

AHISA MEMBER SURVEY

# The impact and influence of social media

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As reported by AHISA members' schools  
June 2024

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## The impact and influence of social media

At the end of June 2024 AHISA launched a survey of members on the impact and influence of social media in their schools.

Data gathered by the survey informed AHISA's submission to a parliamentary inquiry in the impact and influence of social media on Australian society.

There were 50 responses to the survey. This number represents 10 per cent of AHISA's membership.

I am deeply grateful to AHISA members and to their staff members who may have assisted them to gather information for the survey. They have helped inform the understanding of other educators and of politicians and policy makers at what may prove to be a pivotal moment in the transformation of education delivery.

Dr Chris Duncan  
AHISA CEO  
28 June 2024

### Survey questions: The impact of social media in independent schools

Research establishes that social media, an essential element in the lives of young people, is associated with both positive and negative effects on their mental health.

1. Is there an observable increase in mental health problems? Could you comment on the extent of the problem in your school?
2. How is social media implicated?
3. What have you seen as the negative effects of students' social media use, eg distraction from schoolwork, school refusal, harmful content, cyberbullying, increased staff time dealing with issues, etc?
4. Could you comment on actions or initiatives taken at school level to address problems related to social media, eg mobile phone policy, online safety education for staff and/or students, parent partnerships...?
5. Acknowledging that governments and social media platforms as well as parents and schools have a role in protecting young people from the harmful effects of social media, what new measures might be helpful to schools, eg more robust age verification regulation, raising the age restriction from 13, public education campaigns, additional resources for teachers and students, online safety professional development, more parental guidance tools...?
6. Do you have any other comments you wish to make?

Note: Some survey responses have been edited to correct spelling and grammatical mistakes.

## Is there an observable increase in mental health problems? Could you comment on the extent of the problem in your school:

- Since Covid we have witnessed increased numbers of students presenting on enrolment with anxiety, school refusal and other mental health concerns.
- There has been a constant increase in presentation of a deficit focus within our landscape and within the community outside of campus for a number of years. We are however seeing impact on our students quite significantly.
- Yes, anxiety is a significant and growing issue. It manifests in numerous ways including physiological issues such as panic attacks, social issues with friendships, attendance issues such as school refusal and it seems to be on the increase.
- Yes, depression and anxiety have sky rocketed
- Mental health problems have increased in our school, and we have, in the past three years, employed a nurse and psychologists to address the lack of services in regional Victoria. Although students are referred to external services, there has been an observable increase since 2020.
- Poor mental health within our student body is a concern within our student body. The extent and severity of this problem varies considerably from feelings of overwhelm, stress, anxiety through to severe anxiety, depression, NSSI, suicide ideation and eating disorders.
- Yes. We have a number of students experiencing declined mental health and an increase in the numbers of students accessing or requiring additional support. Anxiety is most prevalent across all age levels.
- There is an observable increase in mental health issues, and also in students being familiar and comfortable with using the terms around mental health issues in the absence of a genuine mental health issue. eg. Claiming to have anxiety when they are stressed and claiming trauma and not feeling safe in the face of no history of trauma and a member of staff making a reasonable request. We find that social exclusion is on the rise and impacting students badly.
- Yes - we have had an observable growth in mental health problems over the past five years, increasing annually.
- Yes, it appears this way today. Students and families are quick to self-diagnose mental health problems, and the escalation in language is visible. Whether this is an actually increase remains unclear, I am tracking the appointment data of our counsellor / psychologist to understand more.
- Yes, increased anxiety (both general and social), decreased resilience to social challenges, difficulties navigating social dynamic, and increased cases of school refusal, self-harm and suicidal ideation.
- Yes, I think there is certainly an increase in students with diagnosed mental health challenges with a mix of generalised anxiety about life in general.
- There has been an observable increase in the last decade and especially during the pandemic, and the years immediately following it. I also think that students are more likely to seek help, and so any increase is perhaps also a reflection of this societal trend. Over the last year mental issues in my setting have declined a little, as we continue to support pro-social interaction post pandemic.
- Yes Students are increasingly more anxious and vulnerable, lacking resilience.
- Yes there has been an observable increase in mental health challenges in our school context. We have needed to increase the number of school counsellors and pastoral staff to address this.
- Yes. Anxiety, school refusal and social/emotional issues are rising.
- Most definitely. Presentations of anxiety, school refusal and other issues are more evident.

