

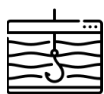
SAFE ONLINE EDUCATION, GENDER, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

ONLINE SAFETY

Online safety is providing internet users the **freedom to maximize opportunities gained through internet use** by empowering them to **protect themselves and their communities, and creating a system and/or safety net** to protect users from internet safety risks.

In the context of safe online education, 'safety' is two-pronged: first, students and teachers must be **protected and empowered to protect themselves** from the most common internet safety risks; and second, students and teachers must be **surrounded by a supportive and safe online community of care**, where all are **encouraged and empowered to participate in education**, and **no one is left behind**.

THE NINE MOST COMMON INTERNET SAFETY RISKS



Phishing and Internet scams. Phishing is the practice of social engineering to gain personal information (such as passwords, bank account numbers and PINs, addresses, phone numbers, and more) from individuals. This includes baiting people with memes (ex. Your birth month represents the first half of your rapper name, and your birth day represents the second half) or similar practices. Internet scams similarly gain personal information by promising an individual prizes, exclusive membership, or other similar incentives. The personal information gained is later used for identity theft or for blackmail.



Email or SMS spoofing. Email or SMS spoofing is the fraudulent practice of sending emails, messages, or links to websites impersonating or disguised as trustworthy entities (such as banks or reputable companies) to provide credibility in an attempt to gain personal information (such as passwords, bank account numbers and PINs, addresses, phone numbers, and more) from individuals.



Malware. Malware, or malicious software is a blanket term for computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, spyware, or any program, file, or code harmful to a computer or computer system. They can steal, encrypt, or delete sensitive data, alter or hijack computer functions, or monitor users' computer activity without users' knowledge or permission.



Identity theft or fraud. Identity theft or fraud happens when an internet fraudster claims to be someone else after gaining access to personal information (such as username and password, bank details, address, phone number, or credit card number) through phishing or malware. Fraudsters can then withdraw money, shop with someone else's credit card, take loans or make accounts in someone else's name, or even release this information to others, without one's knowledge or consent.



Online predation and sextortion. Online predation happens when people over the internet pretend to be someone they're not, groom or create close relationships with individuals, usually younger, and manipulate them to produce and send over sexually explicit material of themselves. Once individuals begin to resist requests to send these materials, sextortion may happen. Sextortion is a form of blackmail where predators might threaten to share private or intimate material of the victim unless the victim gives in to demands for money, more intimate material, or sexual favors.



Online sexual harassment. According to the Safe Spaces Act, online sexual harassment is conduct targeted at a particular person that causes or is likely to cause mental, emotional, or psychological distress and fear of personal safety. It includes terrorizing or intimidating victims through physical, psychological, or emotional threats; misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic or sexist slurs, or unwanted sexual remarks, comments, and suggestions, regardless of whether they're public or private; invasion of privacy through cyberstalking; impersonating victims online, or posting lies about victims to harm their reputation; incessant messaging; uploading and sharing photos, voice memos, videos, or any other information without the victim's consent, or taken without the victim's authorization; and, filing false abuse reports to online platforms to silence victims.



Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices, and can occur via text, or voice or video call, or over the Internet, on social media, instant or direct messaging, email, gaming apps, or more. Cyberbullying includes posting hurtful, nasty comments, rumors, pictures of videos directed to individuals online, whether publicly or privately; excluding individuals of different socio-economic or cultural backgrounds from online forums or groups; uploading photos, videos, or other personal or private information of individuals without their consent; or sending unwanted or inappropriate messages to harass individuals; or stealing someone's account to pretend to be them. The nature of the Internet makes cyberbullying uniquely persistent, permanent, and hard to notice.



Cyberstalking. Cyber stalking is stalking an individual, group, or organization through the use of the Internet, with the purpose of embarrassing, controlling, intimidating or threatening, harassing or influencing victims. Broadly, cyberstalking includes monitoring, gathering information, identity theft, threats, solicitation for sex, persistent and manipulative calling and texting, and other means of approaching the victim unexpectedly. Most victims are women.



