

DCE PLANNER

A curriculum framework
for digital citizenship education



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Foreword

For many years, the Council of Europe has been a strong advocate for education that builds democracy, respect and human dignity. Through its long-standing work on education for democratic citizenship, the Organisation has helped shape how schools and communities across Europe nurture human rights values, participation and mutual understanding.

Today, education faces a new frontier. The digital world – with its enormous opportunities and growing challenges – is transforming how young people learn, communicate and engage with society. The spread of disinformation, cyberbullying, online hate speech and the misuse of personal data all remind us that digital spaces are not neutral. They must be shaped by the same values of respect, inclusion and responsibility that guide democratic life.

This is why digital citizenship education is now more important than ever. It is about helping every learner, child, young person and adult alike, to become confident, responsible and active participants in the digital society. It is about learning to think critically, act ethically and use technology to strengthen, rather than weaken, our democracies.

As part of its Education Strategy 2024-2030 and the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025, the Council of Europe is proud to present the *Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) Planner – A curriculum framework for digital citizenship education*. This DCE Planner is a practical and inspiring tool to help educators, school leaders and policy makers bring digital citizenship into the heart of education.

With 320 examples of learning outcomes tailored to four age groups, the DCE Planner offers guidance and flexibility for those designing programmes that prepare learners to thrive in a digitally connected world. It is not a fixed curriculum, but a living framework that can be adapted to each context and community.

The DCE Planner was created through a unique process of collaboration. With contributions from more than 60 educators, experts and students across 30 member states, it reflects the Council of Europe's enduring belief that education, grounded in human rights and democracy, can help people of all ages shape a fairer, safer and more inclusive digital future.

We hope this DCE Planner will inspire all those working in education to take the next step towards a Europe where every learner can be not only digitally skilled but also digitally wise and civically engaged.



Villano Qiriazzi
Head of the Education Department

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Villano'.

Introduction

The Council of Europe's Digital Citizenship Education Planner (the DCE Planner) is a flexible educational tool designed to enhance the teaching of digital citizenship education (DCE) in schools. It offers a systematic approach to the teaching, learning and assessment of DCE, which can be applied across all member states of the Council of Europe and in all phases of education, from primary through to upper secondary.

At the heart of the DCE Planner is a set of learning outcomes arranged by age group and digital domain. These outcomes describe the types of knowledge and skills learners can be expected to acquire by the end of a digital citizenship lesson, activity or project. Compiled by educators, experts and learners from 30 member states, the learning outcomes articulate a shared European vision for DCE that is flexible enough to meet local needs and conditions, while remaining aligned to the core values and principles of the Council of Europe.

Designed to complement the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC), the DCE Planner extends education for democracy into the digital world, equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and ethical understanding needed to participate in society as democratic citizens in the digital era. It encourages students to think critically about the different ways in which digital technology affects human life today and how technology might be harnessed to create a fairer and more equal society in the future.

Above all, the DCE Planner is a practical tool, designed to support grassroots practitioners in schools. Its learning outcomes require little or no interpretation and can be written directly into lesson plans. By looking through them, educators are able to see at a glance exactly what digital citizenship involves and how it is taught, without the need to read a lengthy explanation. But the DCE Planner is more than just a tool for planning lessons. It has a wide range of possible applications, both inside and outside schools – from monitoring standards and professional development to curriculum planning and resource development. This makes it relevant to education professionals at all levels – teacher trainers, school inspectors and education administrators, as well as teachers and school leaders and also those working in non-formal education settings.

Chapter 1 introduces the concept of DCE and traces the development of the DCE Planner from original conception to final publication.

Chapter 2 explains the benefits of a common European framework for DCE, some of the challenges facing the development of such a framework and how these might be overcome.

Chapter 3 looks at what makes the DCE Planner distinctive and how it is constructed.

Chapter 4 shows how the DCE Planner may be used by different stakeholders – from teachers and school leaders to teacher educators, inspectors, advisers and educational administrators – and includes several practical scenarios.

Then follows the text of the DCE Planner itself, with its 320 practical suggestions for DCE activities arranged for four age groups.

The publication ends with a complete list of the many educators and experts who contributed to the development of the DCE Planner.

Chapter 1

Background and concept

Background

The DCE initiative was launched by the Council of Europe's Education Department in 2016 as a response to the wide-ranging changes, including in education, brought about by digitalisation. Digitalisation profoundly affects all aspects of contemporary life and affects all citizens and society. It brings many new opportunities and benefits but can pose new ethical questions and concerns. Citizens need a broad range of new skills – including digital literacy – to successfully access the many opportunities that digital society offers and to negotiate the challenges that are likely to arise. Importantly, new citizenship skills are needed if citizens are to participate fully in the life of society and to flourish in the digital environment.

In 2016, the Council of Europe convened an expert group to take forward the concept of DCE and to assess how education professionals can best support learners to prepare for a digital future. The work commenced with a scoping review of the field and the available literature. This found that educational responses to the challenges facing citizenship in the digital era had been focused on single issues such as online safety, responsible online use, practising digital civility or delivering educational material more effectively through digital platforms (Frau-Meigs et al. 2017). A need for a more structured approach to education for digital citizenship founded on the values of democratic culture was therefore highlighted as a priority. As a result, the Council of Europe initiated a programme of activity to develop a holistic concept of DCE to be supported by appropriate resources and guidance materials aimed at policy makers, educational administrators, industry and practitioners in education.

Early steps

The first task undertaken by the expert group was to elaborate on the conceptual model of DCE. Building on a systematic survey of the field, a holistic theoretical model of DCE was put forward, supported by a literature review (ibid.) and an extensive stakeholder consultation. The multistakeholder consultation contacted over 200 organisations and experts across all member countries and surveyed them on relevant policy issues, sense-making practices regarding education for digital citizenship and the gaps and challenges in formal and informal learning contexts (Richardson and Milovidov 2017). A second follow-up questionnaire was sent to national contacts for 42 projects focused on children's digital skills.

This questionnaire – the Competence Grid Survey – asked specifically about the level of focus being placed on the 20 competences and four areas of the RFCDC to identify any areas of particular concentration or special focus. In fact, the survey found little evidence of a systematic approach to digital citizenship and ad hoc approaches to

developing competences in projects oriented towards fostering digital citizenship. It also found that parental engagement in digital citizenship was low and that resources and awareness-raising materials were needed to increase understanding of digital citizenship.

Building capacity for digital citizenship education

An outcome of the initial scoping activity and stakeholder consultation was a greater focus on capacity building. Recognising that there was generally low awareness of DCE as a priority issue, a series of conferences and events was held to promote DCE, facilitate networking and build awareness, particularly among policy makers (Council of Europe 2017). The DCE expert group then engaged further with diverse stakeholder groups to create networks of relevant non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and public institutions.

In 2019, the Digital Citizenship Education Promoters Network¹ was created to promote and develop DCE at local, regional and national levels. Nominations of DCE Promoters and local experts were formally ratified by ministries of education in member states, thereby further building awareness of this policy priority. A DCE network was also established with diverse civil society organisations and a number of public institutions to establish stronger links with parents and carers across Europe.² A major survey of parents was carried out in 2019 on the topic of how they can support the competence-building process to help children become responsible digital citizens (Richardson and Samara 2022). Finally, following a series of networking events with the industry, guidelines on developing partnerships between education institutions and the private sector based on principles of education for digital citizenship were developed and published, leading to an ongoing structured dialogue with the private sector on DCE topics.³ Each of these initiatives has served the direct function of raising the profile of DCE and the Council of Europe's prioritisation of it while further disseminating its work, tools and resources to respective members and stakeholders of organisations across Europe.

