



Safeguarding (from Childnet)

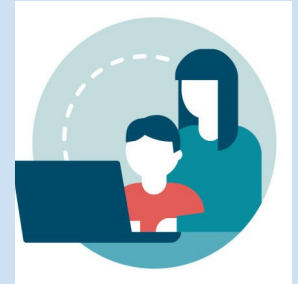


Young people are growing up in a world where technology has always been present for them, which can have a positive and negative impact on their lives

Digital wellbeing is about how the internet and technology can make us feel.

This includes recognising the impact being online can have on:

- Our emotions,
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Physical health and wellbeing.



Technology and the internet should be there to enhance and simplify our lives rather than be a cause of distraction, worry or upset.

However, not all online experiences are positive for young people, and this can have a negative impact on how they feel about themselves, their friendships and relationships and even how they see the wider world.

What impacts digital wellbeing?

Any negative online experience could impact a young person's digital wellbeing, but there are some issues that young people tell us are more likely to shape how going online makes them feel.

Digital drama

Falling outs and disagreements within friendships and relationships can often be seen as part of growing up but when these occur online they can become more complicated. The ambiguity of the internet and the fact that we cannot see someone's facial expression or hear their tone of voice can mean that messages and posts are misunderstood.

Desire to 'fit in'

This could be pressure to look a certain way, receive a large number of likes or follows or even pressure to watch and engage with content they may not be comfortable with. For example, on social media young people may encounter highly edited images which portray an aspirational look or lifestyle which are often referred to as 'goals'. The pressure to conform to these 'goals' could leave a young person feeling negatively about themselves and their achievements.

Distressing content

Unfortunately, not all online content is positive and some can have a worrying impact on the digital wellbeing of young people. This content could include upsetting news stories, adult websites like pornography or gambling, discriminatory content or messages or content which promotes self harm or eating disorders. Depending upon the nature of what they have seen sometimes it can be difficult for a young person to reach out for help in understanding what they have seen for fear of judgement or embarrassment.

Screen time and healthy balance

It is likely that young people may engage with technology and the internet for extended periods of time every day/ week. This extended use of the internet has been reported to leave young people more likely to worry about how long they are spending online and what they have seen. It has also been linked to a sense of loneliness amongst young people. When it comes to using technology and the internet it all comes down to quality and not quantity, meaning that we should focus on making our use purposeful, and strike a healthy balance between online and offline experiences.