Unwanted exposure to obscene or offensive content. Due to the open nature of the Internet, children may be intentionally or unintentionally exposed to explicit material, from softcore to very graphic pornography, including torture, incest, bestiality, or child pornography.

THE PRINCIPLES OF CARE APPLIED TO ONLINE SAFETY AND ONLINE EDUCATION

Students and teachers are expected to **embody the principles of care** while taking measures to **protect themselves, their fellow students, the students that they are responsible for, and their communities**, especially given increased Internet use once online learning begins. As usually the only adults in a classroom, and as persons of authority, teachers are expected to **lead in the creation of safe spaces** while using the Internet through **modelling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation of the principles of care**. In addition, students are also expected to **help in the creation of online safe spaces**.

FOR TEACHERS:

What does it mean to model, engage in dialogue on, practice, and confirm the principles of care?

Modelling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation are the four core principles of education from the care perspective. Through these four principles, teachers are able not only to teach about care to their students; they are able to concretely show this in the way that they teach.



Modelling. Modelling is teaching by example — although the provision of academic materials for students is important in learning about caring for, about, and with others, teachers also play a key role in helping students understand care by demonstrating care in their relationships with students.



Dialogue. Care is taught in dialogue distinguished by mutual concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection, and hope to build understanding, allowing for people to evaluate their attempts to care. Teachers should, to the best of their ability, foster this form of dialogue among students in the classroom, and between themselves and students.



Practice. Students are able to learn care by enacting care for each other, and teachers are in a unique position not only to provide for opportunities to enact this care, but also to provide opportunities to reflect on such practice.



Confirmation. Through affirming students' efforts to care about others, teachers are recognizing that something admirable is struggling to emerge in their students. Teachers can encourage students' ability to care through confirmation.

The Principles of Care

Care is an important aspect of creating online safe spaces and helps people feel **welcomed and empowered to participate in a community**. Students and teachers are expected to embody the principles of care at all times.

- 1. Attentiveness.** Attentiveness means **noticing unmet needs**, and **seeing the world from the perspective of those in need**. As such, students and teachers are expected to **be aware of their classmates, students, or teachers while participating in online classes**. They are also expected to **remain vigilant** against threats to themselves, their classmates or students, or their teachers.
- 2. Responsibility.** Responsibility means taking the burden of **responding to unmet needs**. Students and teachers should respond to unmet needs **in an ethical way**; that is, they must **respect themselves and others and expect respect in return**.
- 3. Competence.** Competence refers to competence in relation to **providing care for oneself and for others**. Students and teachers are expected to act with care and compassion not only **toward themselves**, but also **toward their peers, their students, and the school community online**.
- 4. Responsiveness.** Responsiveness means **listening to the response of those who are or need to be cared for**, potentially resulting in new unmet needs. It requires individuals to be **more open, more accessible, and more willing to engage** in genuine dialogue.
- 5. Solidarity.** Solidarity means **taking collective responsibility** and **making an attentive commitment** to caring. It highlights the **role that every person plays in creating a safe online space for learning**, and in **ensuring that nobody is left behind**.

Laws Protecting Students. Students and teachers must also be aware of laws in place to protect students online:



RA 9775 (Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009). The Anti-Child Pornography Act makes it illegal for anyone to hire or coerce a child into creating pornography, as well as for anyone to produce, publish, share, possess, or access any form of child pornography.



RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012). The Cybercrime Prevention Act protects against all forms of cybercrime, including computer-related forgery; computer-related identity theft; cybersex; and child pornography, as defined by RA 9775.



RA 10627 (Anti-Bullying Act of 2013). The Anti-Bullying Act protects against all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying and retaliation against those who report bullying. It defines cyberbullying as "any bullying done through the use of technology or any electronic means," and "any conduct resulting in harassment, intimidation, or humiliation, through the use of other forms of technology."



RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act of 2019). The Safe Spaces Act protects against gender-based sexual harassment (GBSH), and in schools and online in particular. Acts such as catcalling; wolf-whistling; misogynistic, transphobic, or homophobic remarks; unwanted sexual remarks, comments, or suggestions; unwelcome sexual advances, requests, or demands for sexual favors; conduct of a sexual nature or conduct based on sex affecting a person's dignity; unwelcome, pervasive conduct creating an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating environment; cyberstalking; physical, psychological, or emotional threats; impersonating victims online to post lies or rumors to harm their reputation; uploading and sharing materials or information of a person without their consent; and incessant messaging are penalized under this law.

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF CARE ONLINE:

		STUDENTS	TEACHERS
ATTENTIVENESS	In general online inter-action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students should set up secure passwords and use two-factor authentication as much as possible. They should ensure that only they, and, if needed, trusted persons such as parents, know their passwords. They should not attempt to hack into anyone's accounts for any reason. In addition, they should avoid sharing or downloading unknown files, especially those with extensions such as .bat, .cmd, and .exe. Students should end contact with anyone exhibiting suspicious behavior. They should report suspicious behavior, incidences of identity theft or fraud, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, online predation, sexual harassment, or sextortion, to the appropriate authorities, even if these do not happen to them. To the best of their ability, students should try to check up on classmates who have been cyberstalked, cyberbullied, or sexually harassed online. It is much easier to feel isolated and alone when one is studying from one's home, so a good support system is more important than ever. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers should set up secure passwords and use two-factor authentication as much as possible. They should ensure that only they know their passwords. They should not attempt to hack into anyone's accounts for any reason. They should avoid sharing or downloading unknown files, especially those with extensions such as .bat, .cmd, and .exe. Teachers should discourage students from identity theft or fraud, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, online predation, sexual harassment, or sextortion, or other forms of suspicious behavior and report such behavior to appropriate authorities, especially if these happen to their students. They should check up on students who have been cyberstalked, cyberbullied, or sexually harassed online. It is much easier to feel isolated and alone when one is studying from one's home, so a good support system is more important than ever. Teachers should pay attention to the details of whomever they interact with online. Teachers can show respect and attention by remembering particulars like names, preferred pronouns, and specific circumstances, contexts, and interests. This applies both inside and outside the classroom.
	In school-related online inter-action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students should show attentive care by recognizing the need for balance between work or school and other commitments. As such, they should remember to interact with classmates and teachers regarding schoolwork only during class hours or hours previously agreed upon (ex. Teachers' consultation hours). Students are responsible for remaining updated on their schoolwork, and should remain attentive and participative during online lectures or discussions. To the best of their ability, students should try to extend help to classmates falling behind in online classes. Students can still share internet connections or hold study sessions. If these aren't needed, classmates will appreciate students checking in on them from time to time, even if just for classmates' mental health. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are advised to set up fixed class hours and consultation hours, and must agree with students on expectations for behavior during class and consultation hours. With the consent of students, teachers may record consultations, for clarity on what was talked about, and for mutual safety. Teachers should complete due diligence when updating students on their schoolwork. They must not assign homework outside class hours, and must not set unrealistic deadlines. Given the flexible nature of online learning, teachers must provide ample room for students to learn at their own pace. To the best of their ability, and as long as they do not break standards for propriety, teachers should check up on and assist students who are falling behind in online classes. Teachers should watch out for signs of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, as well as for signs of abuse (Ex. mood swings, aggression, inconsistent moods, decreased attention, memory, focus, difficulty in school, difficulty in making friends or involvement in bullying or other inappropriate behavior, and self-protective behavior)

