

NC TOOLKIT for  
**Digital Readiness**

## **Session 5 Instructor Guide**

Interacting with Students' Education Online - Combined Group

# OVERVIEW

## Session 5 - Interacting with Students' Education Online

### Session Time

(2 hours)

### Description

For most people raising children today, technology has changed quite a bit since they were in school. In this session, we will explore some of the new kinds of technology that are being used in the classroom and their educational potential, as well as options for communicating with the school using that technology. Students and guardians will work together to complete hands-on, interactive lessons on classroom technology.

### Objectives

Adults will be able to:

- Access various methods of online communication with their students' school
- Choose an appropriate method of communication when contacting school
- Write an efficient email to their student's teacher
- Identify specific technologies their students use in learning

Students will be able to (ISTE Standards 1d, 7a, 7c):

- Describe and demonstrate technologies they use in learning
- Assist adults in learning new technologies

### Preparation

- Work with school media specialist(s) and technology staff to tailor this session to the specifics of the local school district.
- Print handouts for adults.
- Customize slides with relevant announcements, Wi-Fi password, etc.



## Just Before Session

- Open slideshow on presentation computer.
- Place sign-in sheet near entrance.
- Talk with assisting facilitators about how you would like them to roam among participants and field individual questions. Answer any questions they have about the session.
- Prepare any technology being demonstrated.



## OUTLINE

## Session 5 - Interacting with Students' Education Online

**Arrival | 10 Minutes**

All participants sign in. Use this time to make sure each family brought their device, they can sign into their device, it is charged or connected to an outlet, and connected to Wi-Fi.

**Introduction & Agenda | 5 minutes**

Introduce facilitators present. Set expectations for communication during session. Explain the structure of the evening.

**ADULT TRAINING****35 Minutes** .....**Introductions & Icebreaker | 5 minutes**

*Have each participant introduce themselves and answer the discussion question as they do.*

- Discussion Question: Name one way the school communicates information to you.

**School Website & Communication Overview | 10 minutes**

Discuss benefits and drawbacks of various communication. Consider how you might get information from the school in a given scenario. Highlight useful parts of the website and social media, if applicable.

**How to Communicate with School | 10 minutes**

(Group Activity)

Best practices for communicating with teachers and the school.

- Demo/Activity: Write an email that a teacher would like to receive.



## **School Apps** | 10 minutes

- Demo: How to use school apps to see student grades, assignments, etc.

## **Break** | 10 minutes

## **ED TECH EXPO** .....

### **50 Minutes**

Adults will have a chance to interact with the kinds of educational technology being used in their student's school.

## **Wrap-Up** | 10 minutes (Further Resources & Exit Survey)



## SCRIPT

## Session 5 - Interacting with Students' Education Online

*Italicized words* are instructions and notes to you, not to be read aloud.

Highlighted text indicates that participants should complete those instructions on their devices along with your demonstration.

**Arrival | 10 minutes**

- *Allow some time for participants to arrive and get settled so everyone can start together.*
- *Each participant who arrives needs to sign in (both the adult and the student).*
- *Use this time to make sure each family has a device that is charged, connected to Wi-Fi, and signed in.*


**Introduction & Agenda | 5 minutes**

- *Introduce facilitators present.*
- Today, we are going start by talking about the ways we can find information about your student's school online and use the internet to communicate with the school. Then we will spend some time with the kinds of technology your student might use at school.

**ADULT TRAINING**

35 Minutes


**Introductions & Icebreaker | 5 minutes**

- Before we get started, let's all introduce ourselves in case we haven't all been together before. So please say your name and:
-  Discussion Question: Name one way the school communicates information to you.
- *Give an example by saying your first name and one way the school communicates information, like posting information on the website or via automated call.*




## School Website Overview | 10 minutes


- On the screen are a few ways the school might communicate information, some of which you mentioned.
- Let's talk about some pros and cons of each of these methods.


 Discussion Question: Which is the most and least:

- Efficient
  - Private
  - Interactive
  - Convenient for the school
  - Convenient for you
- Hopefully, when the school shares information, they choose a method that fits the needs of the information being communicated, depending on each situation.
  - Now let's think about how you seek information from the school and communicate with them.
  - Together with your student, consider this scenario:

 Discussion Question: Your student says they will be receiving an award at school but they lost the paper about the event. What's the first, second, and third way you would try to find that information?

- *Give families a minute to discuss and then ask them to share briefly.*
- As a first step, I recommend spending five minutes looking for the information you need on the school's website or social media. If the answer is there, this will be much quicker than contacting anyone or the school.
- *Demonstrate how to reach the school's website and then social media (preferably a method that does not require an account, like a link from the school's website or from Google).*

 Spend five minutes now looking at the school website. If you use the website often, try to find something new that you don't usually look at.

 Discussion Question: Which parts of the website do you think are the most useful?

- *Navigate to the parts of the website that are mentioned in the discussion so everyone can see them on the screen.*






- Add other relevant info to the discussion. Some examples to look for:
  - » The website might include a calendar, attendance policy, handbook, directories and contact information, etc.
  - » Social media might host event calendars, announcements and updates, and pictures.

- Checking here first might save you and the school staff some time.
- Being familiar with the website gives you a better idea of what kind of information can be found here easily and what information you might need to ask for.


## How to Communicate with School | 10 minutes

(Group Activity)

- If you can't find the information you need about this award on the website, an email to the teacher is another option

 Discussion Question: Why might an email be a good option for contacting the school?

- e.g. You can send a message when you have time and they can reply when they are available. Saves you time trying to get a hold of someone. To be sure information passes directly between you and the teacher without the student factor.

 Discussion Question: Why might an email be a bad option?

- If it's a complicated issue, you might use an email to set up a phone call or in-person meeting.
- If it's urgent, for example if your student needs to get home a different way today, consider that a teacher may not be able to check their email while students are in their room.

Practice writing an email together. Demonstrate each step.

- A good email can save both you and the teacher time and confusion. Let's talk about what kind of email a teacher would like to receive.
- First, we need a recipient email address. Who should we send this to? (e.g. homeroom teacher or teacher in charge of award)
- Where can we find their email address? (e.g. website)
- Next, we need a subject line that gives the teacher an idea of what this email is about. What can we use for an email about this award? (e.g. Student Name – Award Question)





- Now for the email message. How should we address this teacher? (e.g. *Hello Mr. Smith,*)
  - In a school setting, teachers are used to being referred to by their last name, so unless you know the teacher personally, this is a good, respectful option.
- How long should this email be? (*Just a few sentences. Stick to the facts and keep it to the point.*)
- What information should be included? (e.g. *your student's name, the information you have, and the information you need*)
- At the end, include your name and contact information so they can reach you.
  - Example email:
 

Hello Mr. Smith,

My child Jack Jones tells me he is receiving an award next week but he lost the paper he was supposed to bring home. I haven't been able to find anything about it on the website. Can you give me any information about this award or the paper he lost?

Thank you,

Jennifer Jones

jenjones@gmail.com

555-555-5555
- Many teachers are unable to reply to emails during school hours, so you might expect a reply within a day or two.
- 🗣️ Discussion Question: Any questions or thoughts about the different ways you might communicate with the school?

## School Apps | 10 minutes

- *Go over the apps your partner school uses to interact with families, for example, Homebase/PowerSchool, Remind, Here Comes the Bus, etc.. If possible, a school representative could demonstrate the apps and/or help families create accounts for them.*
- 🗣️ Discussion Question: What are the pros and cons of apps your school uses? Has anyone found them useful in the past?
- *If there is time remaining because a school representative isn't present to demonstrate, you may want to highlight some library resources for helping students with homework or Common Sense Media's guides to homework help apps.*



**Break** | 10 minutes

Session Online

## **ED TECH EXPO**

**50 Minutes**

*Adults will have a chance to interact with the kinds of educational technology being used in their student's school. Please work with a member of school staff to plan some hands-on time and demos of the kinds of technology students might use in their school classroom. Engage students in demonstrating and teaching about technology. Make sure parents get a chance to try the technology themselves. If you are unable to collaborate with the school, a list of activities is available.*

## **Wrap-Up** | 10 minutes

(Further Resources & Exit Surveys)

- Before you leave, I want to point out one resource on today's handout. Common Sense Media has great articles about the kinds of technology students might use at school or as a part of their homework. They also have suggestions and reviews for homework help websites and apps.
- Please take tonight's exit surveys and then you're free to go.