- Yes, I believe so since Covid, but the number has seemed to steady recently.
- Yes. Complete lack of resilience, warped senses of entitlement, lack of patience, inability to handle any discomfort and all in all mentally weak.
- Yes, there is. Incidences of anxiety especially seem to be on the rise, however due to reduce stigma this could mean there is more reporting. Around 15% of our students are attending counselling from mental health professionals, either inside or outside our school
- Absolutely. The rise of unmoderated social media, especially TikTok has led to an exponential rise in pressure for teenagers to homogenously 'fit in', creating a pseudo social pressure. Teenagers feel they must be on platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat in order to socially conform and belong. This then places pressure at home with behaviours that are atypical and at times dangerous.
- Yes. We have seen an increase in referrals to our counselling team both from staff and self-referrals from students; the data that our counselling team collects that shows an increase in anxiety and self-harm or risk episodes as the reasons for visits.
- In some ages there is an increase- anxiety, perfectionism, isolation, increase in school refusal- particularly in girls.
- There has not been an observable significant increase in mental health problems in the past year of research which we have gained from the student population. The rise of issues has mainly been based on the ability to cope with situations within a school setting. This includes dealing with the usual rigours of life as well as the ability to genuinely connect with those around them for support.
- Yes, there is an observable increase in mental health problems in our school. We have seen an increase in the number of students presenting with anxiety, sleep deprivation and technology addiction.
- Yes, significant. COVID added complexity
- Yes. Stress, anxiety, body image, bullying and exclusion
- levels of anxiety but has remained consistent now for a few years
- There has been, A combination of easier diagnosis, lowering of the bar in this area. Managing low level anxiety and depression are the fastest areas of concern.
- Yes - there has been an escalation of mental health issues in my school since the addition of the smartphones and social media
- Yes. The nature and impact of mental health is definitely on the rise. This is reflected in the number of students who are attending counselling sessions and in the demand for more counselling staff.
- Yes. The increases are observable in the breadth of mental health problems, the number of students affected by mental health and the age of the students affected has broadened to include upper primary school students.
- Yes absolutely. Whilst the research may demonstrate both positive and negative effects, sadly we seem to be much more aware of the negative effects that it has. In reviewing the welfare incidents investigated this term at our school approximately 75% of these have had an online component attached to this. From girls struggling with their appearance and feeling the need to meet high expectations from seeing airbrushed images to students who have had tiktok accounts made about them body shaming them. Bullying no longer ends at the conclusion of the day but through social media is able to continue and invade children's home spaces. The increase in self-harm and suicidal attempts is vastly increasing.
- Student behaviour. Absenteeism. Disengagement.
- Mental health problems have increased markedly over the past 6 years. We have many more students affected by anxiety which leads to depression, cutting and suicide ideation. Staff find it hard to switch off and it creates an imbalance on workload perspective and disrupts normal coping strategies. Sleep is poor.

- Yes students are struggling with or aware of mental health issues of other peers or family members. It is hard to quantify the extent but students are interested in learning about mental health and help seeking
- Yes. We are increasing the number of student well-being staff positions and accessible services to cater for this increase.
- Yes we have statistics with increasing counselling loads as well as increased case management loads for our Heads of House (wellbeing positions of responsibility). Issues relate to suicide ideation, school refusal and anxiety.
- Yes, there has been an increase in mental health problems at school.
- There is a significant observable increase in mental health problems in young people over the last few years. Nearly all of our students over the age of 11 are impacted by this issue significantly. Many of the students under this age are also affected.
- Yes, there is an increased incidence of mental health in our school
- Yes. With more education, understanding and awareness, more mental health problems are being identified and addressed.
- Yes, from the data we collect we are seeing more students with mental health issues.
- Yes, Mission Australia data has identified a worrying trend along national figures.
- Increase in anxiety, depression, school refusal, cyberbullying and disordered eating
- Leading to more issues around anxiety - to the extent if affordable we would employ more social workers, psychologist, counsellors. It is occurring in upper primary and middles secondary primarily
- Yes, less resilience in many children and staff.
- Nothing that can be specifically attached to social media at this point