		STUDENTS	TEACHERS
RESPONSIBILITY	In general online inter-action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students should take caution when posting anything sensitive online — one's personal information, such as one's full name, school, address, phone number, one's parents' places of work, intimate or sexual photos, videos, or messages, or more should never be posted or shared online. Students should also exercise extra caution in posting incriminating photos or videos online. 2. Students should, as much as possible, communicate online only with people that they know personally and trust. When communicating with people that they don't know, students should keep interactions light and appropriate. 3. In addition, students should verify information and check for safety before sharing materials online. Students should not participate in disseminating fake news on malicious blogs and websites. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers should take caution when posting anything sensitive online — one's personal information, such as one's full name, school, address, phone number, one's parents' places of work, intimate or sexual photos, videos, or messages, or more should never be posted or shared online. Teachers should also exercise extra caution in posting incriminating photos or videos online. In addition, teachers should never post information about their students online. 2. Teachers should communicate online only with people that they know personally and trust. When communicating with people that they don't know, and when communicating about their students, they should keep interactions light and appropriate. (Comments such as "May maganda ba sa class mo?" are inappropriate and must not be tolerated.) 3. Teachers should verify information and check for safety before sharing materials online, and especially when sharing materials to students. Teachers should not participate in disseminating fake news on malicious blogs and websites.
	In school-related online inter-action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School platforms such as Google Classroom must be used appropriately, and for school-related matters only. 2. Students are responsible for fulfilling their class requirements, and must maintain integrity. They are reminded that existing school policies on internet use during class, plagiarism, and cheating still apply to the online classroom, and will not be tolerated. 3. Instead of resorting to cheating or plagiarism, students are encouraged to help each other understand concepts and lessons through hosting group study sessions or sharing helpful resources. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School platforms such as Google Classroom must be used appropriately, and for school-related matters only. Teachers must ensure that such platforms are maximized for online learning and the classroom environment needed (ex. Will private chatting be allowed? Who is allowed to turn on their webcam?) Teachers must avoid using personal social media accounts and phone numbers for school-related matters, and avoid bringing up personal matters to students unless out of concern for the student's well-being. 2. Teachers should agree with students on class conduct expectations for both teachers and students. Teachers should encourage respect, honesty, integrity, and collaboration in the classroom. They should dress professionally and ensure that students are also dressed appropriately for every lesson. 3. At all times, teachers must protect students' personal information, including their grades. Students' personal information and grades must never be shared with colleagues, with other students, or with anyone except the individual student and their parents.

		STUDENTS	TEACHERS
COMPETENCE	In general online inter-action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students should remember that the Internet must not be used to hurt other people. Students must never use the Internet to steal other people's identity, cyberbully, cyberstalk, sexually harass or harass, sextort, or share unwanted, obscene or offensive content with others. 2. Students must also not shame or isolate fellow students who have experienced Internet-related issues such as the aforementioned. In an online setting, it is much easier for a person to feel isolated, so students must form a strong support system for each other. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers should discourage those they interact with online from using the Internet to hurt other people. They should never use the Internet or encourage others to use the Internet to steal other people's identity, cyberbully, cyberstalk, sexually harass or harass, sextort, or share unwanted, obscene or offensive content with others; or to isolate or shame those who have experienced the aforementioned.. 2. Teachers should also educate themselves on the best way to provide care for those who have experienced the aforementioned. As teachers, they are also "frontliners" in schools — there is a good chance that they will have students who have experienced or will experience the aforementioned, so teachers must be best equipped to deal with such instances.
	In school-related online inter-action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing care for oneself means studying required course material, and politely asking for help from classmates or teachers when one does not understand course material. It is the student's responsibility to build competence on the skills and lessons required in online classes. 2. Students should take care to educate themselves not only on academic material, but also on social issues and their impacts and implications. They must also seek opportunities to learn the values and skills to apply academic knowledge to social issues. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers should help students understand and internalize course coverage through well-taught classes. Instead of just reading from slides or lecturing, teachers are advised to seek more interactive ways to teach classes online. They are also expected to be open and attentive to students who ask for help. It is the teacher's responsibility to do everything in the teacher's power until their students understand the course material. 2. Teachers should educate their students not only on academic coverage for their areas of expertise, but also on social issues, and their impacts and implications. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to learn the values and skills to apply academic knowledge to social issues.
SOLIDARITY	In general online inter-action	Students and teachers should remember that each person is going through something different and there is no single "right" way to care for another person. It is each person's responsibility to care for themselves and to care for others enough to learn what the most helpful form of care would be for each person, and to help create a safe space for them through enacting that care.	
	In school-related online inter-action	Students are expected to be sensitive to others' needs and mindful of their role in fostering a safe space for fellow students in the midst of a global pandemic. Standing in solidarity with fellow students who want to make the most of their online education means that students should allow for learning opportunities to be maximized, if not for themselves, then for others. For example, not all students may have optimal home environments for learning, so distractions in the online classroom must be minimized.	Teachers are expected to be sensitive to others' needs and mindful of their leading role in fostering safe spaces for students and fellow teachers in the midst of a global pandemic. So that students can maximize online education despite not having an optional home life, teachers can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make learning as flexible and as interactive as possible so that students can learn at their own pace and in ways that engage them; 2. Provide for different types of assessment (Some students may not be able to produce videos; some students will be better at more creative than more academic assessments); 3. Inject social issues and lessons on online safety, among others, into class discussions.

