

# What Your Child Sees Online

A Guide for Parents and Students on Digital Behaviour

Booklet D

## **Bad Language and Poor Social Skills Students Can Learn Online**

# How Online Behaviour Is Learned

Students do not only watch content online. They also learn how people talk, argue, joke and respond to others. Repeated exposure can make rude phrases, harsh humour and disrespectful replies seem normal.

Algorithms, group chats, gaming platforms and short videos can repeatedly recommend similar language patterns. The more often students see them, the more familiar and acceptable they may feel.

Tip: Discuss the difference between online entertainment and real-life respect. Ask: "Would this be kind, safe and acceptable in school?"

# Bad Language Online

Bad language is more than swear words. It includes insults, threats, name-calling, humiliating jokes, gossip, sexualised remarks, racist comments and messages that pressure or shame others.

Online spaces often reward quick reactions and dramatic replies. Students may learn to be louder, harsher or more sarcastic because these behaviours get attention, likes or laughter.



Tip: Teach students to pause before posting: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? Would I say this face-to-face?

# Inappropriate Online Behaviour

Disclaimer: This guide is not exhaustive. It is intended to support conversations at home and in school.

## 1. Profanity and Censored Swearing



### Where students may see it:

Comment sections, short videos, memes, gaming chat and livestreams.

### Why it is harmful:

- Makes strong words feel normal in daily conversations.
- May become disrespectful when used with teachers, parents or classmates.
- Can damage a student's image even when typed as "joking" or censored.

### Better skill to practise:

Replace harsh words with clear emotions: "I am frustrated," "I disagree," or "Please stop."

# Inappropriate Online Behaviour

Disclaimer: This guide is not exhaustive. It is intended to support conversations at home and in school.

## 2. Insults, Name-Calling and Put-Downs



### Where students may see it:

Roast videos, argument clips, reaction content and competitive online spaces.

### Why it is harmful:

- Teaches students to attack the person instead of the problem.
- Can lower empathy and make classmates feel unsafe or embarrassed.
- Often escalates small conflicts into bigger discipline issues.

### Better skill to practise:

Use respectful disagreement: "I see it differently because..." or "Let us solve this properly."

# Inappropriate Online Behaviour

Disclaimer: This guide is not exhaustive. It is intended to support conversations at home and in school.

## 3. Toxic Gaming Chat and Rage Culture



### Where students may see it:

Online games, voice chat, livestreams and fan communities.

### Why it is harmful:

- Normalises shouting, blaming teammates and mocking mistakes.
- Encourages students to react impulsively when they lose.
- Can carry over into sports, group work and classroom discussions.

### Better skill to practise:

Practise teamwork language: "Good try," "What is our plan?" and "Let us reset and try again."

# Inappropriate Online Behaviour

Disclaimer: This guide is not exhaustive. It is intended to support conversations at home and in school.

## 4. Cyberbullying, Trolling and Comment Piling



### Where students may see it:

Anonymous comments, group chats, public posts and viral response threads.

### Why it is harmful:

- Encourages students to join in because "everyone else is doing it".
- Can deeply affect the target's confidence and emotional wellbeing.
- Screenshots can spread quickly and remain online.

### Better skill to practise:

Do not join the pile-on. Save evidence, report the content and seek help from a trusted adult.

# Inappropriate Online Behaviour

Disclaimer: This guide is not exhaustive. It is intended to support conversations at home and in school.

## 5. Sarcasm, Meme Culture and “Just Joking”



### Where students may see it:

Memes, edits, reaction GIFs, captions and inside jokes.

### Why it is harmful:

- Students may hide hurtful messages behind humour.
- Private jokes can exclude or humiliate others.
- Tone is easily misunderstood online, especially in text messages.

### Better skill to practise:

A joke is only funny when everyone is safe and respected. If someone is hurt, apologise and stop.

# Inappropriate Online Behaviour

Disclaimer: This guide is not exhaustive. It is intended to support conversations at home and in school.

## 6. Gossip, Rumours and Exposing Others



### Where students may see it:

Confession pages, screenshots, forwarded messages and fan/drama accounts.