### How is social media implicated?

- At our school the effect of social media seems to be episodic, based on individual issues.
- Students often discuss the pressures of social media and expectations around this. When referencing strategies and tools to shift out of a deficit focus, students often reflect on their experiences and say if they could distance themselves from social media they would.
- There is an argument that students are wrestling with perceptions of perfection and comparison that skew their view of their world.
- We are getting an increasing number of reports of harassment and abuse being experienced online. Students comparing themselves to each other and 'influencers', setting unrealistic expectations of themselves.
- This is difficult to answer. Students cannot access social media on our network; it is hard to monitor. However, we do know that anecdotally and the research tells us that the "share and compare" social media does affect mental health.
- We strongly believe that social media plays an enormous role in contributing to poor mental health outcomes for our students. 1. Extensive use of social media will often lead to poor sleep hygiene and lack of sleep which has a well-known negative effect on wellbeing. 2. When young people are spending long periods of time on social media, they are not spending time on activities that will boost their wellbeing and mental health such as spending time with family and friends, sports, co-curricular activities and study. 3. Via social media, young people are exposed to unfiltered and possibly harmful content that they may struggle to process and understand. This content may also expose them to concepts that are harmful to their mental health and wellbeing such as NSSI or eating disorders. 4. On social media, young people are often exposed to content that degrades, judges and undermines peers and strangers on a repeated basis. Without appropriate discussion, content no doubt erodes their "moral compass" and sense of right and wrong.

From this constant exposure, they may begin reenacting what they see for example "roasting" a vulnerable peer for "laughs".

- Social media is implicated for several reasons. 1. Bullying and exclusion and FOMO are all heightened because of social media. 2. Students brains are not developed enough, nor are they self-actualised (which is of course age appropriate) so conformity, deindividuation and addiction to phones are common, resulting in students doing and saying things on social media that they would never do or say in real life. Schools are having to deal with things which are happening at home then spilling over to school.
- Many of our children are highly enmeshed with social media use. Whilst it is limited at school, our boarding school experience is that it is unhelpful and student engage in many hours of our use. For many, there is a fear of missing out and they relate to others via social media above other things. I believe there is a clear correlation with the increase in social media use and the decrease of mental health in teenagers. We noticed a marked improvement in school attention, once we took steps to limit phone use during the school day.
- Certainly for girls, social media appears to be highly addictive.
- Used as a tool to increase social isolation, alienation and bullying to manipulate social dynamics. It has influenced young people's perception of acceptable behaviour, allowing for more polarising, discriminating, damaging and aggressive behaviour to be seen as a norm. Young people are less considerate of the impact of their communication on others.
- Students are unable to focus like they used to, generalised anxiety about life and the challenges that lay ahead of them, there is a sense of fear of missing out.
- This is a big question which has no easy or quick answer, and to which there has been a lot of ongoing research. There are links between access to social media and mental health issues, however I do think there are a lot of other factors which come into play; including: pandemic; greater access to online medical information, a more fractured society facing global issues with few easy solutions etc.
- Students are much more connected and addicted to connecting with their peers on social media. Students are more likely to write inappropriate and unkind messages then say it in person. It has a more lasting impact when it is written down then if it was just spoken in the heat of the moment.
- Lots of the pastoral issues that emerge in the school are related to use of technology/ social media. We have parents of students who are struggling to manage screen addiction, bullying largely happens online outside of school hours and not in person, girls who are being drawn to self-harm through their exposure to this as a coping mechanism on online forums. We are also starting to see more problematic sexualised behaviours explored by young people online.
- A lot of the anti-social behaviour being reported by students is being initiated or perpetuated on social media. The interactions online seem bolder/more cruel than students would do face to face. Language used is more vulgar. There is more pressure to 'keep up' and be included in group chats and in current trends such as those seen on Tiktok, Snapchat or Instagram reels. Trends and algorithms that target school aged boys can be confusing and problematic.
- It appears that students utilise social media as a key way to connect but the quality and depth of that connection is concerning.
- Students seem more addicted to the screens. I have noticed students feeling they cannot switch off or go without their phone. A lot of students cannot sleep well. I have also noted a negative relational impact due to WhatsApp group chats.
- Because that's where these young people spend their lives. Zombie mode, basically making them useless.
- Social exclusion and bullying