The second key priority in capacity building has been the development of educational resources that can be adapted for different age groups and settings, and which can support educational professionals in translating these important principles into practice. Significant outputs to date include the *Digital citizenship education handbook* (Richardson and Milovidov 2022), the trainers' pack *Digital citizenship education* (Raulin-Serrier et al. 2020) and a resource for practitioners, *Educating for a video game culture* (Soriani 2021). A series of leaflets and brochures has been published targeting specific groups and topics such as "Keeping young citizens busy at home during the Coronavirus crisis" and "Easy steps to help your child become a digital citizen".⁴

1. See www.coe.int/en/web/education/dce-promoters, accessed 8 October 2025.

2. See www.coe.int/en/web/education/parents-network, accessed 25 January 2026.

3. See www.coe.int/en/web/education/dce-and-the-private-sector, accessed 25 January 2026.

4. See <https://rm.coe.int/easy-steps-to-help-your-child-become-a-digital-citizen/16809e2d1d>, accessed 25 January 2026.

Lesson plans have also been developed on diverse topics including cyberbullying, fake news, ethical shopping, solidarity and speaking out.⁵

More recently, a video series, *DG-Nauts*, was developed to encourage young children, their parents and educators to think about what it means to be a digital citizen. Each video is accompanied by activities and exercises brought together in an activity book to recall scenes from the videos, reinforce key messages introduced and generally support the development of digital citizenship competences.⁶ Finally, a series of short online courses was developed for busy professionals on how to deal with the different aspects of DCE and integrate them into everyday practice. The aim is not simply to teach what education for digital citizenship is but to enable learners to include DCE in every educational context.⁷

The concept of digital citizenship education

What digital citizenship education is and how it is taught

DCE is an educational programme that empowers learners with the competences they need to be active as democratic citizens in a digitised world. It focuses on the societal impact of digital technology, both good and bad. It is relevant to all learners, in all phases of education, beginning from their earliest encounters with the digital world.

Citizenship education for a digital era

DCE does not replace traditional citizenship education but extends it into the digital world. While citizenship education focuses on civic duties, rights and participation in democratic processes within physical communities, DCE applies these principles to the online world. In an increasingly interconnected world, the two overlapping forms of education complement each other, shaping individuals who can effectively play their part as democratic citizens in both offline and online communities.

Integrated into any subject

Like conventional citizenship education, DCE is not the province of any one school subject or discipline but can be integrated into any lesson. It can take place outside as well as inside lessons, including in extracurricular activities, service learning and participation in student councils, clubs, school campaigns and events. This means that DCE is not the responsibility of any one teacher in a school, but relevant to all who are able to reference digital technology in their teaching and learning.

5. All lesson plans and other educational materials are available in the Council of Europe DCE e-Library at www.coe.int/en/web/education/dce-for-educators, accessed 25 January 2026.

6. See www.coe.int/en/web/education/dce-for-educators, accessed 25 January 2026.

7. See <https://theewc.org/resources/launch-of-what-is-digital-citizenship-education>, accessed 8 October 2025.

Mutual benefit

Incorporating digital citizenship into teaching and learning does not mean taking time from conventional subjects. It is about integrating it in ways that simultaneously benefit both the existing subject and digital citizenship learning. For example, by sometimes using digital rather than analogue references – such as in maths, in evaluating statistical claims made by influencers or exploring mathematical patterns behind the algorithms used in recommendation systems. Or by working with online source material – for example, in critically assessing historical information found in online spaces. Or by finding a technological dimension in existing learning – as when discussing digital waste in environmental education, or in language lessons examining how language-learning apps and platforms collect personal data. Or by using technology as a vehicle for learning – like fact-checking in science and social studies.

The medium is the message

Education for democratic citizenship is about values and attitudes, as well as skills and knowledge. While skills and knowledge can be taught directly, values and attitudes are learned indirectly and develop slowly over time – through the example of role models and the environment in which teaching and learning takes place. In DCE, therefore, the process by which skills and knowledge are taught is an important source of learning in its own right. It involves creating a learning environment that is inclusive and non-threatening, in which students are able to express their opinions freely and without embarrassment and are encouraged to use their initiative and learn through experience.

A special relationship with civic education

In schools where civic education is a separate subject, the teachers of this subject have a special responsibility for DCE. They have dedicated time for citizenship education and also subject knowledge that other teachers do not have. As a subject, civic education can also act as a hub or focal point for DCE generally in a school, or as part of a wider whole-school approach. Teachers of civic education can then act as co-ordinators for school policy on digital citizenship, sharing their expertise with others and helping to create a unified approach to teaching and learning across their school.

The origin of the DCE Planner

The idea of developing a common European framework for digital citizenship education (DCE) emerged from research carried out by the Council of Europe DCE Expert Group soon after its establishment in 2017. It had become clear that, in spite of the growing international interest in this field, the concept of digital citizenship was not well understood either by policy makers or practitioners, and that this was a major factor affecting progress in the teaching of DCE in schools. A feasibility study on the idea of developing a common framework was undertaken by the authors in 2023, in partnership with the Council of Europe Digital Citizenship Education Promoters

Network. It involved educators and experts from 21 member states. The study replicated the findings of the earlier research and went on to explore the potential benefits and challenges of creating such a resource. The idea was overwhelmingly endorsed by those participating in the feasibility study, and soon afterwards made a priority by the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education in its Education Strategy for 2024-2030 – Learners first – Education for today's and tomorrow's democratic societies.

How the DCE Planner was created

The DCE Planner was developed through a collaborative process involving over 60 educators, experts and students from 30 Council of Europe member states. Member states were involved in all steps of the process, from initial conceptualisation to identification of the learning outcomes and format design. The process was overseen and facilitated by the working in partnership with the Digital Citizenship Education Promoters Network and the Steering Committee for Education.

Refining the concept

The concept was refined and further developed in a series of collaborative research activities in the summer and autumn of 2023. The first was a two-day professional workshop held in Lisbon in June. Digital Citizenship Education Promoters from a range of Council of Europe member states took part in a series of group discussion activities on themes relating to DCE and the school curriculum, facilitated by the authors.

The second was an online questionnaire designed to elicit DCE Promoters' views on the idea of developing a common framework for DCE. Promoters were asked to rate the usefulness of such a resource in their country, to describe its benefits and identify its potential beneficiaries.

When asked to rate what they saw as the most important benefits of such a framework for the education system in their country, respondents ticked eleven different items. The most highly rated were "increasing teacher confidence and motivation in DCE" (80%) and "development of teacher training in DCE" (79%). The next most highly rated were "raising awareness of the concept of DCE" (77%), "building age-related progression into the DCE curriculum" (75%) and "integration of DCE into the existing school curriculum" (73%). Also fairly highly rated were "designing a more relevant and effective DCE curriculum" (72%) and "establishing a unified approach to DCE" (72%). (Huddleston and Styslavaska-Doliwa 2024)

The third activity consisted of two online focus groups. Participants were asked to comment on possible formats for a framework, how such a framework might be developed and what a suitable time frame would be.

Identifying the learning outcomes

Identifying the learning outcomes was the central activity in the development process. Four expert groups were convened, each focusing on a different age group:

5-7, 8-11, 12-15 and 16-18 years of age. The expert groups were made up of a mixture of promoters and local educators and experts nominated by national representatives on the Steering Committee for Education. In all, 37 individuals were involved, representing 19 member states.

The process of identification began online. Members of each group worked together on a common online document containing a selection of pre-prepared specimen learning outcomes arranged by digital domain. Using criteria developed by the authors, their task was to accept, reject or revise these specimen outcomes or propose additional ones.

This was followed by four face-to-face workshops held in Strasbourg between May and June 2024, dedicated to the different age groups. In the workshops, groups analysed the collection of outcomes that had accumulated in their online document and reduced these to 10 for each digital domain.

Putting the framework together

The information from the four workshops was then collated by the authors. This involved a number of procedures, including reducing the number of learning outcomes to eight per digital domain, checking for duplication, standardising language, identifying common themes running through the domains and ensuring progression across the age groups.

The resulting draft framework was published for comments at the launch of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education in January 2025. This draft was subsequently released for consultation with members of the four expert groups, other members of the Promoters Network and a range of international experts – in all 40 individuals from 25 member states. Following the consultation, the draft was revised and the final version published in electronic form on the Council of Europe website, and formally launched at the Digital Citizenship Education Forum “Let’s Act Now!” in Strasbourg in May 2025.

Chapter 2

The need for a common framework

Why the DCE Planner was created

The DCE Planner grew out of a clear recognition among Council of Europe member states that educators needed some kind of practical tool to help them integrate DCE into their teaching practice.

The need for a common framework

Research across Council of Europe member states, undertaken by the Digital Citizenship Education Expert Working Group, highlighted a lack of consistency in the teaching of DCE in schools. Students in some schools might be provided with excellent opportunities for learning while others missed out entirely. The quality of teaching and learning depended to a large extent on which country a student lived in, where they went to school or even level of teacher expertise.