### Why it is harmful:

- Makes private information feel like entertainment.
- Can damage trust and friendships.
- May lead to shame, conflict and disciplinary consequences.

### Better skill to practise:

Ask permission before sharing. Keep private messages private and refuse to spread rumours.

# Inappropriate Online Behaviour

Disclaimer: This guide is not exhaustive. It is intended to support conversations at home and in school.

## 7. Disrespectful Group Chat Habits



### Where students may see it:

Class group chats, friend groups and school-related messaging platforms.

### Why it is harmful:

- Spamming, ignoring questions and late-night messages show poor boundaries.
- Leaving people out or using secret chats can create social pressure.
- Forwarding without context can cause confusion or conflict.

### Better skill to practise:

Use group chats for clear, helpful communication. Be timely, polite and respectful of others' boundaries.

# Poor Social Skills Students Can Learn

**1**

## Low empathy

Scrolling past hurtful comments can make unkindness feel normal. Students may forget that there is a real person behind every screen.

**2**

## Poor conflict skills

Online arguments often reward winning, mocking or exposing others instead of listening, apologising and repairing trust.

**3**

## Attention seeking

Students may copy extreme jokes, drama or risky posts to gain likes, reactions or status among peers.

**4**

## Weak boundaries

Oversharing, late-night messaging, screenshots and pressure to reply immediately can weaken healthy boundaries.



Tip: Praise students when they show patience, respectful disagreement, apology, helpfulness and self-control online.

# Warning Signs to Avoid or Monitor

**1**

## **1) FREQUENT RUDE OR HARSH WORDS**

A student begins using insults, swearing, humiliating jokes or aggressive replies as normal communication.

**2**

## **2) ENJOYING CONFLICT OR DRAMA**

They follow accounts that expose people, laugh at arguments or encourage public shaming.

**3**

## **3) LACK OF EMPATHY ONLINE**

They say "it is only a joke" when someone is hurt, or they dismiss others' feelings too quickly.

**4**

## **4) POOR DIGITAL BOUNDARIES**

They screenshot private chats, spam messages, pressure others to reply or share without permission.

**5**

## **5) COPYING DISRESPECTFUL INFLUENCERS**

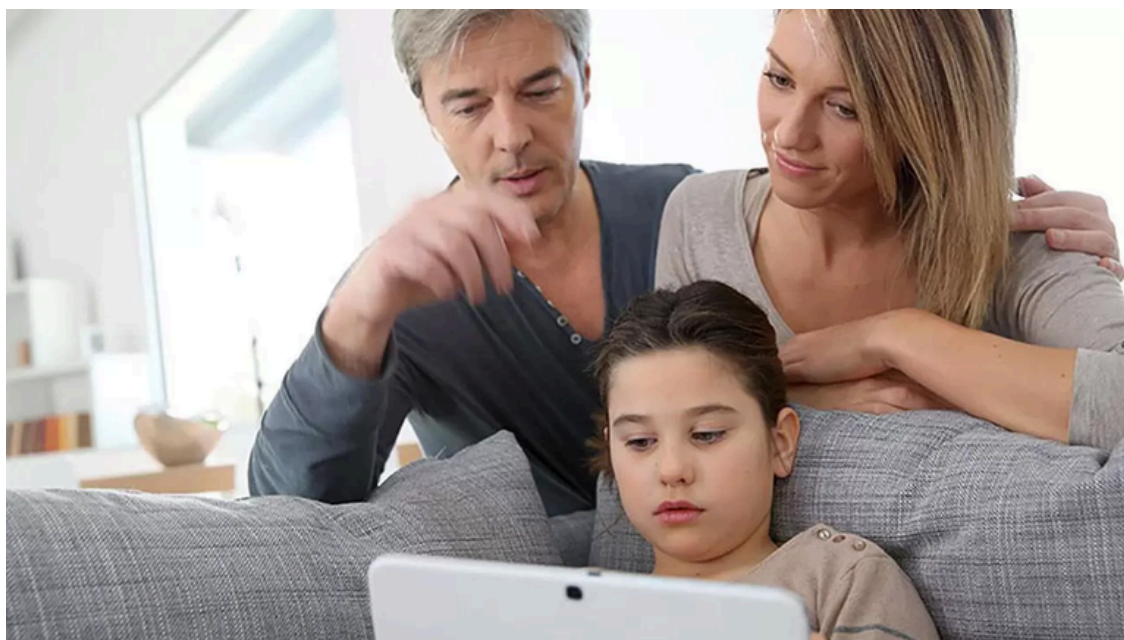
They imitate creators who mock, shame, provoke or use bad language to gain attention.



# Recognizing Poor Online Habits

Some students may become more impatient, sarcastic, easily triggered or dismissive after spending time in toxic online spaces. They may struggle to listen, accept feedback or communicate respectfully.

Warning signs include repeated rude jokes, talking back, blaming others, public shaming, exclusion, gossiping, or treating classmates as "content" for entertainment.



Tip: When correcting behaviour, focus on the skill to rebuild: empathy, self-control, respectful words, privacy, apology and problem-solving.

# Positive Digital Behaviours Students Should Practise

Students should not only learn what to avoid online. They also need to practise positive digital habits that help them communicate respectfully, solve problems calmly, and build healthy friendships.

## Positive habits to encourage:

### 1. Pause before replying

Take a few seconds before sending a message, especially when feeling angry, embarrassed, or upset.

### 2. Use respectful words

Speak online the same way you would speak face-to-face with teachers, parents, and classmates.

### 3. Clarify before reacting

If a message sounds rude or confusing, ask politely instead of assuming the worst.

### 4. Protect privacy

Do not forward screenshots, private messages, photos, or rumours without permission.

### 5. Repair mistakes

If someone is hurt by a message or joke, apologise, stop, and learn from the situation.

### 6. Encourage others

Use online spaces to support, include, and help others, not to shame or embarrass them.

## Healthy phrases students can practise:

- "I disagree, but I understand your point."
- "Can we talk about this properly?"
- "I did not mean to hurt you. I am sorry."
- "Please do not share this without permission."
- "Let us solve this calmly."
- "Good try. Let us try again."

Online habits can become real-life habits. The way students speak in group chats, games, and comment sections can affect how they communicate in class, work in groups, handle conflict, and show respect to others.

# School Guidelines and Support

## For students:

Pause before posting.  
Speak to others as you would in person. Do not forward private content.  
Report hurtful behaviour and ask for help early.

## For parents:

Review apps and group chats together. Keep conversations calm and regular. Focus on values, not only restrictions.

## Questions to use at home:

1. What kind of language is common in this online space?
2. Does this creator model respect and self-control?
3. What should you do if a friend sends a hurtful screenshot?
4. How can you disagree without insulting someone?

# Key Takeaway for Parents

The goal is not to create fear, surveillance, or punishment. The goal is guidance and skill-building.

Children and teenagers are still learning how to communicate, manage emotions, handle conflict, and show empathy. Online spaces can influence these skills positively or negatively. When students repeatedly see rude jokes, harsh replies, gossip, public shaming, or disrespectful influencers, they may slowly begin to see these behaviours as normal.

Parents can help by having calm and regular conversations, setting clear boundaries, and modelling respectful communication at home. Instead of only asking, “What app are you using?”, try asking:

- “How do people speak to each other there?”
- “Does this content teach respect or disrespect?”
- “Would this be acceptable in school or in real life?”
- “What can you do if someone is hurt online?”

Together, parents and school can guide students to become responsible digital users who communicate with kindness, confidence, self-control, and respect both online and offline.



## Objective of the "What Your Child Sees Online" Series

The "What Your Child Learns Online" series helps parents and students stay aware of how digital content can shape language, manners, empathy and social behaviour. This booklet focuses on bad language and poor social skills that students may pick up from online comments, games, group chats, memes and influencers.

The goal is not to create fear, but to encourage regular conversations, healthy boundaries and better digital character. Parents are encouraged to share new trends or concerns with the school so this series remains current and relevant. Together, we can guide students to communicate with respect both online and offline.

For more information  
contact us at:

WhatsApp: 016-2218795

Email: [accounts@axcel.edu.my](mailto:accounts@axcel.edu.my)