- Social media is implicated in a range of instances, such as encouraging procrastination due to the addictive nature of it (fuelled by algorithms which are designed to increase engagement), the contagion factor related to anxiety conditions including self-harm, the beauty myth, different TikTok and other trends etc., exposure to harmful content, especially porn for young boys and cyber-bullying etc...
- The ubiquity of social media and the social demands to have an account on TikTok and Snapchat is placing unnecessary emotional burdens on teenagers.
- Another reason for increased use of our counselling team is social and friendship issues - we are seeing more students with less strategies to navigate friendship issues or conflict. We see that this has been affected by higher levels of social media use. Also, pathologising of normal 'bad days' or uncertainty, discomfort which has been linked to social media such as Tik Tok, has perhaps led to young people thinking that all negative feelings are a mental health disorder and that they are not responsible for their own everyday wellbeing.
- Constant desire to look perfect, instant gratification, unrealistic expectations, exposure to content that is not age appropriate, social pressure to conform.
- Social media has influenced the ability of students to connect on a face-to-face basis with the 'digital playground' becoming more proficient. Students will use downtime as a way of engaging in social media which has been an observable shift in the ability for students to come up with activities to manage downtime.
- The constant bombardment of perceived social norms and the inability for students to disconnect. Students find it increasingly difficult to distinguish between what is normal versus unrealistic. Failure to measure up fuels poorer mental health in our students.
- Students with depression anxiety, school refusal have a significant dependency on SM but also alone and at night.
- Most incidents of bullying and harassment in our school occur on social media. Often a reason students cite for not getting enough sleep, which impacts mental health.
- Students comparing themselves to what they see on social media and never having a break from school related challenges such as friendship issues - they all come home with them on their phones.
- Curated to the individual means that they only see what they show an interest in which leads to less risk taking and also provides an unrealistic view of life with all its bumps, bruises and non perfectness.
- Snapchat, instagram and tiktok are the major issues with students addicted to these services.
- It is difficult to know whether mental health is attributable to social media. Certainly, social media is creating its own challenges in schools, particularly the misuse of various platforms and the impact of cyberbullying.
- Students are seeking technology to view social media every chance they can. Students use social media to connect with however, it has been noticed that many interactions are negative and some lead to students in crisis over the content in social media posts.
- Students from certain cultural backgrounds inform us they are struggling with their identity because they don't see representation of their culture through social media. Many boys are being strongly influenced by people such as Andrew Tate and struggle to understate that his views are misogynistic. Through our work with Melinda Tankard Reist we were shocked to discover the number of our students from age 12 that are regularly exposed to pornography through social media.
- Student access at home and on weekends that is generally unfiltered.
- Social media creates a messaging tool that plays on people's minds causing them to ruminate in unhelpful and often damaging ways. Social media is used day and night and causes poor sleeping habits which leads to mental health issues.

- The high level and regular use amongst students. The need to engage in social media to belong or connect. The negatives on social media that influence thinking, worries and habits.
- The increase in frequency of mental health issues amongst students seems to have increased as social media use has increased. There appears to be an informal, but not absolute, connection between heavy social media usage and students with mental health issues.
- In our mind social media is implicated due to the large amounts of time students are on it and the negative behaviour that we are constantly seeing and attempting to address which causes high levels of distress for students. Issues such as piling onto a particular student or kicking them out of groups has made social media a very negative place for some of our students, those being the ones who do come forward.
- Students are extending their days significantly by staying online post normal bed times. They are not getting enough sleep as a result of social media usage which has the same draw on students as a drug.
- Girls are subjected to the constant pressure of comparison, the pressure to look and behave in a particular way, and the subsequent social issues and bullying that accompany these phenomena. Boys are drawn into inappropriate social media driven sites that drive inappropriate sexual behaviours, withdrawal from the "real" world, and anonymity associated bullying.
- Social media increases pressure to maintain a perfect online persona which can lead to anxiety and stress. Cyberbullying is another significant issue, with students often experiencing emotional distress. The addictive nature of social media is leading to excessive use, leading to disrupted sleep patterns and reduced face-to-face social interactions, both of which are critical for mental health.
- We are finding an increase in the number of students addicted to technology and in particular, social media platforms such as Tik Tok, Snapchat and Instagram etc.
- Students are less able to self-regulate and calm down. I sense that social media and the inability to tune out and relax has had an effect.
- Screen time; harassment; coercive and excluding practices; trending vandalism eg toilet trashing etc.
- Anecdotally we link both social media, and the COVID years of on-screen schooling as contributing factors
- Student time on devices at home and unsupervised. Online bullying. Online messaging through apps re weight, skincare, looks clothes making students feel inadequate. Sexting
- Many of the children report spending hours scrolling on social media
- General stress in the community induced by comments etc.
- Kids are creating problems outside of school.

