

WHAT TRUSTED ADULTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT: SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL-HEALTH

Social Media is often scrutinised as having a negative impact on children's mental health. Children and young people are now growing up in a technology dominated world, and social media plays a major role in their social lives. This balanced guide focuses on both the positive and negative impacts that social media can bring to young people and their mental health.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

EASY ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND HELP

There are many ways in which young people are getting help for their mental health, such as experiencing low mood, or suffering from anxiety, they may sometimes reach out to access support from others online. Sharing problems or issues with friends, peers and broader social networks can be met with positive reactions.

During challenging times. Where there are moderated communities which offer support and guidance, children can be provided with a great source of support.

SUSTAINING FRIENDSHIPS AND MAKING CONNECTIONS

There is evidence to suggest that strong adolescent friendships can be enhanced by social media interaction, allowing children to create stronger bonds with people.

Online platforms can help sustain friendships, especially when a distance exists between them.

A SENSE OF BELONGING

Support can be found in various places online; sometimes this is known as "finding your tribe". Online platforms and groups can provide a wonderful sense of belonging for children, especially when they can connect with peers with similar interests and circumstances which can sometimes be

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna [Name], who is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.

SELF-ESTEEM & BODY IMAGE

There are 10 million new photographs uploaded to Facebook alone every hour, providing an almost endless potential for young people to be drawn into appearance-based comparisons whilst online. No one is the same as how they portray themselves online as we tend to only show the best part of ourselves. The pressure to fit-in and conform is huge, which can become a driving force for children to

experience a feeling of inadequacy. As a result, it can lead to a feeling of low satisfaction with their own lives.

HARMFUL ADVICE

The online world provides the opportunity for anybody to upload and share photoshopped pictures, edited video, fake news and even unvetted advice. Children may stumble upon this, which could encourage them to make wrong decisions and not get the best out of their lives. As a teacher, you teach your children to be critical and use their judgement and be useful.

FAKE NEWS

ADDICTION AND COMPULSIVE CHECKING

Social media addiction is thought to affect around 5% of teenagers. The Office for National Statistics found that children who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media are three times as likely to support poor mental health. Furthermore, compulsive checking leads to (Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-10-20>).

Children who check their social media messages on social media, leading them to be three times as more likely to feel constantly tired at school than their classmates who don't use social media during the night.

CYBERBULLYING

One recent large-scale UK study showed that cyberbullying is one of the biggest challenges for young people. Other studies suggest that cyberbullying has a bigger effect on wellbeing and mental health than other types of bullying. 7 in 10 young people have experienced cyberbullying, and 1 in 10 experience cyberbullying on a high level. It is also more likely to be bullied on Facebook.

HELPFUL APPS:

- Hub of Hope - • Childline, 0800 1111 or visit <https://hubofhope.co.uk/> their website
- Mindshift
- Smiling Mind

SOURCES OF HELP:

- Bullying UK, 0808 8002222
- Young Minds Parents line 0808 802 5544

SOURCES: <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/social-media-young-people-and-mental-health>, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-10-20>, <https://www.rsph.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/62be270a-a55f-4719-ad668c2ec7a74c2a.pdf>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cutting-edgeleadership/201505/5-warning-signs-mental-health-risk>

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