Help Students Use Tech *Respectfully*

More than one student has secretly taken a cell phone picture or video of a teacher. The worst of this behavior is called "cyberbaiting," where students make a deliberate attempt to provoke their teachers. Students then capture the response on video, and post it online where anyone may see it.

You may not be able to stop your students from trying to cyberbait you, but you can make them think twice about it. Know your school's cell phone policy and make it clear that you will enforce the consequences. Talk to your students about privacy and respect to help them understand why taking cell phone pictures and videos without permission is wrong. Additionally, consider integrating cell phones into your classroom lessons and activities if your school policy permits it. For example, the free service Poll Everywhere, allows students to text question responses to their teachers.

Preparation for Today

Internet communication technology is not going anywhere. In fact, new social media, image-sharing, video-streaming, and other tools are being developed every day. It is critical that students know how to use these tools safely and effectively, and educators are essential to students attaining this knowledge. Although online communication tools carry some risks for educators, the benefits that they can offer far outweigh them. Incorporate the tips offered in this brochure into your personal and professional usage of Internet communication technology to start taking advantage of them more safely today.

Learn more about online safety risks and get tips to prevent them at **NetSmartz.org**.

NetSmartz® Workshop
A PROGRAM OF THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN®

An EDUCATOR'S GUIDE to Online Communication Tools

Pop Quiz!

Teachers have faced disciplinary actions for:

A. Posting images of themselves with alcohol

B. Posting negative comments about administrators

C. Posting information about their students

D. All of the above

Online Communication Tools

Increasing numbers of education professionals are using online communication tools both personally and professionally. Social media sites such as Facebook, for example, may be used to share private images with friends *and* to engage students in a discussion about a reading assignment. As educators continue to embrace these tools, it is important that they learn to use them safely. Improper or incautious usage may have consequences for educators which include embarrassment, ridicule, and job termination. The better informed educators are about the risks, the more emphasis they can place on using online communication tools to equip students with 21st century skills.

Be Tech Smart - Personally

Even after the school bell rings, educators' actions may be seen as representative of their schools and their profession. In fact, many states demand that teachers uphold a certain level of conduct whether inside or outside of the classroom. If an educator's conduct is seen as "unbecoming of the profession," he or she may be dismissed. And with the rise of social media use, "outside of the classroom" has come to include teachers' posts to personal social media sites, blogs, image-sharing sites, and other online communication sites.

Educators should remember that content shared online can easily become public, and take steps to protect themselves such as:

- Carefully considering comments and images before posting them online

- Using the privacy settings on social media sites, blogs, image-sharing sites, and other online communication tools

- Using different social media sites in- and outside of the classroom or keeping separate profiles for personal and professional use

- Not friending colleagues, students, and parents or giving them access to personal blogs and image-sharing sites

- Being careful about job-related posts—especially those involving students. Don't post anything that is negative or divulges sensitive information, or information that could be used to individually identify a student

- Not making personal posts during school hours or with school- or district-owned devices

- Not posting content about sex, alcohol, or anything else that you wouldn't want your students, their parents, or administrators to see

Be Tech Smart - Professionally

Many educators are using Internet communication tools to integrate 21st century skills into their lesson plans. While the benefits are numerous, they should be vigilant against unprofessional contact with students online. Otherwise, educators may face legal consequences in addition to jeopardizing their employment. Reduce possible miscommunications by being as transparent as possible; for example, log all online interactions with students. Limit other misunderstandings by:

Talking to administrators

- Know your school/district polices on the use of online communication tools or help your school develop a policy if it does not have one

- Give them access to class social media pages, blogs, etc.

- Discuss procedures for reporting student disclosures or conversations with potentially inappropriate content

Talking to students

- Discuss proper etiquette for communicating online, including your guidelines for acceptable language and content

- Warn them that online communications are being logged and saved

- Let them know that you must report disclosures of maltreatment or illegal activities to school administrators

Talking to parents

- Get their consent before using online communication tools

- Invite them to view class pages and other online communications where appropriate

Social Media for Schools
Thinking of using social media in the classroom ?

Why not try these sites designed specifically for schools?

Instead of Facebook	try **Edmodo**
Instead of Wikipedia	try **Wikispaces for Educators**
Instead of YouTube	try **SchoolTube**
Instead of Twitter	try **Twiducate**