### **What have you seen as the negative effects of students' social media use, eg distraction from schoolwork, school refusal, harmful content, cyberbullying, increased staff time dealing with issues, etc?**

- Distraction from schoolwork and some elements of cyberbullying. Whilst much of this occurs outside of school this has an impact on teaching and learning and time spent following up concerns by our pastoral care staff.
- Students media use impacts: \* Concentration and focus at school \* Opting out of connection and engagement with others \* Issues online with peers and/or anonymous or

unknown individuals \* Increased presentation of issues that have occurred online and spill over into the school day

- All of the above.
- Yes. Compulsion on being on phones and social media is huge
- Distraction from schoolwork, harmful content shared, cyberbullying, eating disorders, and self-diagnosis (particularly TikTok) are all evident in our school. These are issues that are all brought to school, and soak up a lot of staff time dealing with the outcomes.
- The negative effects of student social media use is considerable. Excessive SM use takes them away from schoolwork, cocurricular activities, time with families and friends and definitely exposes them to harmful content and bullying.
- Accessing harmful content online, fear of missing out, escalation of negative situations due to poor communication or limited use of non-verbals to communicate messages, cyberbullying, image-based abuse through social media channels, consent to share images, anxiety, depression.
- Inability to sustain engagement and focus, inability to manage distraction, comparing yourself to others unhelpfully, cyberbullying, expose to inappropriate content (language, themes and images), changes in personality after long periods on social media (or gaming), parents expecting the school to deal with such issues and intervene even when things happened on their watch and on the devices they provide. Definitely increased staff time dealing with issues.
- Sleeplessness is a common problem. Students are distracted and preoccupied. Poor behaviour is normalised on TikTok, especially for students in early Secondary years. Some students become addicted to scrolling and it impacts on their wellbeing, and ability to attend to other tasks.
- Disruption and distraction to study, harmful content, increased sense of loneliness. Cyberbullying is not frequent at my school, but high social media use seems to cause a sense of isolation and fear of not being invited.
- All of the above - addiction to technology, bullying, school refusal, social anxiety, shaming, unknowingly distributing child pornography material, school refusal, inciting violence. Schools are expected to manage how students interact on their devices and the outfall of their interactions (we are a non-device school).
- There is certainly an increase in the time that staff spend on ensure our education is preventative and not reactive and then dealing with situations as they arise. Social media is a huge distraction from schoolwork for students and their ability to focus on a task but also stay engaged in the task at hand.
- Students are presented with information at a young age through social media that they do not have the ability to filter or file. Frequently our younger students will imitate what they see and hear to disastrous effect - increased use of racist language, sexualised behaviour, acting without thinking leading to more online bullying. This is harder for schools to police - the signs of social disaffection are changing; and do we really know what these look like now?
- All of the above!! Distraction from schoolwork, school refusal, exposure to harmful content and connections with inappropriate adults, cyberbullying which all results in staff picking up the pieces and trying to sort out the problems.
- Students are very tired. They are spending lots of time online on devices at school and outside of school hours. They struggle to do interpersonal relationships well, when lots of their relationships happen in the online space. Staff are spending increasing amounts of time dealing with issues that happen online outside of school hours.
- Social media attacks students' ability to pay attention. There is a visible impact of addiction linked to dopamine release linked to social media 'likes/reactions', validation and ease of scrolling versus putting time and effort into schoolwork. Many of our school refusal cases

have been linked to gaming addiction that involve online social games with chat features and achievements/rankings to unlock. More students are getting school-based consequences for posting harmful or hurtful content that they may have been exposed to via social media and have become desensitised. Increasing numbers of students are taking to social media to perpetuate social issues they may be facing at school, for example using social media to publicly or privately threaten or shame others. A common trap for younger secondary students is taking photos of their peers/others and sharing them on social media platforms without that person's consent. Often the images are embarrassing or have been altered to be inappropriate. Most of the investigations that the pastoral team do now include some element (if not all) of social media involvement.

- Levels of distraction are on the increase; levels of engagement with phones generally are reported as high with access to age-inappropriate material apparent; we have more students displaying school refusal patterns. Although students are not allowed to have phones in class, they are accessible at break times and reduce quality interactions in some cases. We deal with inappropriate online activity regularly, even with school laptops.
- Distraction from schoolwork, cyberbullying, less sleep, increased staff time dealing with issues, lack of effective ways to form strong relationships, issues around pornography
- Distraction from schoolwork, school refusal, harmful content, cyberbullying, increased staff time dealing with issues, bullying, disgraceful language and its normalisation, becoming sneaky and lying all increase along with a warped sense of entitlement, disrespect and the list goes on and on and on.
- All of the above
- Students are increasingly reporting procrastination on school work due to their social media use, less sleep due to late night scrolling/chatting leading to a myriad of mental and physical health problems, distraction during study and work tasks, less time spent engaged in in-person relationships, reducing non-verbal communication skills, an increase in exposure to harmful content, social anxiety due to FOMO and/or bullying within group communication, general self-esteem reduction from unrealistic ideals portrayed and more.
- Students are increasingly distracted from learning. Never in 25 years have I witnessed such a disconnection from learning and a short attention span. Bullying has bled into the post-school arena far more than ever before. Peer pressure and the need to conform to social trends and risky behaviours is heightened because of the perceived safety of being behind a screen. Teenagers are being exposed to content far beyond their years than what moderated media has ever allowed. I witness some students truanting school on a daily basis sitting on their phones. Social time at home with the family is more disconnected - our teenager boy now sits with his phone during family time and barely engages from our activity/discussion/relationships. It has led our teenager to take far riskier behaviour than we have seen in the past or expected of someone his age.
- Students (particularly primary) struggle to navigate the use of social media within their friendships often posting without thinking or using inappropriate terms/language leading to conflict. Parents and students are ignoring the 13+ recommendations for social media apps. Staff are spending much more time dealing with conflict that arises on social media outside of school time/hours (we have phones banned from use at school). We also have increasing reports of image-based abuse towards our students which results in further DCJ or police reports.
- Concentration levels awful, phone addiction and manic behaviour to get around school mobile restrictions, content young children should never have seen leading to highly sexualised behaviours, objectification of girls, inability to form healthy relationships, loss of respect, lack of parental control or interest... this is "killing" the next generation and we need to do something about it.

