

# Digital Device Danger

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Children and young people's poor mental health has been increasingly associated with excessive internet use.

The OECD has reported that reliance on digital technology has fuelled concerns from parents, teachers, governments and young people themselves that digital technology and social media are increasing feelings of anxiety and depression, disturbing sleep patterns, as well as cyber-bullying.



It is also argued, however, that a bit of internet use can have a small positive impact on children's well-being. As the rapid take-up of digital technology and social media by children continues, it is important to minimise any risks.

As part of our report, we conducted a survey of 25, year 9 students, and found out that most young people spend more than 4 hours on their digital devices per day, including weekdays. Year 9s have around 8 Apps, on average, downloaded on their device(s) with SnapChat and YouTube the most popular.

80% of respondents were not concerned about how their use of digital devices may affect their mental well-being. However, many of them were taking online precautions to reduce any negative impact on their mental health, including: switching off devices whilst asleep; only accepting friend requests from people they knew well and keeping any social media profiles private.

Interestingly enough, there were no reports of cyber-bullying, but over 50% reported feeling tired or that they were suffering from headaches and lacking in motivation. Schools are aware that it is important that children should be taught about responsible online participation and about risks and appropriate use and are covering areas in PSHE about online safety and mental well-being.