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Using digital devices for good

Many of us relying on digital devices for work, school andfor staying connected to the outside world. With devices playing an increasing role in our lives, many people are questioning how they are used. While there are negative aspects of relying on devices, these are balanced by ways they can beused as a force for good. For example, they provide a useful way for people to connect and communicate with friends, loved ones and the wider community. Additionally, devices allow us to access learning platforms, information which can help us learn and develop new skills. These quick reflective activities encourage us to start to examine the role digital devices playin our lives, and how we can use them responsibly and with kindness.

Learning objectives

Learners will:
- Consider the positive and negative aspects of using digital devices
- Examine how they use digital devices to connect with others
- Develop kindness and resilience
- Discuss how digital platforms can be used positively and with kindness

Discussion activity: Digital stats

Begin by thinking about how many people use digital devices in the world.

> How many digital devices do you use? (This includes phones, tablets, gaming consoles, TV etc.)
> What app or programme do you use most?
> How many hours a day do you spend on social media?

Encourage learners to think about their experience compared with the below statistics?

> 5.9 billion people use a mobile phone.
> 4.5 billion people now use the internet (60% of the population).
> The average time people spend on their devices each day is 3 hours 40 minutes.

Now consider:
> What does this tell us about how people are using digital devices?
> What might the main reasons be for people using digital devices?

Walking debate

Ask learners to reflect on their own use of digital devices and platforms and whattheir experiences have been. Read out the following statements and discuss how far they agree ordisagree. You can draw a scale on a piece of paper and point to where they are on the line,or even label one side of the room as 'agree' and one as 'disagree' to move towards each response to each statement below. Discuss with learners why they agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

> I use platforms like YouTube a lot.
> The things I see online are usually kind.

> I leave comments on things I read of see online.
> I mostly use my device to play games.
> Using digital devices and apps help me to learn.
> I see a lot of information online and I am not sure what is true and what is not.
> I feel connected to other people through digital devices.
> Online bullying is a big problem.

Connections

Connecting with people is important, especially when you are away from friends and feel isolated. Digital devices can help us feel close to our loved ones. Encourage learners to think about:

> Why these connections are important to you?
> Why is it important to stay in touch with others?
> How can we remain in contact with each other?

Draw a map with their name in the middle. Close to their name write the names of those they live with, and then further away those they are connected to in different ways using digital platforms and devices. Draw a different coloured line to represent a different kind of connection - maybe blue for face to face, yellow for telephone, green for email etc.

Reflect on the map. Ask learners if there is anyone who isn't on the map that they want to connectwith more? Maybe a family member who doesn't have internet or a classmate they can't contact? How can they stay connected to them? Maybe they can't contact them now, but can later. Have them think about how they could create a diary or letter about their life now to share with them in the future.

Sharing kindness

Think about the ways we have used digital devices to share kindness. How can we use our devices kindly? This could also mean sharing them with your family members or taking regular screen breaks to be kind to your eyes.

One way to share kindness is for parents and teachers to share Kind Acts recorded on the Power of Kindness Calendar on social media using #Powerofkindness. Remember to practice safe internet skills.