
ECEY5009/C

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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY USE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELLBEING.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?



Social media is a platform that allows people to communicate, share content and connect with others from all around the world. While technology offers many benefits, excessive or unsafe use can affect wellbeing.



Social media and digital technology have become a part of everyday life for everyone however in this presentation we are going to explore the positives and negative impacts that technology use and consider the ways children and young people can be supported in developing healthy digital habits.

WHY IS TECHNOLOGY IMPORTANT?



Technology is a major part of children and young people's everyday lives. Many children and young people use online platforms to communicate, learn, express themselves and build relationships. However, increased use of technology can also raise concerns around mental health, self-esteem, sleep, online safety and emotional wellbeing.



By understanding the impact social media and technology can have on children it gives adults, families and professionals the knowledge and understanding to support children and young people developing a safe, balanced and positive relationships with technology.



This raises the question of how can we support children and young people to experience the benefits of technology while reducing the potential risks to their wellbeing?

The United Nations recognises that digital technology has transformed children's lives, creating opportunities for learning, communication and access to information. However, it also highlights the need to protect children's rights and wellbeing in digital spaces, "Technologies can help make our world fairer, more peaceful, and more just. Digital advances can support and accelerate achievement of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – from ending extreme poverty to reducing maternal and infant mortality, promoting sustainable farming and decent work, and achieving universal literacy. But technologies can also threaten privacy, erode security and fuel inequality. They have implications for human rights and human agency. Like generations before, we – governments, businesses and individuals – have a choice to make in how we harness and manage new technologies." (United Nations, 2020)

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

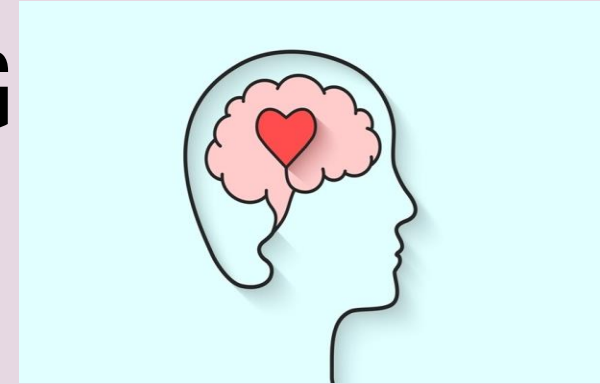


*Image from
Bulmershe School
"Our Vision for
Mental Health &
Wellbeing"
webpage (n.d.)*

Social media can influence how children and young people view themselves, interact with others and manage their emotions. Online experiences can have both positive and negative impacts on wellbeing (Glan Usk Primary School, 2026)

By adults supporting children and young people to develop emotional awareness, resilience and healthy online habits it can help promote positive digital experiences.

Organisations such as Save the children provide parents and teacher with resources that support children in developing emotional intelligence. By helping children recognise, understand and manage their emotional, these resources promote positive relationships, resilience and self awareness, supporting children to become confident and well-rounded individuals. **Save the Children**

(n.d.) states "The benefits of emotional intelligence extend far beyond the classroom. Children with strong emotional skills are better equipped to navigate challenges, build positive relationships, and maintain good mental health. They're more likely to feel confident, show empathy towards others, and develop resilience when facing difficulties."

Support and Challenges

Social media can support well-being by providing...

- Opportunities to connect with others
- Access to advice, information and support networks
- A space for creativity and self-expression

However, challenges can include....

- Social comparison and pressure to meet unrealistic expectations
- Impact on self-esteem and body image
- Cyberbullying and negative online interactions
- Increased feelings of anxiety, stress and loneliness

IMPACT ON SLEEP AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Technology plays an important role in children and young people's lives; However, the amount and timing of screen use can influence physical health and daily routines

High levels of screen use may also reduce opportunities for physical activity, outdoor play and face-to-face interactions. Encouraging a healthy balance between online and offline activity can support children and young people's overall wellbeing

Blue light from digital devices can have a significant impact on sleep patterns.