This lack of consistency was associated with a number of factors:

- ▶ inconsistent understanding of what digital citizenship actually means;
- ▶ lack of co-ordination in how DCE is implemented;
- ▶ bias in favour of teaching about safety at the expense of broader citizenship concepts;
- ▶ awareness among key stakeholders about the importance of digital citizenship;
- ▶ shortage of teaching resources and professional guidance.

In considering these factors, it became clear to the authors that some form of common framework was needed to bring coherence to digital citizenship teaching – a shared understanding of what DCE is and how it can be implemented in schools:

Although digital citizenship education is now recognised as part of the school curriculum in many countries, there is a lack of consensus about its goals, how it should be taught, and how it relates to other curriculum areas. (Huddleston and Styslavska-Doliwa 2024)

The benefits of a common framework

A common framework would have many benefits for DCE, including helping to:

- ▶ improve consistency in teaching and learning in and between schools;
- ▶ ensure key concepts, skills and topics are systematically covered;

- ▶ promote collaboration, including between educators, policy makers and digital platforms;
- ▶ create opportunities for exchanging best practices and co-developing resources;
- ▶ build coherence and continuity across different grades and phases of education;
- ▶ develop assessment tools and methods;
- ▶ inform professional development;
- ▶ support the development of instructional materials;
- ▶ provide benchmarks for quality education.

A common framework like this would benefit a range of stakeholders, not just teachers and school leaders. It would help teacher trainers by ensuring consistency in how educators understand and teach digital citizenship, inspectors by providing a standardised framework for evaluating schools, administrators by fostering collaboration across stakeholders, resource developers by making it easier to create resources that are relevant to schools, and parents and carers by providing clear direction on how they can support their children's learning:

If there was a common framework, it would be easier to promote digital citizenship education in every level of education. (Huddleston and Styslavska-Doliwa 2024)

The challenges

At the same time, it was recognised that there would be a number of challenges facing the development of a resource of this kind.

Diversity of curriculum planning and delivery

The structure and delivery of school curricula across Europe vary significantly due to differences in national education policies, cultural priorities and historical influences. For example, some countries emphasise a centralised curriculum with standardised learning objectives, while others adopt more flexible, decentralised models that allow for regional adaptations. A common framework for DCE would need to be able to take all these differences in account.

Differences within schools

Schools vary considerably in terms of where they currently stand in relation to DCE. A common framework would need to be as relevant to a school just coming to terms with the possibility of DCE as one that is well on the way to having an established programme. Similarly, teachers vary greatly in relation to their interests and expertise in this field. A common framework would need to have the flexibility to be as relevant to a teacher lacking confidence as one already experienced in digital citizenship.

Accessibility

Working conditions in schools mean that unless educational resources are easy to implement they are unlikely to be effective. Complicated or rigid materials can create barriers, leading to inconsistent use or outright abandonment by teachers who lack the time or training to navigate them. Where resources require minimal preparation time and are less dependent on specialised skills, educators are more likely to take them up and use them effectively. A common framework would need to be easy to access and implement by any practitioner, regardless of special expertise or familiarity with technology.

Sustainability

One of the risks of developing an educational resource related to technology is that technology evolves rapidly and soon becomes out of date. Issues that are headline news for a while can be quickly forgotten as technology changes. A common framework would need to be designed in such a way that it does not lose any of its usefulness as technology develops.

Meeting the challenges

The authors in partnership with member state representatives from the Digital Citizenship Education Promoters Network drew up a set of key design principles for creating a curriculum framework to support digital citizenship teaching:

- ▶ enabling the framework to be capable of implementation across member states; member states themselves should be equal partners in its creation, in a collective process overseen and facilitated by the Council of Europe Education Department;
- ▶ giving the tool the flexibility to meet local needs and conditions within schools; it should be based on examples of learning outcomes that practitioners can select from and adapt, allowing them to create bespoke learning activities, lessons or units of work;
- ▶ making the tool accessible and easy to implement; learning outcomes should be specific, age-related and expressed in simple “can do” language that makes them straightforward to assess and capable of being written directly into teachers’ lesson plans;
- ▶ making the tool sustainable; learning outcomes should be geared towards the development of enduring citizenship skills – like thinking critically, acting ethically, staying safe and participating actively – rather than technological knowledge and skills that are more likely to date.

Naming the new tool

It was agreed that the new tool would be known as the *Digital Citizenship Education Planner*, the *DCE Planner*. The term “planner” was chosen on account of the different kinds of educational planning for which it could be used – not just planning lessons and activities in school but also for professional development, quality assurance, curriculum planning and resource development.

Chapter 3

The DCE Planner design

Values and principles

What makes the DCE Planner distinctive

In recent years a number of strategic frameworks relating to DCE have been developed. Examples include:

- ▶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Global Citizenship Education in a Digital World;
- ▶ European Commission: Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp 2.2);
- ▶ UK Council for Internet Safety: Education for a Connected World;
- ▶ Common Sense Media: Common Sense Digital Citizenship Curriculum;
- ▶ Google: Be Internet Awesome;
- ▶ European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education: Holistic Education, Resilience and Media Maturity in Educational Settings (HERMMES).

The DCE Planner shares several key elements with these frameworks: an emphasis on human rights and democratic participation (UNESCO); technology as an aid to citizen engagement (DigComp); safeguarding and online safety (UK Council for Internet Safety); critical thinking (Be Internet Awesome); a focus on age-appropriate learning (HERMMES); and a high level of flexibility (Common Sense Media).

However, while the DCE Planner has various elements in common with these and other frameworks, it is not intended simply to duplicate what already exists. The DCE Planner has a unique format and number of distinctive features that distinguish it from other initiatives. It should be seen as complementing, therefore, rather than replacing other strategic resources in the field.

Core values of the Council of Europe

The first distinguishing feature of the DCE Planner is its dependence on the core values of the Council of Europe: democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The DCE Planner exists to promote, and has been shaped by, these values. On the one hand, the tool itself was designed to help schools implement the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC). Its learning outcomes translate the abstract competences of the RFCDC into concrete opportunities for learning. The relationship between DCE and the competences for democratic culture is set out in the document "Contextualising competences for democratic culture in digital citizenship education: a guidance document" (Huddleston, O'Neill and Styslavská-Doliwa 2024). On the other hand, it puts explicit emphasis on issues like accessibility,

equality and citizen empowerment, thus reinforcing the Council of Europe's broader mission to create an inclusive, rights-based society.

International co-operation

A second key feature of the DCE Planner is that it is the product of international co-operation. Educators, experts and learners from member states were involved at every stage in its creation – from initial conceptualisation to the development of the learning outcomes and decisions relating to its format and design. This process of co-creation has been important in producing a tool that supports educators across Europe, regardless of where they live and work. It has also been important for arriving at an approach to DCE that all member states can feel they have a share in and own.

A comprehensive framework

Another significant feature of the DCE Planner is its comprehensive framework for addressing the diverse aspects of digital citizenship. Covering topics like digital rights, media literacy, ethical shopping, the impact of technology on mental and physical health, the ownership of digital media and problems of electronic waste, the structured approach provided by the 10 digital domains means the DCE Planner is able to offer a rounded approach to digital citizenship. This contrasts with initiatives that have a single emphasis – such as media literacy or online safety – or that define digital citizenship purely in terms of learners' own use of technology. The DCE Planner's coverage extends far beyond learners' personal interactions with technology. It fosters a broader exploration of how digital systems shape society and influence ethical considerations that prepares individuals not just to use technology responsibly but to actively contribute to a fairer and more just digital world.

Designed with classroom needs in mind

Perhaps what is most distinctive about the DCE Planner, however, is that it is designed with classroom needs in mind. In contrast to resources that offer general advice or guidelines on DCE, the DCE Planner provides practitioners with concrete examples. Its ready-to-use learning objectives require little or no interpretation and are capable of being integrated directly into practice with the minimum of additional work. They are clear and adaptable and slot seamlessly into classroom activities, allowing educators to focus more on student engagement. At the same time, these learning outcomes are able to act as models for the kind of participatory and co-operative forms of learning that enable students to experience democracy first hand – for example, through opportunities to agree on rules, debate public issues, create news content, solve community problems and contribute to school policies.

