Cybersecurity

Students spend many hours in a day online, whether through digital classrooms, video conferencing, gaming, engaging in social media, or simply navigating the web for fun. It is important to guide students and help them cultivate safe online habits and recognize the potential dangers of using the internet. Cybersecurity is about being safe and secure online and is for everyone. Teachers and students can work together to become responsible digital citizens by taking personal and proactive steps towards online safety and data security.

1. How can teachers introduce the concept of cybersecurity or being safe online to their students?
2. How can teachers guide students towards cultivating positive digital habits?
3. How can teachers help students display good digital etiquette?

? to Consider

KEY Elements

Technology is a constant and intrinsic part of students' daily lives and directly impacts their academic achievement. Cybersecurity is all about being safe online, and teachers play an important role in promoting online safety. Teachers guide students as they develop safe online habits, helping them recognize the potential dangers of using the Internet, as a regular part of classroom instruction and conversations.

Teachers should introduce and model safe online behaviors, such as keeping personal information private. A student should never give strangers or anyone they meet online personally identifiable information. If a student is being bullied, intimidated, threatened, or harassed online, the student should immediately report such behavior. Although school IT departments can implement safety measures on school devices, teachers and students need to be aware of the risks and take actions to protect themselves.

Safe online behavior involves taking measures to protect devices, limiting information about oneself, and protecting data and information. Teachers can teach students how to set up strong passwords and use secure internet connections. Teachers should remind students not to share their password with peers, siblings, or friends. Devices should be kept in secure spaces to prevent others from attempting to log-on and exploit the device or online user accounts. While school IT departments usually install and keep updated antivirus software and a firewall on school-issued devices, students should be proactive when using freely and publicly available internet access by checking for a secure connection denoted by a lock icon or the letters "https" at the start of the website address.

When anyone uses the internet, their digital communications and activities can be tracked and stored; this is called a person's digital footprint and includes written messages, emails, photos, videos, online posts, social media interactions, and one's browsing history. It is vital that teachers emphasize the importance of having a good digital footprint. To help students consider their digital footprint, the acronym THINK can be used to prompt students to be responsible when posting online. Students can ask themselves: T: Is the content I am posting TRUE?, H: Is my post HURTFUL?, I: Are my actions allowed or are they ILLEGAL?, N: Is it NECESSARY to post this?, and K: Are my words and posts KIND and respectful to my peers and myself? Teachers can help students to maintain safe behaviors online and to to cultivate a good digital footprint.