

Etiquette, Netiquette and Cyber Safety

Etiquette

- Understand that the first language of students in your partner school may not be English, so your students need to write clearly and also be tolerant when they receive responses back that may have grammatical or spelling errors. (You could always ask them to write a letter back in the first language of your partner school to emphasise how difficult it can be to communicate in a language that is not your first language.)
- Your students should remember that the focus for the exchange is a sharing of cultural insights and the nurturing of new friendships. They need to be polite, friendly and well mannered in their correspondence: be it in hard copy or electronic formats. Be aware of any bullying or disrespectful content in students' emails/letters.

Netiquette

"Netiquette" is good manners when using ICT. Basically, the same rules apply as face to face communication. Here are some extra hints to help you out:

- CAPS LOCK: if you type CAPITAL LETTERS in an email, that's the web version of SCREAMING or SHOUTING. Your recipients could get quite offended....so be careful not to lock that key!
- Chain letters: sending chain letters to someone can be illegal, can be a hoax or can simply put a bad taste in someone's mouth. Avoid them; they're a waste of time and energy.
- Line spacing: If you have a long email to send, try to break up and chunk together bits of information so it is easy to read. Reading on the screen is pretty difficult anyway, so if you chunk your content into paragraphs, you'll find the recipient will be able to read your points more clearly and be more receptive to what you're saying.
- Keep your communications concise and pointed. Remember, many users don't have unlimited Internet time.
- Think of the importance of tone and attitude when you write things down. This is as important in an online discussion room and in emails, as it is when you and your students are chatting face-to-face with someone. Also, think of how you sign off your emails – are you abrupt, friendly, cheery, formal? Do you use: 'bye', 'cheers', 'regards' or just your name or your signature? Make sure your *hellos* and *goodbyes* are also culturally sensitive.
- Be careful of what you say/write: once your comments are written and emailed or posted on the web in a discussion group, they can be forwarded, cut and pasted and sent anywhere.
- Get your students to read, re-read and read their text again before you send it....especially if the message is important. It is easy to get a message fouled up by misplaced or poorly chosen words.
- You can add humour to your messages by using smileys, and other emoticons which you create from the characters on your keyboard. Here are some examples:

: -)	happy	: -I	indifferent
: -@	screaming	: -(sad
; -)	winking	: -<	mad / angry
: -D	laughing	: -o	surprised
: -e	disappointed	a <G>	grinning

- You can use your own text/SMS abbreviations. You'll find it very interesting to see the difference between how text language is used in Australia and Indonesia!
- In emails you send, wiki entries you write or post to discussion groups, always clearly identify the subject of your message in the subject line or the opening sentence.
- Be careful of the size of files you attach to emails: large files can be impossible to download or take several hours when the recipient only has a telephone connection. If you have lots of images or video, why not save these onto a CD/DVD and send to your partner school in the mail?
- Think of the format you will use for images: bitmaps take up a lot of space while jpegs tend to be smaller in size. You may have to resize an image if it is too large to send.

Cyber safety

The Internet offers enormous potential benefits for teaching and learning. However, schools and teachers have a responsibility to ensure that their students' interaction online is safe and ethical when using the Internet during class.

Students must behave responsibly for themselves and towards others. This includes the language they use and the things they say, how they treat others, respecting people's property (e.g. copyright) and visiting appropriate websites.

We encourage all teachers to contact see what existing policies are in place in their schools and/or contact their local education authority for further information.

Some resources that can provide information for students, teachers, parents and the broader community about creating safe online environments are:

NetAlert

NetAlert is part of the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to providing a safe online environment for all families, especially children.

Bullying No Way

Bullying No Way aims to create learning environments where every student and school community member is safe, supported, respected, valued, and free from bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination.