Digital and E-Mail Etiquette Tips

What is digital and e-mail etiquette? It is the set of rules and manners that tells people how to behave on the Internet and in e-mail.

First, in any online or e-mail interaction, keep in mind two questions:

1. How would I feel if someone did this or said this to me?
2. Would I behave this way in person?

Also, think ahead to the future! It doesn't matter what age you are now, whatever you put out there digitally can linger a long time. So ask yourself these things as well:

1. When I get ready to apply for college, would I want a college admissions officer to see this?
2. When I get ready to apply for a job, would I want my future employer to see this?

In general, respect peoples' privacy and avoid conflict. This includes avoiding embarrassing others or getting them in trouble.

Here are some other tips to follow:

- Remember people can't see or hear you online, so be careful when you're joking. Ask yourself, "Could someone take this the wrong way?"
- If you're chatting online, say goodbye when you're finished talking. Don't just walk away and leave the person hanging.
- Remember that using all capital letters or lots of exclamation or question marks means that you're shouting.
- Don't share private conversations or pictures with others.
- Don't be a cyberbully. Don't make fun of others, hurt their feelings, or embarrass them.
- Be careful when you're doing research or looking for something online. Keep your searches appropriate.
- If you use a computer where someone else is already logged in, then log out for them. Don't read their private messages. Also, do not send messages pretending to be that person.
- Don't download music, books, or movies that you should be paying for. This is illegal.

When you use e-mail, there are a few other tips to remember in addition to the ones above:

- Respond quickly. When replying, answer any requests or questions first.
- Do not forward unnecessary e-mails.
- Check your spelling and grammar.
- Be careful about using "reply to all." Ask yourself first if you really need to send the e-mail to everyone on the list.
- Keep it short. Most e-mails should be kept short and to the point.
- Make your subject line clear. For example, writing "Hi" as your subject line doesn't tell your reader much about your e-mail. However, if you change the subject to something specific, for example "Friday night's rehearsal," then your reader will know what the e-mail is about.
- Limit the number of attachments that you send. Since attachments take time to download, you don't want to clog up someone's inbox or take up more of their time than necessary.
- Pay attention to tone. Make sure your e-mail is polite.
- Think before you send it. E-mails don't just disappear. Even when you delete them, they are not necessarily gone forever. So be thoughtful about what you're sending out there.

Following these tips will help keep your online and e-mail experiences safe, friendly, and respectful.