GENDER-SENSITIVITY, GENDER-RESPONSIVENESS, AND ONLINE SAFETY

Online safety goes **beyond** the simple **protection of individuals' personal information and privacy**. It is also about ensuring that every person feels **safe and supported** enough to **include themselves in online community activities**. Ultimately, online safe spaces ensure that every individual, **regardless of their sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity, or expression (SOGIE)**, is able to **fully benefit from the support of a community**, and **maximize opportunities in relating to such community**.

Gender and sexuality are often targeted in internet-related attacks. Teaching about and acting in a gender-sensitive and gender-responsive manner can help school communities foster a more positive culture in relation to gender and sexuality. This helps **those who have experienced cyberbullying, blackmail or sextortion, or online sexual harassment; and those who may experience stigma, discrimination, or harassment due to their gender identity or sexuality** feel more comfortable and safer with their school community. In turn, this feeling of security may help groups marginalized due to their gender or sexuality **heal and reintegrate, participate more in online education, and eventually make the most of their education**.

The following are some measures that schools and teachers can adopt in relation to gender-sensitivity and gender-responsiveness:

1. Create, communicate, and implement **strict rules and a zero tolerance policy** against any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment, or retaliation against someone in relation to their gender or sexuality.
2. Put in place **clear and working online mechanisms** for reporting and exacting accountability for gender- or sexuality-based discrimination, bullying, harassment, or retaliation.
3. Allow for **flexibility in terms of online education**, taking into account a **potential increase in labor burden**, especially for female students, due to care based activities.
4. Be aware of and make adjustments to **avoid possible microaggressions** such as **misgendering or deadnaming** individuals.
5. Be alert to **gendered expectations in the use of praise or other feedback** — ensure that feedback provided is in line with the care perspective, and not in line with 'policing' approaches which may trigger individuals.
6. Provide **equitable opportunities for people of all genders in every role**, including leadership; and be aware of gender bias in peer ratings and even one's own ratings.
7. Immediately **shut down misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic, or sexist behavior or language**, whether online or offline. Discuss why this behavior or language is inappropriate or harmful and check up on students directly affected by such behavior or language.
8. Screen **course coverage for gender equality**. Make efforts to **include women and LGBT+ writers, as well as perspectives of women and the LGBT+** in the curriculum. In addition, screen all course material for gender bias, sexism, misogyny, transphobia, or homophobia.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE, SAFE, ONLINE EDUCATION AND ITS CONNECTION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS.

Gender equality and access to education are integral in the conversation about human rights. The very basis of human rights is that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)], **without distinction of any kind**, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political, or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status."

In addition, the UDHR states that "**everyone has the right to education**," and further that "education shall be directed to the **full development of the human personality** and to the **strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms**." Gender-responsiveness and safety in online education are important aspects in the provision of education for all, regardless of SOGIE, which is, in turn, seen as fundamental human rights needed for all people to develop and flourish as human beings with dignity.

A gender-responsive and safe online education thus is integral not just in the promotion, but in the very fulfillment of human rights.

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