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# The Rules for Being Kind and Respectful Online

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Ages 9-13 ⌚ 3 min read

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## What Does Being Kind Online Mean?

The internet is amazing — you can chat with friends, play games, watch videos, and learn new things. But sometimes people forget that real human beings are on the other side of the screen. Being kind and **respectful online** means treating people the same way you would face-to-face, even when they can't see you.

When you're online, there are no teachers or parents watching over your shoulder every second. That's why **digital citizenship** — being a good internet citizen — depends on **your** choices.

## The Golden Rules of Online Kindness

**Think before you post.** Once something goes online, it can stay there forever. Ask yourself: "Would I say this to their face? Could this hurt someone's feelings?" If the answer is yes, don't post it.

**Use kind language.** Without tone of voice or facial expressions, words can be misunderstood easily. What feels like a joke to you might upset someone else. Avoid **cyberbullying** — name-calling, spreading rumours, or making fun of people online.

Think of it like shouting in a crowded room versus whispering to a friend. Online, everyone can hear your "shout" — thousands of people might see your post or message.

**Respect other people's privacy.** Don't share someone's personal information, photos, or secrets without permission. Don't screenshot private conversations and share them.

**Listen and learn from others.** People have different opinions and backgrounds. Disagreeing is okay, but do it respectfully. Avoid arguing just to win or to upset someone.

## What About When People Aren't Kind?

If someone is being mean to you online, remember: it's not your fault. **Tell a trusted adult** — a parent, teacher, or school counsellor. You can also **block, report, or mute** people on most platforms. These tools exist to keep you safe.

The internet is a shared space, and everyone deserves to feel safe and welcome there.