



Social media firms failing to protect young people, survey finds

Once again social media companies have been called out for not protecting young people's mental health. Almost half of young people have been threatened, intimidated or received abusive messages on social media, according to a survey commissioned by the Children's Society and YoungMinds. The report goes on to say that 8 out of 10 young people feel social media companies should do more to tackle cyberbullying. More worryingly the rate of anxiety and depression has risen in young people by 70% in the last 25 years. However young people have noted that using social media has given them better access to support emotionally through their friends online.

In the last few newsletters I have talked a lot about resilience, especially digital resilience. If you are concerned or have issues with young people around cyberbullying I would recommend the following:

- Remind young people to only allow people into their online world that they know.
- Set privacy settings to high
- Young people need to understand when they are at risk online and to know what to do, to keep themselves safe. What about linking in online safety to protective behaviours.
- Now more than ever we need to encourage and enhance young people's problem solving skills. Schools need to highlight this to parents as much as possible.
- **Cyberbullying is all about behaviour, so you need to challenge young people's behaviour online not technology.**

Digital free zones and take a break

In another recent article I was reading Chris Hemsworth (above) has admitted to smart phone anxiety, and highlighted how we are now getting to dependent on mobile phone devices. 1 in 8 of us sleep within a meter of our mobile phones and 1 in 5 young people have confessed to waking up in the middle of the night to check messages on social media. I recommend to parents that bedrooms should be digital free zones and so should the dinner table. I asked a group of year 6 students last week, "how would you feel if Snapchat and Youtube didn't exist for 2 days" The response was devastated, wouldn't be able to cope angry. I then asked the same group "how would you feel if no one commented on your photos on Instagram" they came back with embarrassed, I would remove the photo and put another one online quickly, sad and upset. This really worried me from two aspects self-esteem and how dependent young people are on apps and the internet. Once again please highlight the above to parents and advocate to parents how important time limits are. **Remember the 3 D's at home, bedrooms should be digital free zones, digital sunset (come away from technology before bed time) and parents need to be strong digital role models.**

Information for the newsletter

As you know I send an online safety newsletter out once a month. If you or your organisation would like to share something around online safety then please email: OnlineSafety@northamptonshire.gov.uk and let us know.

Important: Adults who groom children will often meet them in moderated or public online spaces and then develop a relationship until they can persuade them to take their communication into a private, unmoderated service.

A lot of the facts in this newsletter have come from this amazing research. Well worth a read.

