

Digital Citizenship: A Parent's Guide

Vestal Middle School

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What is digital citizenship?

Digital citizenship is the norms of appropriate, responsible technology use.

Whether it is called digital citizenship, digital wellness or digital ethics the issues are the same: how should we act when we are online, and what should be taught to the next generation.

(2014 Digitalcitizenship.net Mike Ribble)

Everyone online has a digital footprint or tattoo. This includes your online profiles, everything you have shared online, as well as everything others have shared about you. Your digital footprint is permanent and searchable, able to be copied and has the potential to be seen by thousands (both intended and unintended audiences). This is why it is more important than ever to be a positive digital citizen.

What parents can do to support a positive digital presence:

1. Know the apps/sites/games your children are using: Research and explore (commonsensemedia.org)
2. Read app/site user agreements
 - a. Most are 13 years or older
 - b. Some, not all, prohibit inappropriate material
 - c. Most are not designed or monitored for children
3. Know your child's usernames
 - a. Help your child create appropriate ones (don't use full names)
 - b. Friend/follow your child (privacy is earned)
4. Google your child
 - a. What information can you find? (talk about their privacy settings)
 - b. Are they being a good digital citizen?
5. Model, Model, Model
 - a. Google yourself: Are you being a good role model for your child?
6. Open Communication
 - a. Be involved in their lives, keep lines of communication open
 - b. Discuss possible scenarios: What would you do if...? Why do you think people... online?

Final Thoughts:

- Digital access is a privilege not a right
- Establish a digital code of conduct
- Model good digital citizenship
- Moderation and Balance
- Establish device free zones (#DeviceFreeDinner)
- Consider Waiting until 8 (#Waittil8)

To read more:

- Why the Best Parental Control is You <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/why-the-best-parental-control-is-you>
- Family Media Agreement and Device Contract <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/technology-addiction-concern-controversy-and-finding-balance/resources>
- Vestal's Digital Citizenship Webpage: <http://www.vestal.stier.org/DigitalCitizenship.aspx>