

Lesson 7

Using text and picture messaging

In this lesson pupils consider the possible risks associated with using mobile phones including services like text messaging (Short Messaging Service) and multimedia messaging services (MMS) which are a feature of MMS or picture phones. They will begin to develop strategies to protect themselves.

Pupils are likely to use SMS/text messaging quite frequently, so the positive aspects – it being quick, easy, and cheap, for example – need to be reinforced. MMS is relatively new but usage is increasing and although the dangers might seem quite obvious (and rare) it is important pupils understand how to use the technology effectively and safely. This lesson also involves visiting the SMS/text messaging section of the Cybercafé site, where pupils will help the character, Chloe, to make the right decisions.

You will find it helpful to read the sections on SMS and MMS in the teachers' notes. The materials for this lesson can be downloaded from www.gridclub.com/cybercafe/teachers.

Learning objectives

Pupils will know that there are safe and appropriate behaviours to use when receiving and sending text and multimedia messages. They will know that there is a range of strategies that they can use to deal with:

- spamming
- bullying and/or offensive messages
- requests for meetings, photographs, etc.

Pupils will also learn about the level of personal detail it is safe to include in their own messages, and how to look after their phones.

The approaches that they select and choose will depend on their previous experiences. Tell pupils that the focus of this lesson is about using the messaging services on mobile phones, rather than on the use of mobile phones per se, as you are assuming that they know the risks with talking to people on the telephone and not giving out personal information, etc.

Organisation

During this lesson pupils will need access to the Cybercafé web site (www.gridclub.com/cybercafe). The lesson begins with a whole-class discussion and sharing of personal experiences. They will need to reflect on their own uses of messaging, perhaps within the context of asking, giving or exchanging information. With whom do they communicate? Do they only communicate with people they know, such as friends and/or family? From whom do they receive messages?

For Activity 1, they split into three groups (as in earlier lessons) and access the Cybercafé.

Timing	Suggested age group of children	Useful for
The lesson should take approximately 65 minutes	Year 4 Year 5 ✓ Year 6 ✓	Whole class teaching ✓ Large group work ✓ Small group/pairs ✓

Lesson 7

Relevant to the following:

PSHE and Citizenship framework at Key Stage 2

Knowledge, skills and understanding

Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities

1. Pupils should be taught:
 - c) to face new challenges positively by collecting information, looking for help, making responsible choices, and taking action

Preparing to play an active role as citizens

2. Pupils should be taught:
 - c) to realise the consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviours, such as bullying and racism, on individuals and communities
 - k) to explore how the media present information

Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle

3. Pupils should be taught:
 - e) to recognise the different risks in different situations and then decide how to behave responsibly, including sensible road use, and judging what kind of physical contact is acceptable or unacceptable

- f) that pressure to behave in an unacceptable or risky way can come from a variety of sources, including people they know, and how to ask for help and use basic techniques for resisting pressure to do wrong
- g) school rules about health and safety, basic emergency aid procedures and where to get help.

Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people

4. Pupils should be taught:
 - a) that their actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people's feelings and to try to see things from their points of view
 - d) to realise the nature and consequences of racism, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours, and how to respond to them and ask for help
 - e) to recognise and challenge stereotypes
 - g) where individuals, families and groups can get help and support.

Resources

Part of the Lesson	Type and Title of Resource
Activity 1	Cybercafé web site – www.gridclub.com/cybercafe
Activity 2	Text messages – a pupil activity sheet; cut out the messages and give each pupil in the groups a card
Follow-up (optional)	Safety Stars – a Pupil Recording Sheet

Introducing the lesson

Ask pupils how they use their mobile phones, whether they use them to talk, to send text messages or play games. Do they ever use a computer to generate a text message? What are the disadvantages of sending messages this way? (For example, although it is easier to type a message on a keyboard than on a phone keypad, it is not as portable unless you are using a WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) PDA (Personal Digital Assistant). Many mobile phones can be used to send e-mails and will even allow you to speak your e-mail messages rather than type them.) Ask pupils what sort of service/account they have – whether it is Pay as You Go or a monthly rental. Ask if they have insured their phones and whether anyone has ever lost one. What happens if someone finds your phone? Can they use it? How can you protect yourself?

Discuss with pupils the statistics on mobile phone theft (this is detailed on the SMS section of the Cybercafé site).