Sleep Foundation (n.d.) explains that... "While all light can interfere with our [circadian rhythms](#), the 24-hour internal rhythms that control processes like the sleep-wake cycle, the blue light emitted from electronic screens has the greatest impact on sleep" This research explains that exposure to blue light, especially in the evening, can make your brain feel more awake by reducing the production of melatonin the hormone that helps regulate sleep. This can make it harder to fall asleep and may affect the quality of sleep an individual gets. As sleep is detrimental to children's health, development and overall wellbeing it is vitally important that there screen time is limited especially at bedtime.



Impact poor sleep can have on children and young people

Using devices such as phones, tablets and gaming consoles close to bedtime can affect sleep by making it harder to relax and maintain healthy sleep patterns. Poor sleep can impact:

- Mood and emotional regulation
- Concentration and learning
- Behaviour and relationships with family, peers and teachers
- Energy levels and motivation

ONLINE SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDING

As children and young people spend more time online, it is important that they understand how to use technology safely and responsibly. Digital spaces can provide opportunities for communication and learning, but they can also expose young people to potential risks.

Potential concerns include

- Cyberbullying and harmful or upsetting content
- Risks around privacy and sharing information
- Online pressure to share images or participates in activities
- Contact with unknown individuals and online exploitation



Social media logos (n.d.)

"Adolescents today are more connected than ever, spending hours on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, which shape their social interactions, self-perception, and neuro-cognitive development. While these digital spaces provide opportunities for connection and self-expression, they also introduce significant challenges, including increased exposure to cyberbullying, unrealistic beauty standards, and compulsive content consumption." (Masri-Zada *et al.*, 2025). This meaning that safeguarding children online involves helping them to develop digital awareness, encouraging open conversations and ensuring they know where to seek support if they experience something that worries them.

The Online Safety Act 2023

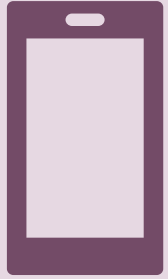
The Online Safety Act 2023 is UK legislation designed to improve online protection for children and young people. It places responsibility on online platforms to reduce harmful content and improve user safety

It aims to

- Protect children from harmful or inappropriate content
- Improve reporting and moderation systems
- Hold social media companies accountable for user safety
- Increase transparency around online risks

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/50>

SUPPORTING HEALTHY TECHNOLOGY USE



While social media and technology can have both positive and negative effects on children and young people, the key focus is promoting balanced and safe use.



(Medium, 2020)



Adults, schools and caregivers can support healthy digital habits by:

- Encouraging a balance between online and offline activities
- Promoting regular screen-free time, especially before bed
- Supporting open conversations about online experiences
- Teaching children how to manage emotions linked to online interactions
- Encouraging critical thinking about what they see online
- Promoting awareness of online safety and safeguarding guidance

THE ROLE OF ADULTS AND SCHOOLS



*Image of PSHE Association
school training page (n.d.)*

Help

Help children to understand emotions linked to online experiences

Teach

Teach resilience and self-esteem

Provide

Provide safe spaces to discuss worries

Work

Work with families to promote health habits (workshops)

CONCLUSION

Technology is an important part of modern life, and when use safely and in balance, it can support learning, creativity and connection. The role of adults is to help children and young people develop the skills and awareness needs to use technology in positive and healthy way. The government provide a range of resources and support avenues for parents and carers to access advice and guidance around children's online safety. These resources help adults feel more comfortable in supporting children to develop safe, responsible and positive digital behaviours. These resources will support you to talk to your child about a range of online safety issues, set up home filtering in a child-friendly way and set up age-appropriate parental controls on digital devices.

- Thinkuknow (NCA-CEOP)
- Childnet
- Parent Info
- NSPCC
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- SWGfL & Internet Matters
- BBFC
- Children's Commissioner (UK Government, 2020)



(Adobe, 2026)

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