Outcomes, domains, themes and age groups

How the DCE Planner is constructed

The DCE Planner consists of a set of 320 examples of learning outcomes, arranged by age group and digital domain. The outcomes describe the types of skills and

knowledge learners can be expected to acquire by the end of a digital citizenship lesson, activity or project. They are designed to be simple and accessible, allowing educators to see at a glance what DCE is and involves, and how it can be implemented in practice.

Key features

The learning outcomes have a number of key features:

- ▶ they are specific and clear, stating clearly what the learner will achieve, and can be written directly as learning objectives in lesson plans or easily shared with colleagues or with learners;
- ▶ they are realistic, designed to match the learner’s level of social understanding and digital experience and available resources;
- ▶ they use actionable verbs like “describe”, “give examples” and “analyse”, making them easy to observe and assess;
- ▶ they are developmental, tailored to reflect the growing abilities and experience of learners and allowing them to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding over time;
- ▶ they cover a range of cognitive skills, from ones required for knowledge acquisition to those needed for critical thinking and practical action;
- ▶ they treat technological understanding not as an end in itself, but as a means to more effective citizenship.

The 10 digital domains

The learning outcomes are divided into 10 digital domains. Each domain covers a different area of digital citizenship learning. Active Participation, for example, deals with how citizens can use technology to make a difference to their communities and to society, while Access and Inclusion explores how the benefits of technology can be made available to all. Together, these 10 domains cover all the main areas dealt with in DCE. A complete list is provided in Box 1. More information about individual domains can be found in the *Digital citizenship education handbook* (Richardson and Milovidov 2022).

Box 1 – 10 Digital domains		
BEING ONLINE	WELL-BEING ONLINE	RIGHTS ONLINE
Access and Inclusion	Ethics and Empathy	Active Participation
Learning and Creativity	Health and Well-being	Rights and Responsibilities
Media and Information literacy	e-Presence and Communications	Privacy and Security
		Consumer Awareness

Eight themes

The digital domains are each divided into eight themes. The themes allow learners to revisit key topics in the domain at increasing levels of complexity at different ages – following the spiral-curriculum principle of Jerome Bruner – so that learning deepens over time. In the DCE Planner, however, the themes have a second function. They give learners the opportunity to develop the full spectrum of cognitive skills required in active citizenship – from skills of knowledge acquisition and retention to critical thinking and practical action. The themes in each domain contain learning outcomes that feature these different kinds of skills. For example, in the domain of Ethics and Empathy:

- ▶ knowledge acquisition, e.g. “Can identify different types of hurtful online behaviour”;
- ▶ critical thinking, e.g. “Can discuss the difference between cyberbullying and ‘harmless jokes’”;
- ▶ practical action, e.g. “Can explain what to do if they witness cyberbullying”.

Four age groups

The learning outcomes in the DCE Planner are divided among four parallel age groups: 5-7, 8-11, 12-15 and 16-18 years old. These broadly represent the four phases of mandatory education in European schools. Learning outcomes increase in complexity in each successive phase, reflecting learners developing cognitive abilities and their growing experience of technology. They are also designed to reflect successive stages in learners’ evolving understanding of society, with each stage having a characteristic focus – see Box 2. Arranging the outcomes sequentially like this enables learners to build knowledge and skills in a structured, meaningful way. It helps them deepen their learning over time and fosters engagement and motivation, with learners feeling a sense of achievement as they advance. The allocation of learning outcomes to specific age groups in the DCE Planner is not to be regarded as a strict rule, however. It is meant as a guide only, and users are free to select the outcomes they think appropriate for their learners, wherever they appear in the DCE Planner.

Box 2 – Learners’ evolving understanding of society

Stage 1: Immediate environment, family members, friends and authority figures;

Stage 2: School, other children and tangible groups;

Stage 3: Peers, communities, wider groups and social structures;

Stage 4: Society, social institutions and systems.

Learning outcomes for younger children

Where younger children are concerned, it is not always possible to identify a digitally related citizenship learning outcome. In the early years, children's use of technology tends to be highly individualistic, often confined to watching videos, listening to stories or playing games by themselves. However, even when clear learning outcomes are not obvious, digital citizenship can still be meaningful if approached through simple, relatable experiences and values that apply both online and offline. These may be thought of as the precursors of digital citizenship. Instead of complex goals, the outcomes are focused on building healthy habits and involving parents to support learning at home. For example, in the domain Rights and Responsibilities, instead of expecting young children to be able to take action on children's digital rights, the DCE Planner suggests a more general outcome: "Can speak out when they see something wrong, even if others stay quiet".

Chapter 4

A source of ideas and inspiration

Using the DCE Planner

Though primarily designed to support lesson planning in schools, the DCE Planner has a range of potential uses, making it relevant both inside and outside schools. Among other things, it can be used as:

- ▶ a companion to explain the nature of DCE;
- ▶ a map of the essential components of digital citizenship;
- ▶ a guide to lesson and curriculum planning;
- ▶ a compendium of practical ideas;
- ▶ a model of practice for different age groups;
- ▶ a checklist for monitoring and evaluating standards.

Therefore, the DCE Planner is not only useful for teachers and school leaders, but also for teacher trainers, school inspectors and advisers, and education administrators. Older students can look to the DCE Planner for ideas for school projects, parents and carers can support their children's learning, and youth workers can foster meaningful conversations with young people about their digital lives and habits. Further examples of what different stakeholders can use the DCE Planner for are listed below.

Teachers

- ▶ learning about digital citizenship
- ▶ implementing official curricula
- ▶ making links with school subjects
- ▶ planning lessons, activities and projects
- ▶ fostering classroom discussion
- ▶ reflecting on their own practice
- ▶ assessing learning
- ▶ collaborating with colleagues

School leaders

- ▶ learning about digital citizenship
- ▶ reflecting on school practice
- ▶ implementing national curricula and policies
- ▶ addressing individual school challenges
- ▶ monitoring and evaluating school standards
- ▶ setting school priorities
- ▶ developing school curricula
- ▶ encouraging student participation
- ▶ collaborating with parents

Teacher trainers

- ▶ planning and implementing professional development
- ▶ learning about digital citizenship

Inspectors and advisers

- ▶ learning about digital citizenship
- ▶ monitoring and evaluating school standards
- ▶ advising on school practice and priorities

Education administrators

- ▶ learning about digital citizenship
- ▶ making links with school subjects
- ▶ developing national curricula
- ▶ monitoring and evaluating national standards
- ▶ setting national priorities
- ▶ formulating national policy
- ▶ public awareness raising

Getting started

There are some simple steps that anyone can take when first using the DCE Planner, regardless of what they are using it for.

Look at the big picture

Familiarise yourself with what the DCE Planner contains and how it is constructed. Get an idea of what is in the domains and what they are aiming at. Focus on the outcomes for the group or groups in which you are interested – remembering that these are only examples and that some of the outcomes for adjacent groups may be more important for your learners.

Reflect on practice

Use the outcomes in the DCE Planner as a checklist to identify strengths and weaknesses in current provision – whether in school, teacher training, educational resources or even official curricula.

Identify priorities

Use the outcomes in the DCE Planner as a guide to deciding on the priorities for future development – whether it be learning activities, arrangements for curriculum delivery, a protocol for assessment or a revision to the curriculum.

Select appropriate learning outcomes

Focus on the outcome or outcomes relevant to your priorities. Consider the actions that will need to be taken to make these priorities a reality.

Adapt to meet specific needs

Ensure the chosen outcomes meet your specific purpose, by linking them to other objectives, revising the wording or using them with an age group different from the one specified in the DCE Planner.

A whole-school approach

The DCE Planner is particularly suited to a whole-school approach because it offers an easy-to-follow overview of DCE that is easily understood by any school stakeholder. It is relevant to all stakeholders, not restricted to any one subject or discipline, and has application both in and outside the classroom. By integrating various school operations – like curriculum planning, assessment and quality assurance – the DCE Planner ensures that all staff members can work cohesively towards common goals.

Practical scenarios

Using the DCE Planner in school

A young teacher is expected to include DCE as one of several transversal themes in their teaching. Knowing nothing about the area, they read through the learning outcomes to get an idea of what DCE involves and what they can do with the class.

