
CYBERBULLYING PREVENTION UNIT

Grades 4-8 | Digital Citizenship & SEL

Empathy • Bystander Strategies • Reporting • Rebuilding Communities

A Premium Digital Safety Resource

Includes Parent Communication Resources & Student Pledge

Teacher Guide & Implementation

The Importance of Explicit Cyberbullying Prevention

As students spend more time in digital spaces, the boundaries between school and home blur. Cyberbullying can happen 24/7, often leaving no physical traces but causing deep emotional harm. This unit is designed to move beyond 'just don't do it' and instead foster deep digital empathy, equip bystanders with actionable strategies, and teach students how to actively rebuild positive online communities.

Handling Sensitive Disclosures

During these lessons, students may disclose current bullying situations. Before teaching, familiarize yourself with your school's reporting protocols. Remind students that your classroom is a safe space, but if they share something that indicates they or someone else is in danger, you are mandated to report it to the school counselor or administration.

Pacing Guide

This unit is designed for 4 sessions (45-60 minutes each). It can be taught during Digital Citizenship week, advisory periods, or as part of a broader SEL curriculum.

Lesson 1: What is Cyberbullying?

LESSON 1: WHAT IS CYBER BULLYING?	Duration: 45-60 mins
Objective:	Students will define cyberbullying, identify its various forms, and understand its unique impact compared to traditional bullying.
Essential Question:	Why is cyberbullying often harder to escape than traditional bullying?
Warm-Up (5 mins):	Think-Pair-Share: Have you ever seen someone say something online that they would never say in person? Why do people act differently behind a screen?
Direct Instruction (15 mins):	Define Cyberbullying: Repeated, intentional harm using digital devices. Contrast with traditional bullying (24/7 access, anonymous, viral potential). Discuss the 'Power Imbalance' in digital spaces. Review different forms: Flaming, Harassment, Impersonation, Outing, and Exclusion.
Core Activity (20 mins):	Students work in small groups with Case Study Discussion Card #1. They read the scenario of 'The Group Chat Exclusion', identify the type of cyberbullying, and answer the discussion questions on their worksheet.
Closure (5 mins):	Exit Ticket: Write down one reason why a screenshot of a cyberbullying incident is important to save.

Lesson 2: The Bystander Effect & Upstander Action

LESSON 2: THE BYSTANDER EFFECT & UPSTANDER ACTION	Duration: 45-60 mins
Objective:	Students will understand the bystander effect, identify the roles in a bullying situation, and learn strategies to become upstanders.
Essential Question:	If everyone sees someone being bullied online, why doesn't anyone do anything?
Warm-Up (5 mins):	Show an image of a crowded street where someone needs help. Ask: Why is it sometimes harder to help when there are lots of people around?
Direct Instruction (15 mins):	Explain the Bystander Effect (diffusion of responsibility). Define roles: Target, Offender, Bystander, Upstander. Introduce the Upstander Strategies Anchor Chart (Support the Target, Report it, Interrupt the Behavior, Ask an Adult).
Core Activity (20 mins):	Students review Case Study Discussion Card #2 'The Fake Profile'. Using the Anchor Chart, they write down 3 specific ways a bystander in the scenario could become an upstander.
Closure (5 mins):	Share out: Which upstander strategy feels the most realistic for you to use? Which feels the hardest?

Lesson 3: Reporting Strategies & Digital Empathy

LESSON 3: REPORTING STRATEGIES & DIGITAL EMPATHY	Duration: 45-60 mins
Objective:	Students will learn how, when, and who to report cyberbullying to, and practice stepping into the shoes of a target through digital empathy.
Essential Question:	When should you handle a situation yourself, and when must you get an adult involved?
Warm-Up (5 mins):	Journal Prompt: Think of a time your feelings were hurt by something said to you. How did your body react? How is that the same or different online?
Direct Instruction (15 mins):	Review reporting protocols: Screenshot, Block, Report to Platform, Tell a Trusted Adult. Discuss the difference between 'tattling' (trying to get someone in trouble) and 'reporting' (trying to keep someone safe). Introduce Digital Empathy: pausing to think about the human on the other side of the screen before posting.
Core Activity (20 mins):	Students complete Case Study Discussion Card #3 'The Viral Embarrassment'. They must write a step-by-step reporting action plan for the target, and then rewrite the offenders' posts using digital empathy.
Closure (5 mins):	Exit Ticket: Who are 3 trusted adults in your life you could report cyberbullying to?