Recap on how pupils use e-mail and compare the technologies. Make a note of the main advantages and disadvantages of each one. Advantages of e-mail could include the ability to send attached files and to write longer messages. Disadvantages may include the fact that many computers with Internet connections are fixed so they cannot be used anywhere else. However, WAP PDAs enable you to use both e-mail and SMS wherever there is an Internet connection. A PDA is a small hand-held

computer which accesses the Internet using wireless technology (WAP). The advantages of SMS and MMS are that it is quick, cheap, easy to use and can be used almost anywhere. The disadvantages might include the limitation on message length (160 characters), the fact that people do use them anywhere and, because they are small, they can easily be lost.

Recap on some of the risks associated with e-mail (spamming, bullying and viruses, for example). Ask pupils if they have experienced similar things on their mobile phones. Have they ever had a message telling them that they have won a competition and need to ring a specific number? Similarly, have they ever received a bullying or offensive message? If any pupils have received such messages, ask them how it made them feel. Has anyone been asked to meet someone or send personal information? Ask them what they did in these situations and if that was not the best approach, how they might respond now. Make a list of possible responses: erasing the message, replying, trying to find details of the person who sent it, telling a responsible adult who might inform the police or the service provider so that calls from that number can be barred, or your number can be changed.

(15 minutes)

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Activity 1 – the Cybercafé

Split the class into three groups (A, B and C) as in earlier lessons – they will all need to access the Cybercafé and visit the SMS section.

All the groups should:

- help the character Chloe to make the right decisions
- decide whether the examples given are appropriate uses of text messaging or whether they are examples of spamming or bullying
- look at the responses made by Chloe: did she give out any personal information that was unnecessary?

Group A

Pupils in this group may need some help in reading the messages and text on the web site. If there is time, encourage pupils to create additional scenarios.

Groups B and C (extension)

Ask pupils in Groups B and C to create additional scenarios to the ones detailed on the Cybercafé site and to identify three alternative courses of action. As a prompt you might use one or two examples from the **Scenario** sheet.

(15 minutes)

Activity 2 – Responding to messages

Divide pupils into groups of four, and give each pupil a card (cut out from the **Text messages activity sheet**) ensuring that no two pupils in the same group have the same card. Ask them to discuss the messages and decide what they would do if they were to receive such a message on their mobile phone. Draw a continuum on the board:

Delete

Reply

Ask the pupils where they would place their cards. Would they delete the message, or reply? With several of the messages, they will need to come to a decision as to how well they know the sender. They might also like to consider the difference between receiving the same messages from strangers and from their friends.

It is through discussion that some of these grey areas can be teased out. As children are deciding in their groups, wander round and intervene with appropriate questions, for example – ‘What might happen if you do decide to reply?’, ‘How well do you know the sender?’ etc.

After about 15 minutes, ask all the pupils with card 1 to tell you where they would place it on the continuum. Did they all agree? If not, why not? Proceed through all the message cards.

Reinforce the Stop! Think! Go? safe behaviour message. Rather than deleting the message, when might it be advisable to show it to an adult?

(25 minutes)

Plenary

Remind pupils that the activities and messages were deliberately created to help them to make appropriate decisions about what to do in those situations. Tell pupils that they should not send bullying or offensive messages and that sending these kinds of message can be a serious offence. Link this to the school's anti-bullying policy and tell them that bullying through phone messages or e-mail is the same as bullying in the playground. Ask them to reflect on how they felt or would feel if they received a bullying or offensive message. Remind them that if they receive bullying messages, they are not at fault and they do not have to accept such calls. Remind them also that they should tell a responsible adult who can contact the service provider to get calls barred from specified numbers or perhaps tell the police. Discuss with pupils the number of mobile phones that are stolen every month. Ask pupils if they can

suggest ways of keeping their phones safe. They may suggest keeping it inside a particular pocket in a bag which they always have with them, not leaving it lying around or in the pocket of a coat that is left unattended, not taking it to places where they will not need them. Some pupils might suggest having 'unlock codes' that need to be entered when the phone is turned on – without the code the phone cannot be used.

Ask pupils to suggest safety messages to remember when using mobile phones to send messages. These might include: if you do not recognise the number – don't open it because it might be a spam or bullying message; don't arrange to meet anyone you do not know; be careful how much detail you include in a message in case someone else finds your phone.

(10 minutes)

Follow-up (optional)

Ask pupils to use these ideas to design **Safety Stars** to add to a safety display. Ideally, pupils should create their own shapes and posters using ICT. To reinforce that texting can be fun, ask the children to fill in blank message cards to send to each other. Encourage them to use some of the text messaging forms they encountered in the Cybercafé.

Learning outcomes

- Pupils will be able to identify types of potentially risky messages and will be able to take appropriate action.
- They will be aware of how vulnerable mobile phones are and should be able to look after their own more carefully.