A special needs teacher is looking for ideas for DCE for 15 year olds who are experiencing difficulty learning. They use some of the learning outcomes for the 8-11 age group to create some appropriate activities for the class.

The lead teacher for civic education has to implement new national guidelines for DCE. The guidelines are clear, but very general. They select the learning outcomes that most closely relate to the new guidelines and use them to create some learning activities that they and their colleagues can implement.

A secondary school tests each new intake of students on arrival to establish their level of prior learning in key areas. They use the DCE Planner outcomes to formulate a few appropriate questions for DCE.

A school leader is doing an audit of DCE in their school. They convert the learning outcomes for the school's age range into a simple survey questionnaire for teaching staff. They use the results to evaluate the school's current strengths and weaknesses and initiate a discussion on priorities for the next academic year.

A language teacher is looking for real-life scenarios to make language learning more stimulating. Using the learning outcomes in the DCE Planner, they identify some everyday situations relating to technology and young people.

Members of the student council are researching learners' experience of DCE in their school. Using the 10 domains as a prompt, they ask peers what they are currently being taught, how helpful they think it is and what they would like to see improved.

The senior leadership team is devising a school strategy for digital inclusion. It uses the learning outcomes in the Access and Inclusion domain of the DCE Planner to brainstorm items for the strategy.

A school leader is giving a presentation to parents and carers on the school's strategy for digital technology. They create a simple infographic using some of the DCE Planner learning outcomes to explain what DCE is.

A primary school teacher feels they would like to do more to address the social dimension of technology with the students. They look through the DCE Planner learner outcomes for their students' age group and find some examples they can integrate into the lessons.

A civic education teacher wishes to update the teaching programme by integrating elements of DCE. They identify parallels between the learning outcomes in the DCE Planner and the existing programme – for example, between bullying and cyberbullying, offline and online consumer rights, or conventional and digital forms of active citizenship.

A group of teachers is using a new teaching resource for DCE in their school. The activities look interesting and motivating for students, but the expected outcomes are mainly long term and attitudinal. They use the DCE Planner to identify learning objectives they can write directly into their lesson plans, implement and assess more easily.

A senior teacher with responsibility for assessment is asked to include DCE in the school's assessment system. Using the learning outcomes that most closely match the school's curriculum for DCE, they establish some criteria for teacher assessment for different year groups.

A primary school leader chooses DCE as one of the curriculum priorities for next year. They share the learning outcomes for the 5-7 and 8-11 age groups with the teaching staff, who use the outcomes to agree what they will do with each of their year groups.

Using the DCE Planner in teacher training

A teacher trainer is running a short training session on DCE. They give the participants a list of 10 domains with their definitions, along with some random learning outcomes. They ask participants to match outcomes to domains, as a stimulus for a discussion on the aims and purposes of DCE.

A teacher trainer is explaining the different kinds of competences that go with democratic citizenship. They give the participants a selection of learning outcomes from the DCE Planner and ask them to allocate these to different types of competence – knowledge, critical thinking and practical action.

A teacher trainer is leading a seminar for primary teachers on how to integrate elements of digital citizenship into their lessons. They give the teachers some good practice examples from different subjects and ask them to match these activities to learning outcomes in the DCE Planner, before getting them to create their own learning activities.

Using the DCE Planner in inspection and quality assurance

A school inspector shares examples of learning outcomes from the DCE Planner in advising and giving practical encouragement to schools on DCE.

Inspectors and advisers with responsibility for monitoring and advising on DCE use the DCE Planner's domains and learning outcomes to create an inspection protocol, ensuring consistency in inspection and improving collaboration and transparency between inspection teams.

Education administrators use the DCE Planner to develop key quality indicators for DCE, enabling them to identify national and local trends and potential areas for improvement.

Using the DCE Planner in curriculum design

A curriculum developer is working on an interdisciplinary initiative that integrates democratic education into subjects like history, literature and social studies. They allocate the learning outcomes in the DCE Planner evenly between the subjects on the basis of their relevance, revising the language of the outcomes where necessary to refer explicitly to the given subject.

Curriculum developers are integrating a new element of digital citizenship into the national curriculum for primary schools. They examine how progression is conceived between the 5-7 and 8-11 phases in the DCE Planner as a basis for building progression in the national curriculum.

Curriculum developers are reviewing the role of DCE in the national curriculum. They use the 10 domains and the topics featured in the DCE Planner's learning outcomes to help them identify the key components of DCE.

Using the DCE Planner in non-formal education

A group of young people is organising a peer education project on technology and health. It selects some of the learning outcomes from the Health and Well-being domain in the DCE Planner to structure its project.

A youth leader would like to set up a youth-led community project on an aspect of technology. They print out some ideas from the learning outcomes in the DCE Planner for young people to discuss and choose from.

A youth worker is encouraging young people to think about the social implications of their technology use. They put together a selection of issues in learning outcomes in the DCE Planner to stimulate a discussion on the topic.

Using the DCE Planner in resource development

A resource developer wants to create a new course on digital rights and responsibilities for schools. They base the course around a selection of learning outcomes from the Rights and Responsibilities domain in the DCE Planner.

A community organisation is creating an outreach programme to support parents and caregivers in guiding their children's digital behaviour. The team uses the DCE Planner to identify relevant outcomes that can be translated into tips, discussion prompts and workshop materials for the programme.

A non-governmental organisation is developing an online training course for teachers on DCE. It uses the learning outcomes in the DCE Planner as a source of ideas for teacher learning objectives to build into the course.

Conclusion

With the development of the DCE Planner, the Council of Europe has created a common framework for teaching, learning and assessing DCE that can be applied in all 46 of its member states and across all phases of education from primary through to upper secondary. The DCE Planner promotes a shared vision and goals for DCE that is flexible enough to be tailored to the needs of schools in different countries, while remaining true to the core values and principles of the Council of Europe and its mission for education. Compiled by over 60 educators, experts and learners from 30 member states, the DCE Planner is testament to the value of multi-partnership work and the dedication of education professionals across Europe.

DCE Planner learning outcomes

Access and Inclusion

Students learn how to make the benefits of technology accessible to all

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
The benefits of technology	1.1.1 Can give examples of ways technology helps people to connect, share and learn together	1.2.1 Can give examples of ways technology helps them to share ideas and work together	1.3.1 Can give examples of ways technology improves life in their local community	1.4.1 Can give examples of ways technology creates opportunities for citizens to participate in decision making
Widening opportunities	1.1.2 Can include their peers in simple collaborative activities	1.2.2 Can describe how technology can bring classmates together to support each other	1.3.2 Can describe how technology helps people to access public services	1.4.2 Can describe how technology helps to improve citizens' educational, economic and healthcare opportunities
Assistive technology	1.1.3 Can identify disabilities that make it difficult for children to use digital devices	1.2.3 Can give examples of tools designed to help people with disabilities access the digital environment	1.3.3 Can assess the strengths and weaknesses of a website, app or other digital product from the perspective of accessibility	1.4.3 Can incorporate accessibility principles in a digital assignment or project
Gender equality	1.1.4 Can recognise that boys and girls and men and women are equally good at using technology	1.2.4 Can agree on some classroom rules for ensuring that boys and girls get the same access to technology for learning	1.3.4 Can explore reasons why girls and women may sometimes be excluded from the digital environment	1.4.4 Can research an issue of gender equality in the design, development or application of technology

Access and Inclusion

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Linguistic and cultural inclusion	1.1.5 Can act out ways of communicating with someone who doesn't speak their language	1.2.5 Can incorporate elements of the language and way of life of another culture into a story or activity involving technology	1.3.5 Can assess the strengths and weaknesses of an online platform from the perspective of another ethnic group or culture	1.4.5 Can draw up inclusive design principles for a digital product, to reflect European linguistic and cultural diversity
Digital exclusion	1.1.6 Can recognise that not all children in the world have access to technology	1.2.6 Can discuss some of the consequences of not having access to technology or the internet	1.3.6 Can identify social, economic and geographical barriers limiting digital access	1.4.6 Can assess the impact of digital exclusion on social and economic opportunities
Policy on digital access	1.1.7 Can make up their own rules for sharing toys, taking turns in games or managing screen time	1.2.7 Can describe how rules and decisions by adults can help to make technology more available to people	1.3.7 Can consider what the minimum access to technology should be in today's society	1.4.7 Can discuss what they think society should do about digital exclusion
Action to promote inclusion	1.1.8 Can describe ways to make others feel included and valued	1.2.8 Can suggest classroom rules to ensure all students have access to the technology they need for their schoolwork	1.3.8 Can design community guidelines for an online platform that promotes inclusion	1.4.8 Can evaluate the work of an organisation or initiative that promotes digital inclusion

