Digital Safety Curriculum Pack (KS2 & KS3)

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, digital literacy and online safety are fundamental skills for children and young people. This curriculum pack provides educators with ready-to-use lesson plans, worksheets, and discussion prompts designed to integrate essential online safety education into Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 3 (KS3) curricula. The aim is to empower students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to navigate the digital landscape safely, responsibly, and respectfully [1].

Curriculum Overview: Key Themes and Learning Objectives

This curriculum focuses on developing students' understanding of online risks, promoting safe online behaviors, and fostering responsible digital citizenship. The themes are progressive, building on foundational concepts in KS2 and delving into more nuanced challenges in KS3.

Key Stage 2 (Ages 7-11): Foundational Online Safety

At KS2, the focus is on introducing basic online safety concepts, personal information protection, and responsible online interactions. The lessons are designed to be engaging and interactive, using relatable scenarios to help students understand complex ideas [1].

Learning Objectives for KS2:

- Understand the importance of keeping personal information private online.
- Identify safe and unsafe online behaviors.

- Recognize the concept of a digital footprint and its permanence.

- Learn how to seek help from a trusted adult when encountering online problems.

- Develop basic critical thinking skills to evaluate online content.

Key Stage 3 (Ages 11-14): Advanced Digital Citizenship

For KS3, the curriculum expands to address more complex online challenges, including cyberbullying, online predation, misinformation, and the impact of digital choices on mental well-being. The lessons encourage deeper critical analysis and the development of proactive safety strategies [1].

Learning Objectives for KS3:

- Analyze the risks associated with sharing personal information online.

- Understand the dynamics of cyberbullying and strategies for prevention and response.

- Evaluate the credibility of online information and identify misinformation.

- Recognize the signs of online grooming and how to report it.

- Develop strategies for managing screen time and promoting digital well-being.

- Understand privacy settings and how to manage their digital identity.

Lesson Plans and Activities

Each lesson plan includes clear objectives, materials needed, step-by-step procedures, discussion questions, and extension activities. Worksheets and activity sheets are provided to reinforce learning.

KS2 Lesson Example: "My Digital Footprint"

Topic: Understanding the permanence of online actions.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to define "digital footprint."

- Students will understand that online actions can have lasting consequences.

- Students will identify examples of positive and negative digital footprints.

Materials:

- Whiteboard or projector
- "Digital Footprint Scenario Cards" (Worksheet 1.1)
- "My Digital Footprint Pledge" (Worksheet 1.2)

Procedure:

1. **Introduction (10 min)**: Begin by asking students what a footprint is. Discuss how we leave footprints in sand or mud. Introduce the idea that we also leave "footprints" online. Explain that a digital footprint is all the information about us that exists online, created by our activities [1].

2. **Scenario Discussion (20 min)**: Divide students into small groups. Provide each group with "Digital Footprint Scenario Cards." Each card describes an online action (e.g., posting a photo, commenting on a video, playing an online game). Groups discuss the potential long-term impact of each action and whether it creates a positive or negative footprint. Facilitate a class discussion, encouraging students to share their thoughts [1].

3. **Digital Footprint Pledge (15 min)**: Distribute "My Digital Footprint Pledge." Students write down three ways they will ensure their digital footprint is positive and safe. They can draw a picture to illustrate one of their pledges. Discuss the importance of being mindful of what they share online [1].

4. **Conclusion (5 min)**: Reiterate that everything they do online leaves a trace. Emphasize the power they have to create a positive digital footprint by being kind, respectful, and thoughtful in their online interactions.

Discussion Prompts:

- "What kind of digital footprint do you want to leave?"
- "How can your online actions affect others?"
- "Who can see your digital footprint?"

KS3 Lesson Example: "Navigating Online Information: Fact vs. Fiction"

Topic: Critical evaluation of online sources and identifying misinformation.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to define misinformation and disinformation.
- Students will identify strategies for evaluating the credibility of online sources.
- Students will practice distinguishing between factual and misleading information.

Materials:

- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- "Online News Scenarios" (Worksheet 2.1) - examples of real or fabricated news headlines/social media posts.
- "Fact-Checking Checklist" (Worksheet 2.2)

Procedure:

1. **Introduction (10 min)**: Start by asking students where they get their news and information online. Discuss the sheer volume of information available and the challenge of knowing what is true. Introduce the terms "misinformation" (unintentionally false) and "disinformation" (intentionally false) [1].

2. **Case Study Analysis (25 min)**: Present several "Online News Scenarios" to the class. For each scenario, students work individually or in pairs to determine if the information is credible using the "Fact-Checking Checklist." The checklist might include questions like: Who created this content? What is their purpose? Is there evidence to support the claims? Is the source reputable? [1]

3. **Class Discussion (15 min)**: Facilitate a discussion on each scenario. Encourage students to explain their reasoning and the strategies they used to evaluate credibility. Highlight common red flags for misinformation (e.g., sensational headlines, lack of sources, emotional language).

4. **Conclusion (5 min)**: Emphasize that critical thinking is essential for navigating online information. Encourage students to always question what they see and to verify information from multiple reliable sources.

Discussion Prompts:

- "Why is it important to question information you find online?"
- "What are some clues that an online source might not be trustworthy?"

- "How can sharing misinformation impact others?"

Worksheets and Resources

This section includes printable worksheets and activity templates for each lesson, designed to be easily adaptable for different classroom settings.

Worksheet 1.1: Digital Footprint Scenario Cards (KS2)

(Example content for cards:)

- **Card A**: You post a funny video of your friend tripping on the playground.
- **Card B**: You share a picture of your family vacation to a public social media account.
- **Card C**: You write a kind comment on a classmate's online project.
- **Card D**: You use your real name and age in an online game profile.

Worksheet 1.2: My Digital Footprint Pledge (KS2)

(Template for students to complete:)

I, [Student Name], pledge to make my digital footprint positive by:

  1. _____
  2. _____
  3. _____

Worksheet 2.1: Online News Scenarios (KS3)

(Example content for scenarios:)

- **Scenario 1**: A social media post claims that eating a specific fruit can cure all diseases, citing an anonymous source.
- **Scenario 2**: A news article from a well-known, reputable news organization reports on a scientific breakthrough, citing peer-reviewed studies.

- **Scenario 3**: A website with a strange URL and many pop-up ads claims a celebrity made an outrageous statement, with no links to original sources.

Worksheet 2.2: Fact-Checking Checklist (KS3)

Question	Yes / No / Unsure
Who created this content? (Author/Source)	
What is the purpose of this content? (Inform, persuade, entertain)	
Is there evidence to support the claims? (Links to studies, expert quotes)	
Is the source reputable and unbiased?	
When was this content published or last updated?	
Does the headline match the content of the article?	
Are there any obvious spelling or grammar errors?	
Does the content evoke strong emotions?	

Conclusion

This Digital Safety Curriculum Pack provides a robust framework for educators to instill crucial online safety knowledge and skills in their students. By fostering critical thinking, open discussion, and practical application, we can help the next generation become responsible and resilient digital citizens.

References

[1] Common Sense Education. (2025, August 26). 30 Great Lesson Plans for Internet Safety. https://www.commonsense.org/education/articles/30-great-lesson-plans-for-internet-safety