Essential Question: How do you know if a website protects your private information?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students learn that children's websites must protect their private information. They learn to identify these secure sites by looking for their privacy policies and privacy seals of approval.

Students discuss a scenario in which their private information is shared without their permission. They then learn about private information and privacy laws regulating kids' websites. Using the **Privacy Checklist Student Handout**, students explore the privacy policies on kids' websites.

objectives

Students will:

- Learn which information they should avoid sharing online because it is private
- Understand which kinds of websites have privacy policies, and why
- Practice checking websites they visit for privacy policies and privacy seals of approvals

Materials and Preparation

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Materials
- **Privacy Checklist Student Handout**, *two* copies per student
- Online computer access
- Chalkboard or white board

Preparation
- Copy the **Privacy Checklist Student Handout,** two for every student
- Preview the websites listed in **Teach 2** (Note: The use of these sites is for educational purposes only and does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement.)

Parent Resources
- Send parents the **Security for Elementary Students Parent Tip Sheet**

Key Vocabulary

- **Private Information:** Information that can be used to identify you, such as your full name, Social Security number, postal address, email address, and phone number
- **Privacy Policy:** A legal document that explains how a website gathers and uses your private information
- **Seal of Approval:** A sign or stamp that states that a website, company, or group meets a certain set of standards and is doing a good job

Privacy Rules

teaching plans

Introduce

TELL students to imagine that they are required to wear a sign on their backs at all times that reveals something personal about them – such as their address, phone number, favorite food, or nickname.

ASK *How would you feel about that?* (Answers may include: embarrassed, okay, weird, uncomfortable.)

ASK *Would you feel better if you could decide who knows those things about you?* (Students might want to control who knows what information about them.)

DISCUSS with students the fact that personal information should not be shared with strangers, and that some information – called **private information** – is especially important to protect for safety reasons.

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term **private information**. Private information includes:

- full name
- home address
- school name and address
- phone number
- email address
- Social Security number

Teach 1 (offline): Know the Law

TELL students that the United States has a law requiring website owners to help protect the **private information** of kids 13 and younger. The purpose of the law is to protect kids' privacy.

(Note for teachers: Websites collecting information from children under the age of 13 are required to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). These websites are supposed to protect children's personally identifiable information, such as their first and last name, home and school address, email address, telephone number, Social Security number, or any other information that would allow someone to identify or contact the child. A website must post a link to a privacy policy on the home page and at each area where it collects personal information from children. The privacy policy must be clear and prominent, and explain how the website protects children's privacy and safety. For more information, visit www.coppa.org.)

POINT OUT that the law applies to websites that do the following:

- Have content meant for kids 13 and younger
- Asks kids for **private information**

EXPLAIN to students that this law is important because without out it, websites could use students' private information however they wanted. For example, a website could use it to try to find them, contact them, and sell them things. Websites could even sell the students' private information to other companies who want information about kids.

TELL students that websites have to explain how they protect kids' private information by posting a **privacy policy**. DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term **privacy policy**. In addition to a privacy policy, two organizations, the Better Business Bureau and TRUSTe, review children's websites to make sure they are protecting kids' privacy. If a kids' website is following the privacy law, the Better Business Bureau and TRUSTe post their **seals of approval** on the site.

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term **seal of approval**.

ASK *What if we didn't have this law, and websites could take your private information and do whatever they wanted with it?* (Encourage students to discuss the implications of others having their private information and using it however they want. Students might get a lot of junk mail or unwanted emails. Someone might try to sell them things they don't want. Companies might share their private information with other companies who want to target kids.)

Teach 2 (online): Check It Out

CHOOSE one of the pre-screened websites from the list below to explore with the class.

- Club Penguin: www.clubpenguin.com
- Nickelodeon: www.nick.com
- Yahoo! Kids®: www.kids.yahoo.com
- Kids Running: www.kidsrunning.com
- Nintendo: www.nintendo.com

EXPLAIN that students should make a habit of checking for themselves to see if the kids' sites they visit post privacy policies and have privacy seals of approval.

DISTRIBUTE the **Privacy Checklist Student Handout**.

EXPLORE the pre-screened website with the class and fill out the Privacy Checklist.

Teach 3 (online): You Be the Judge

DISTRIBUTE a second copy of the **Privacy Checklist Student Handout**.

ASSIGN individuals or groups to the remaining sites (one site per student or group), have them complete the checklist, and then share their results with the class.

Wrap Up and Assess

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives.

ASK
- *What are examples of private information?* (Examples include full name, home address, school name and address, phone number, email address, and Social Security number.)

- *Why should you not give out your private information?* (Students should understand that strangers, whether it is a company or a person, could use the information to find them and contact them.)
- *What sorts of things should you look for to make sure a website protects your privacy?* (Students should refer to the **Privacy Checklist Student Handout**. They should look for clearly marked privacy policies, privacy seals of approval, and a person to contact with questions about privacy.)

REMIND students that they should make a habit of checking the kids' sites they visit for privacy policies and privacy seals of approval.

Extension Activity

On a sheet of paper, have students draw a "privacy vault" to fill the page. This could look like a safe, or a box that's locked or tied up, or a cave. Inside of their privacy vault, have students list what private information should go inside. (They can list the kind of information, not the exact information. For instance, they can write "home address" rather than use their actual address.) Then, ask students to add additional items to the privacy vault that they would not want to share online. What other information would they not want websites to know about them? Have students share their privacy vaults with the class.

Homework

Have students and family members make privacy policies for their own bedrooms at home. What are the privacy rules they would want their other family members to follow? Examples include: knock before entering, ask before borrowing something, and don't read someone's diary. Together, kids and family members discuss their expectations with one another and agree upon privacy policies for their bedrooms. Then they post those policies on their bedroom doors or walls.

Alignment with Standards – National Educational Technology Standards for Students© 2007
(Source: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007)

3. Research and Information Fluency
   c. evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks
   d. process data and report results

5. Digital Citizenship
   a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
   b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity.
   c. demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning

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