Learning and Creativity

Students learn how technology helps them to learn and use their creativity to help others

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Learning with technology	2.1.1 Can talk about things they learn from using technology	2.2.1 Can describe the sorts of technology they use at school and how these help them to learn	2.3.1 Can assess the benefits of learning in a virtual classroom	2.4.1 Can explore ways in which AI-powered tools help to improve learning
Creating with a purpose	2.1.2 Can create a simple piece of digital content on a social theme	2.2.2 Can create a digital story or animation about an issue in their school or neighbourhood	2.3.2 Can produce a podcast or video expressing their views on an issue affecting young people	2.4.2 Can set up an online campaign or challenge to change public opinion on an issue
Creating together	2.1.3 Can share toys, materials and ideas with each other and take turns during activities	2.2.3 Can use technology to share and build on each others' ideas in a joint activity or project	2.3.3 Can use technology to facilitate a group discussion or debate	2.4.3 Can use technology to bring together a group of like-minded peers to work on an online project
Creating ethically	2.1.4 Can recognise the importance of asking permission before using someone else's things	2.2.4 Can describe how to credit people whose ideas, words or images they use online	2.3.4 Can describe ways of checking facts and figures before sharing them online	2.4.4 Can outline the ethical and academic implications of plagiarism

Learning and Creativity

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Copyright	2.1.5 Can recognise that everything they see or hear online has been made by someone	2.2.5 Can explain how copyright law protects their digital work	2.3.5 Can give examples of digital material protected by copyright and explain the penalties for using them without permission	2.4.5 Can identify copyright issues surrounding the use of AI for content creation
Open source	2.1.6 Can create things for others to use and enjoy	2.2.6 Can describe where to find free-to-use materials online	2.3.6 Can explain what open-source materials are and how they are useful for creative and educational projects	2.4.6 Can describe ways of participating in an open-source community
Cultural understanding	2.1.7 Can identify music, clothing or other traditions from around the world in stories and videos they enjoy	2.2.7 Can connect with children in other schools, locally or globally, using digital technology	2.3.7 Can identify principles for creating content that respects different cultures and traditions	2.4.7 Can identify ways to involve people from different cultures and traditions in an online group or open-source project
Responsible innovation	2.1.8 Can describe ways of spreading kindness	2.2.8 Can suggest ways of using technology to care for people or other creatures	2.3.8 Can suggest ways of using technology to solve a school or community problem	2.4.8 Can suggest ways of using technology to solve a social or environmental problem

Media and Information Literacy

Students learn how to assess the reliability of online news and information

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Keeping informed	3.1.1 Can recognise “news” as things that are happening now somewhere in the world	3.2.1 Can use child-friendly apps and websites to analyse stories about people and events in the news 3.2.2 Can explain what “click-bait” is and how it influences the news that people read	3.3.1 Can assess the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of accessing news online 3.3.2 Can explain what “filter bubbles” are and how they influence the way people perceive the world	3.4.1 Can reflect on how their online behaviour dictates the news they get and how they might break free from this 3.4.2 Can examine the influence of media ownership on the content of online news
Who or what is behind the news	3.1.2 Can retell a fairy tale or event from a children’s book or video from the perspective of different characters			
Being critical	3.1.3 Can sort simple examples of digital content into “real” and “pretend” or “made up”	3.2.3 Can distinguish between facts and opinions in different types of online news	3.3.3 Can assess the reliability of information provided by different bloggers	3.4.3 Can explain what “conspiracy theories” are and the effects they have on society
Propaganda and manipulation	3.1.4 Can analyse a simple story or visual with obvious inconsistencies and spot what does not make sense	3.2.4 Can recognise some of the deceptive tactics used to make people believe online news that isn’t true	3.3.4 Can recognise propaganda techniques and other forms of manipulation used on the internet to influence public opinion	3.4.4 Can assess the impact of online disinformation on an electoral campaign

Media and Information Literacy

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Why truth matters	3.1.5 Can describe how telling lies leads to misunderstandings and hurt feelings	3.2.5 Can identify ways in which fabricated information online harms children	3.3.5 Can identify ways in which fabricated information distorts people's understanding of important issues and influences their decisions	3.4.5 Can identify ways in which fabricated information erodes trust in public institutions and the democratic process
Finding news you can trust	3.1.6 Can explain why it is important to check with a trusted adult if they spot something new, strange or exciting	3.2.6 Can recognise the clues that suggest a news story is likely to be fake	3.3.6 Can assess the reliability of an online news story using a variety of verification techniques	3.4.6 Can assess the credibility of different digital media providers using the indicators of responsible journalism
Sharing information responsibly	3.1.7 Can recognise the importance of checking with a trusted adult if they are unsure whether something is okay to share	3.2.7 Can agree on some simple "dos and don'ts" for sharing news and information online responsibly	3.3.7 Can identify ways in which the things they share online may be interpreted differently by other people	3.4.7 Can review legislation designed to combat fabricated information online and consider whether it needs strengthening
Creating your own news content	3.1.8 Can share some news with others – about family, friends or something in their immediate environment	3.2.8 Can create a news report about their school for the school newsletter or website	3.3.8 Can create a news report about young people for a video-sharing or social media platform	3.4.8 Can research a news story trending online and publish their own version

Ethics and Empathy

Students learn how their online behaviour affects other people

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
How people behave online	4.1.1 Can talk about how they like to use technology, such as whether they like to be on their own or play with friends	4.2.1 Can identify ways in which talking to someone online is different from speaking face to face	4.3.1 Can consider why people's behaviour online is often different from the way they are offline	4.4.1 Can describe how the internet both enhances and erodes human qualities like empathy and respect for others
Thinking about others	4.1.2 Can recognise that they should treat people online with kindness and respect just like anybody else	4.2.2 Can explain what "netiquette" is and why it is important	4.3.2 Can identify ways of showing empathy online	4.4.2 Can describe online situations where other people may need their support
Fostering inclusion	4.1.3 Can suggest ways of making sure others don't feel left out	4.2.3 Can suggest practical things they can do to make people feel welcome and included online	4.3.3 Can identify the dangers of social media cliques and explore ways of making their own social media presence more inclusive	4.4.3 Can identify voices that tend to be missing from social media and consider what may be done to include them
Hurtful behaviour	4.1.4 Can recognise that people can be unkind online	4.2.4 Can identify different types of hurtful online behaviour	4.3.4 Can describe different forms of online harassment	4.4.4 Can discuss how they think society should respond to the problem of online abuse

Ethics and Empathy

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Cyberbullying	4.1.5 Can recognise that being mean to someone on purpose, over and over again, is bullying	4.2.5 Can explain what cyberbullying is	4.3.5 Can explain the personal and legal consequences of cyberbullying	4.4.5 Can consider the extent to which social media is to blame for online bullying
What bullying does to someone	4.1.6 Can describe how someone who is being bullied is likely to feel	4.2.6 Can discuss the difference between cyberbullying and "harmless jokes"	4.3.6 Can discuss the impact of online bullying on relations in the classroom and how to address this	4.4.6 Can examine ways in which online abuse and harassment affects public debate and the democratic process
Protecting yourself	4.1.7 Can recognise the importance of reporting upsetting or confusing conversations to a trusted adult	4.2.7 Can explain what to do if they are bullied online	4.3.7 Can describe precautions they can take to protect themselves from online abuse	4.4.7 Can explain how to document and report incidents of online harassment and abuse
Taking action to help others	4.1.8 Can suggest simple activities for promoting kindness in school, like a "buddy bench" or "thank you wall"	4.2.8 Can explain what to do if they witness cyberbullying	4.3.8 Can suggest ways in which students can contribute to school policies on digital safeguarding	4.4.8 Can evaluate a national initiative designed to address cyberbullying

Health and Well-being

Students learn how technology affects their mental and physical health and well-being

