

Digital Schoolhouse

The Penguin Code – Discussion Questions & Teacher Prompt Sheet

1. RULE: Be Safe – Protect your personal information.

Tommy is playing his favourite game online, when another player sends him a message. At first they just chat about the game, and they seem to enjoy the same things. The player then asks him what his real name is, and where he lives. He seems really friendly, and says they're the same age.



What do you think Tommy should do - should he tell that person? Why?

- How much does Tommy know about this player?
- Would you tell a complete stranger your name and address? Why not?
- What other personal information should you not share online?

2. RULE: Be Cool – Respect others.

Priya and her friend Anika are on a social networking site. They find a profile for another girl at their school, who they don't know very well. On her profile, the girl has posted a photo of herself dressed as a witch at Halloween. Priya and Anika think their friends would find it funny if they shared this on their own profile with the caption "Meet the Wicked Witch of Our School".

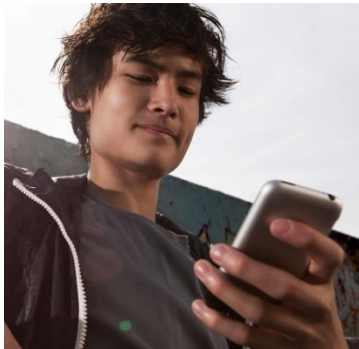


Do you think this would be funny? Why?

- How might the girl in the photo feel about this? Would it hurt her feelings – even if Priya and Anika were only doing it for a laugh?
- Would Priya and Anika say this to the girl's face at school? Or has the anonymity of being behind a computer screen changed the way these girls behave?
- Is this a form of cyberbullying?
- How would you feel if the person in the photograph was your friend?

3. RULE: Be Heard – Tell someone

Your friend Joe keeps receiving mean messages by text and on his social networking profile. Joe doesn't know who sent some of the messages, but others seem to be from people he does know. Joe wants to just delete the messages and pretend it never happened.



Do you think this is the right thing to do?

- What would you have done if you were in Joe's position?
- Why shouldn't Joe delete the messages?

(These messages can act as evidence in case escalation is required.)

- Who would be good to talk to in a situation like this?

(An adult you trust – parent or guardian, teacher, Scout leader, etc.)

If you still have time left...

4. RULE: Be Heard – Tell someone

Before school, Skylar posted a picture of her new puppy on the internet. When she got home, she went online right away to check it. How exciting! Ten people had left comments on her picture! Most of the messages were funny, but one person wrote, “Your dog is really ugly, just like you.” Skylar didn’t know who wrote it - the comment was anonymous. Skylar was so upset and didn’t know what to do!



Can you help Skylar?

Questions:

1) What should Skylar do with the comment? Delete, keep or reply? Explain your reasons.

Keep – having a copy of the comment is important to show an adult you trust, and it could be used as evidence if the police or school were contacted.

2) Should Skylar tell someone about the comment, even though she doesn’t know who it is from? If so, who could she tell?

Definitely – it is important to tell an adult you trust, as they can help stop this from happening in the future. (E.g. by reporting the person to the website and/or the police, or speak to the school.)

3) Do you think this is cyberbullying and why?

Cyberbullying is when someone uses technology to bully others, and this includes posting nasty comments online.

4) Why do some people think it is OK to send anonymous messages like this online?

When hidden behind a computer screen, some people do not realise the impact that their messages can have on someone. Others know that they can reach a large audience of people very quickly online, which can make the effect of what they say much greater. Most children who have directed a mean or cruel comment to someone online don’t consider it cyberbullying, and may have just been going along with friends.

5) Can the website do anything to help?

If reported to the website, they would be able to remove the comments, and possibly suspend the accounts involved. If severe, the website may escalate the situation to local law enforcement.

Additional discussion points:

- Has anyone you know ever received any nasty messages online? If so, what did they do?
- Why is it important to tell someone when this happens? How can this stop it from happening again? (Children often worry that telling an adult or parent will result in their internet access being suspended.)
- Do you know how to block/report on social websites, and what this means?

NB: Sources for images used are referenced in the file CP Scenario Cards.pptx