onto content that could scare or confuse them or they may engage with their peers in negative ways.
- Even when you're comfortable that your children are working on their own, it's still important to stay in close touch.

Think about limits.

- Consider setting limits on how long and how often they can be online — whether on computers, phones, or other mobile devices.

Talk about manners.

- Because they don't see facial expressions, body language, and other visual cues, kids may feel free to do or say things online that they wouldn't offline.
- Remind them that real people with real feelings are behind screen names and avatars. It's easy to feel anonymous online, kids sometimes forget that they're still accountable for their actions.

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Oversharing

- Online socializing can lead to sharing too much information. Posting pictures, or words can damage a reputation or hurt someone's feelings.
- **Remind kids that once they post it, they can't take it back.** Even if they delete the information from a chat, the software on online platforms and devices makes chat history retrievable.

Cyberbullying

Help prevent cyberbullying.

- ❖ **Talk to kids about bullying.** Not just about being bullied, but about being a bully. Tell your kids that they can't hide behind the words and images they post or send. Bullying hurts everyone: Hurtful messages make the target of bullying feel bad, and they make the sender of those message look bad. Bullies can lose friends and be punished for their actions.
- ❖ **Tell your kids to talk to you about bullying, too.** Let kids know that they can tell you if an online message or image makes them feel threatened or hurt.
- ❖ **Recognize the signs of a cyberbully.** Cyberbullying often involves mean-spirited comments. Check out your kid's chats from time to time to see what you find. Could your kid be the bully? Look for signs of bullying behavior, such as creating mean images or posting aggressive, cruel or hostile comments about or to another kid, or repetitive or harassing behavior toward others.
- ❖ **Help stop cyberbullying.** Bullying isn't that common, but there's no reason for anyone to put up with it. If your kids see cyberbullying happening to someone else, encourage them to try to stop it by telling the bully to stop, and by not forwarding anything they send.

What to do about a cyberbully.

- ❖ **Don't react to the bully.** If your child is targeted by a cyberbully, keep your cool, you are dealing with a child and children make mistakes. Remind your child that most people know bullying is wrong. Tell your child not to respond in kind. Encourage your kid to work with you to save the evidence and talk to you about it. If the bullying continues, share the evidence with your child's teacher or the office. The adults at NSA are here solve these kinds of problems.
- ❖ **Block or delete the bully.** Delete the bully from friends lists or block their user name, email address, and phone number.

Before you speak....

T H I N K !

T - is it true?

h - is it helpful?

i - is it inspiring?

n - is it necessary?

k - is it kind?