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
General health benefits	5.1.1 Can recognise ways in which technology helps their family to stay healthy	5.2.1 Can describe ways in which technology helps them make friends and keep in touch with their family	5.3.1 Can describe ways in which technology helps them to express their identity and build new relationships	5.4.1 Can describe ways in which technology helps marginalised and vulnerable groups in society improve their well-being
Digital health tools	5.1.2 Can use apps, websites or videos that promote children's health	5.2.2 Can give examples of health and fitness apps appropriate for their age group	5.3.2 Can give examples of apps, websites or videos that help young people with their mental well-being	5.4.2 Can assess the pros and cons of using the internet for health information and medical advice
Overuse and addiction	5.1.3 Can talk about the dangers of too much screen time	5.2.3 Can describe the physical consequences of excessive use of technology	5.3.3 Can recognise signs of smartphone addiction	5.4.3 Can identify the dangers of relying on the internet as a means of forming relationships
Unhealthy content	5.1.4 Can explain what to do if digital content makes them feel uncomfortable	5.2.4 Can identify dangers associated with online challenges and consider what attracts children to these activities	5.3.4 Can identify the dangers of unrealistic body images and lifestyles promoted by influencers	5.4.4 Can consider how society should respond to platforms promoting destructive behaviours like eating disorders and self-harm

Health and Well-being

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Gaming and health	5.1.5 Can identify safe versus risky situations in video games	5.2.5 Can identify the features of video games that make users want to keep on playing	5.3.5 Can describe the symptoms of video game disorder	5.4.5 Can debate the ethics of including gambling-like systems of randomised rewards in video games, like loot boxes
Getting a healthy balance	5.1.6 Can explain the importance of taking regular breaks from screen activities	5.2.6 Can agree on some basic rules for staying healthy when using technology	5.3.6 Can identify precautions young people can take to avoid technology disorders	5.4.6 Can recognise the signs of problematic technology use
A healthier digital culture	5.1.7 Can give examples of fun activities that don't involve screen time	5.2.7 Can compare the benefits of playing video games with playing face-to-face games, reading a book or doing a sport	5.3.7 Can use technology to track and analyse their own digital habits	5.4.7 Can review legislation on the impact of technology on health and well-being and consider whether it needs strengthening
Action on digital health	5.1.8 Can work together to create a simple plan for practising healthy digital habits	5.2.8 Can contribute to a class activity promoting healthy digital habits	5.3.8 Can design an initiative to raise awareness of the negative effects of digitally altered body images	5.4.8 Can carry out a local investigation into the impact of technology on people's lifestyle choices

e-Presence and Communications

Students learn how to create and maintain a healthy digital presence

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
What is in your digital footprint	6.1.1 Can explain why they should be careful about what they say and who they say it to	6.2.1 Can explain what their digital footprint is and the sorts of things that are likely to be in it	6.3.1 Can check their own digital footprint and reflect on what it contains	6.4.1 Can analyse terms and conditions contracts to find the data that companies are authorised to collect
How your footprint is created	6.1.2 Can recognise that whenever they use the internet it remembers information about them	6.2.2 Can explain how their digital footprint is created	6.3.2 Can describe the different ways in which they influence their own digital footprint	6.4.2 Can reflect on their personal search history and online behaviour and what it says about them
Getting a reputation	6.1.3 Can recognise that how they behave affects what people think about them	6.2.3 Can identify types of online behaviour likely to damage their reputation	6.3.3 Can consider why people often try to present an idealised image of themselves online	6.4.3 Can consider how pressure to maintain a perfect online presence affects individuals and society in general
Virtual characters and avatars	6.1.4 Can say why they like the avatars or virtual characters they choose to represent themselves	6.2.4 Can explain how their choice of avatars and virtual characters tells other people about their personality and interests	6.3.4 Can explain how their choice of usernames and profile pictures affects how other people see and react to them	6.4.4 Can discuss the extent to which people can be held morally responsible for the characters they inhabit in virtual reality

e-Presence and Communications

THEMES	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
How others affect your reputation	6.1.5 Can describe how mean things that people say spread	6.2.5 Can identify ways in which their reputation can be affected by things their friends do or say about them online	6.3.5 Can consider ways in which their online reputation can be damaged by people they don't even know	6.4.5 Can explore ways of trying to protect their online reputation from damage by others
Why your footprint matters	6.1.6 Can recognise that everything they do online is there for all to see permanently	6.2.6 Can identify ways in which sharing personal information online can have an impact on their safety	6.3.6 Can analyse ways in which their digital footprint can affect friendships and relationships with others	6.4.6 Can analyse ways in which their digital footprint can affect their future opportunities
The right to control your data	6.1.7 Can recognise they can say "no" if a game or website asks them for information they don't want to share	6.2.7 Can explain how to update basic online information about themselves, such as usernames and profile pictures	6.3.7 Can give examples of situations where they have the right to ask a platform to remove content they have posted	6.4.7 Can explain the "right to be forgotten" and give examples of online situations where it can be applied
Managing your online presence	6.1.8 Can describe the personal information they should always keep safe and ask a trusted adult before sharing	6.2.8 Can agree on some simple rules for maintaining a good reputation online	6.3.8 Can assess strategies for limiting the personal information they make available on the internet	6.4.8 Can debate the pros and cons of online anonymity

Active Participation

Students learn about ways of using technology to make a difference to their communities and to society

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Finding out about society	7.1.1 Can find out about people in society who help us, like doctors, police officers and firefighters	7.2.1 Can use the internet to find information about organisations that help children	7.3.1 Can use the internet to find information about youth and civil society organisations and their activities	7.4.1 Can use the internet to find information about political parties and what they stand for
Researching issues and opinions	7.1.2 Can present two sides to a story or two opinions on a topic	7.2.2 Can use technology to collect and present classmates' opinions on an issue relating to school life	7.3.2 Can use technology to research and present a topical citizenship issue	7.4.2 Can use technology to research and present public opinion on a topic trending in the news
Participating in debate	7.1.3 Can participate in a simple picture-based discussion, taking turns to express their views	7.2.3 Can agree on simple rules for how to behave in an online discussion	7.3.3 Can assess the pros and cons of different opportunities for online discussions	7.4.3 Can discuss the difficulties of debating sensitive and controversial issues online
Advocacy and activism	7.1.4 Can create a simple visual message expressing their view on something they care about in their immediate environment	7.2.4 Can create some simple digital content on something in the world they would like to change	7.3.4 Can describe different digital advocacy tools and explain how to use them	7.4.4 Can assess the pros and cons of different forms of digital activism

Active Participation

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Lobbying	7.1.5 Can create a simple visual petition about something they would like to happen and collect some "signatures"	7.2.5 Can organise a digital petition to lobby their student council on a school issue	7.3.5 Can write an e-mail to an elected representative	7.4.5 Can research an example of online lobbying and assess its effectiveness
Organising and campaigning	7.1.6 Can create a simple piece of digital content, like a poster, to promote a school event	7.2.6 Can use technology to help organise a school-based event	7.3.6 Can describe how to set up an online social campaign or support group	7.4.6 Can plan a digitally based community action project designed to solve a local problem
Voting	7.1.7 Can participate in a simple online vote	7.2.7 Can use technology to help run a school election	7.3.7 Can suggest ways of using technology to increase student participation in school decision making	7.4.7 Can assess the pros and cons of electronic voting in elections
Local action	7.1.8 Can participate in a simple online classroom event, like a video conference	7.2.8 Can write a blog on a local issue for their school website or social media page	7.3.8 Can suggest ways of using technology to increase parental and community participation in school life	7.4.8 Can use technology to publicise local volunteering opportunities for young people

Rights and Responsibilities

Students learn about rights and responsibilities in the digital environment

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Understanding your rights	8.1.1 Can describe the devices they are allowed to use and not allowed to use	8.2.1 Can give examples of their digital rights, such as privacy, freedom of expression and protection from online harm	8.3.1 Can give examples of situations where children's digital rights are violated	8.4.1 Can debate whether internet access should be made a basic human right
Knowing your responsibilities	8.1.2 Can describe what they are allowed to do and not allowed to do with devices	8.2.2 Can agree on some simple "dos and don'ts" for messaging or playing with friends online	8.3.2 Can give examples of the rules that platforms and apps ask them to follow and consider why they are important	8.4.2 Can discuss the responsibilities of digital citizens and reflect on how well they live up to these responsibilities themselves
Defending your rights	8.1.3 Can say what they should do if someone treats them badly	8.2.3 Can describe actions they can take if they think their digital rights are violated	8.3.3 Can identify organisations and individuals they can turn to if their digital rights are violated	8.4.3 Can describe the steps platforms take to protect users' rights and consider whether they should be asked to do more
Protecting one another	8.1.4 Can speak up when they think someone is being treated badly	8.2.4 Can describe how to report harmful or inappropriate online content	8.3.4 Can describe ways of protecting each other's digital rights	8.4.4 Can identify situations where friends may be in trouble online and consider the best ways to help

Rights and Responsibilities

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Freedom of expression	8.1.5 Can express their feelings using simple tools like “emotion charts” or the “traffic light” technique	8.2.5 Can describe opportunities for expressing their opinions online	8.3.5 Can assess the pros and cons of online platforms that provide opportunities for young people’s voices to be heard	8.4.5 Can debate the limits to freedom of expression on the internet
Freedom from discrimination	8.1.6 Can give examples of fictional characters who are treated unfairly	8.2.6 Can discuss whether girls are given the same opportunities to use technology as boys	8.3.6 Can analyse online images for evidence of gender, racial or other forms of stereotyping	8.4.6 Can identify ways in which AI systems perpetuate existing forms of bias and discrimination
Hate speech	8.1.7 Can recognise the difference between saying things that make people feel welcome and making them feel unwelcome	8.2.7 Can recognise that people belong to different groups and that making mean comments about an entire group is wrong	8.3.7 Can recognise different forms of hate speech online and consider how they can be addressed	8.4.7 Can assess the social impact of hate speech, both historically and in today’s digital world
Taking action on rights	8.1.8 Can speak out when they see something wrong, even if others stay quiet	8.2.8 Can take part in a simple awareness-raising activity designed to promote children’s digital rights	8.3.8 Can design a video, blog or social media campaign advocating stronger protection for young people’s digital rights	8.4.8 Can lobby an elected representative on an issue of young people’s digital rights

Privacy and Security

Students learn how to protect themselves and others online

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Data collection	9.1.1 Can give examples of personal data – such as their name, age and what they like to do	9.2.1 Can describe simple ways of controlling how much of their personal data gets on the internet 9.2.2 Can identify common online scams	9.3.1 Can explain how companies use their personal data to personalise their internet use 9.3.2 Can describe ways in which social media platforms can threaten the privacy or security of users	9.4.1 Can examine the ethical implications of data collection, both for individuals and for society in general 9.4.2 Can describe the security threats that companies and organisations face
Threats to privacy and security	9.1.2 Can give examples of what is safe to share online and what may be harmful	9.2.3 Can agree on some simple rules for protecting each other's online privacy	9.3.3 Can assess their school's online policies or procedures from the perspective of student privacy 9.3.4 Can talk about the effects of watching or sharing extreme content, e.g. violence, war, crime, accidents or pornography	9.4.3 Can describe how the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) protects the online privacy of citizens 9.4.4 Can assess the effectiveness of strategies for protecting children from extreme content
Protecting online privacy	9.1.3 Can explain what to do if they want to take a picture of their classmates or to share information about them	9.2.4 Can explain what to do if they come across digital content that is frightening, upsetting or feels wrong		
Inappropriate content	9.1.4 Can name their "trusted adults" for when they need help with digital issues			

Privacy and Security

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Sharing explicit images	9.1.5 Can recognise when something feels uncomfortable online	9.2.5 Can explain the dangers of sharing photos or videos of themselves or others online	9.3.5 Can explain what to do if personal images are shared online without consent	9.4.5 Can examine the potential consequences of sharing personal images online, both socially and in terms of education and career
Online predators	9.1.6 Can recognise that some people online are not who they say they are	9.2.6 Can describe the tactics online predators use to help them win the trust of young people	9.3.6 Can explain what grooming is and how to recognise signs of grooming behaviour	9.4.6 Can discuss how they think society should respond to the problem of online predators
Keeping safe	9.1.7 Can identify examples of online situations as "safe" or "unsafe"	9.2.7 Can describe how to block and report someone behaving inappropriately online	9.3.7 Can describe how people can be radicalised online	9.4.7 Can review legislation on internet safety and consider whether it needs strengthening
Action for a safer internet	9.1.8 Can check with adults before using new equipment, applications or functions	9.2.8 Can agree on some simple rules for making friends online without putting themselves in danger	9.3.8 Can advise others on how to stay safe on social media and messaging platforms	9.4.8 Can assess the effectiveness of safety tools on platforms and apps

Consumer Awareness

Students learn about the social and environmental consequences of their choices as digital consumers

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Digital money	10.1.1 Can recognise that money is used to buy things even when they don't see physical coins or notes	10.2.1 Can recognise digital forms of payment, like debit and credit cards and digital wallets	10.3.1 Can describe the main features of digital payment platforms and how to use them responsibly	10.4.1 Can describe the main features of cryptocurrencies and the practical and ethical implications of investing in them
Consumer rights	10.1.2 Can recognise that everything they buy costs money, with some things costing more than others	10.2.2 Can describe the responsibilities that sellers and shopkeepers have to their customers	10.3.2 Can describe their rights if they have a problem with a product or service bought online	10.4.2 Can identify the consumer rights written into online purchase terms and conditions documents
Smart spending	10.1.3 Can recognise that they can't have anything they like, even with digital money	10.2.3 Can explain why "free-to-play" games may not always be as free as they seem	10.3.3 Can recognise fake promotions and misleading offers online	10.4.3 Can describe ways of verifying an influencer or celebrity endorsement
Responsible shopping	10.1.4 Can explain the difference between things they need (like food) and things they want (like toys)	10.2.4 Can draw up a simple digital budget they can use to monitor their spending	10.3.4 Can agree on some principles for responsible online shopping	10.4.4 Can compare the social and environmental impacts of shopping online with visiting a physical shop

Consumer Awareness

Themes	5-7	8-11	12-15	16-18
Understanding advertising	10.1.5 Can recognise ads in various formats, such as on TV or in or before cartoons or videos	10.2.5 Can recognise some of the persuasive techniques used in online ads	10.3.5 Can describe some of the strategies used in online marketing, such as tracking tools and influencer partnerships	10.4.5 Can examine the role of ads in platforms that allow users access to free content and services
Environmental consequences	10.1.6 Can recognise that devices like computers, tablets and phones rely on electricity and contribute to carbon emissions	10.2.6 Can chart the environmental impact of a digital device from resource extraction to disposal	10.3.6 Can assess the energy use of online habits like streaming, gaming and frequent downloads	10.4.6 Can examine the environmental costs of AI
Sustainability	10.1.7 Can describe how to take care of devices, like not dropping them, keeping them clean and switching them off when not in use	10.2.7 Can describe ways of recycling digital products to reduce electronic waste	10.3.7 Can investigate ways of using their personal devices more sustainably	10.4.7 Can evaluate environmental claims made by online platforms and companies
Ethical consumption	10.1.8 Can recognise that toys or games have to be paid for with money that their parents/carers work hard for	10.2.8 Can explain how their choice of apps, games and devices affects people round the world	10.3.8 Can examine the appeal of always getting the latest upgrade or gadget and the consequences of this for the environment	10.4.8 Can investigate the ethical credentials of an online platform in relation to product sourcing, inclusion and labour practices

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The Digital Citizenship Education Planner (DCE Planner) is an essential tool for empowering young citizens in the digital era. It aims at creating an agreed vision of competences citizens need for constructive, responsible and meaningful engagement with digital technologies.

The DCE Planner is a dynamic tool with the flexibility to meet the needs of a variety of educational professionals – teachers, school leaders, teacher educators, administrators, non-formal education actors and policy makers. Its accessible language and simple structure enable teachers to create meaningful learning experiences for students. School leaders can draw on it to decide school priorities. Teacher educators can use it to plan professional development, and administrators to monitor educational outcomes. Civil society actors can refer to the DCE Planner when designing training of trainers or other capacity development activities. Policy makers can look to it for direction on addressing current educational challenges arising from the way digitalisation is affecting society, human rights and democracy.

The DCE Planner is a multipurpose tool serving as a companion to explain digital citizenship and to map a variety of aspects of digital competences.

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