- Distraction from schoolwork and need to be on a device has been a notable observation within classes, particularly among younger year students (Years 7 & 8). The ability to stay focused within class for longer periods of time has been a noticeable change due to the short nature of reels and the highly engaging information which they are viewing on a daily basis.
- Low self-esteem, addiction to their device, increased conflict, increase in exposure to pornography, poor time management.
- SM does not necessarily cause school refusal but it does support the behaviour. Parents will blame the school for online bullying etc. Most of our time in Pastoral is unravelling poor online behaviour that impacts our community.
- Distraction from schoolwork, harmful content, cyberbullying, increase in staff time in dealing with issues as well as resources devoted to more and more programmes to educate around this, lack of sleep because of device addiction, harassment of staff with fake profiles being created.
- As above, not being able to disconnect with school related issues, lack of being able to put boundaries in place. Sharing of inappropriate images that students think is normal behaviour in developing a more intimate relationship with someone.
- Cyberbullying and also increased issues with sexting.
- Sleep deprivation, anti-social behaviours such as cyberbullying, an increase in staff managing issues that started outside of school hours, decreased concentration time, some have school refusal issues.
- The main issues that surface relate to behaviour problems associated with misuse of social media much of which is associated with harmful content and cyberbullying. This may be in school or out of school. A number of these matters are reportable to external authorities, including the police. Executive staff are certainly spending an increasing amount of time in dealing with these issues as they are significant in terms of child protection.
- Students have been distracted from their schoolwork and learning time for years now, with new platforms for sharing content and messaging platforms of greatest importance to a secondary student. What has been observed in the last 12 months is the level of intentional content to harm another person has increased. Extremely sensitive and personal information has been shared by friendship groups about a student or their family members, which has had a massive effect on the students involved mental health and their capacity to attend school and be part of the school community. Posts involving name calling, sharing of opinions, or 'yarn carrying' are now considered lower level and are extremely common with staff in student services and wellbeing support roles providing support on a daily basis to some friendship groups, with the support requiring weeks of interventions before attempts to repair the relationships between students can be commenced. The school has advised several families in the last 12 -18 months to report social media posts to Queensland Police Services.
- All of the above. Addiction is very evident. Students find it very hard to be 'offline' and are in fear of missing out on a conversation or the latest gossip on social media. This makes them distracted in class and finding ways to connect online, including misuse of our school email system as a way of bypassing this. Harmful content is impacting students and desensitising them in regards to their sexual experiences. Students are openly bringing books to read in school have an erotic porn narrative and when asked about these the students had no awareness that it was not appropriate - sadly their parents also have not understood this on many occasions. Cyberbullying is significant. Students feel that they can write things online under pseudonyms and feel there is no accountability. Have seen themselves adults 'trolling' others they are exposed to an online culture where the adults around them have made this culturally acceptable. Sadly the long term effects of cyber bullying seem to have more psychological impact than in person bullying. Significant

impacts have occurred where the student has not been able to identify the perpetrator and it has left them without a point of resolution and a lack of trust in their classmates, fearing it could be any of them that has engaged in this behaviour.

- Cyber bullying. Harmful content.
- It affects the overall life experience, there is no childhood past 9 years of age; cyberbullying, time on task-focus on schoolwork is disrupted, poor social skills, increased staff workload in dealing with mental health issues,
- (cyber)bullying, harmful content, addiction, time spent on this in and out of school time, distraction from learning tasks, negative influences.
- School success, school refusal, more staff needed to deal with the issues, increased requirement of the school to be asked to deal with online instances of "bullying" occurring on personal devices, across non-school networks, outside school time.
- Yep all of those aspects, we have increased time release for our wellbeing team to cope with the increased frequency of issues. Distraction most definitely a major issue including students not completing homework tasks to the required level.
- Tiredness, zombie-like, not reading as much as they used to, distraction from school work, reduced concentration, reduced quality of work when online doing actual school work online,
- Negative effects on students include: distraction from school work, withdrawal from the "real" world, school refusal, lack of real world social skills, harmful content encouraging anti-social behaviours, harmful views on the treatment of the opposite gender, harmful view on gender roles, encouragement of extreme behaviours and extremist views, cyberbullying (victim, and perpetrator), social anxiety, increased rates of depression, unhealthy body image issues impact on staff time and resources as schools deal with these issues.
- Social media use among students has several negative effects. Distraction from schoolwork is a major concern, as students often prioritise social media over academic / school responsibilities. Additionally, exposure to harmful content and cyberbullying on these platforms is negatively impacting students' mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and school refusal.
- We have seen an increase all the above! Distraction from schoolwork; a little school refusal as a result of technology ban/withdrawal; cyberbullying and definitely an increase in staff time dealing with the fallout of social media/online issues.
- Complaining about workloads when workloads have not increased and have probably decreased. Distraction and the inability to stay focused on a task for any extended length of time. Lack of sleep and emotions not being regulated.
- Addiction to screen/phone; poor concentration span in class; interpersonal issues; bullying and harassment; sexual content; violent content etc
- All of the above except harmful content
- harmful content, cyberbullying, school refusal, school work impacted, definite increase in time that school staff have to manage issues many of which are occurring when students are at home/weekends. Students unable to disconnect and anxiety around this.
- Increased school refusal, less flexible mentality, increased referrals to counsellors.
- Preoccupation and using it as a distraction.
- So much staff time being used in dealing with problems.

**Could you comment on actions or initiatives taken at school level to address problems related to social media, eg mobile phone policy, online safety education for staff and/or students, parent partnerships, . . . ?**

- Working towards a phone policy that is more reflective of the current research \* Increased online safety education through class time and pastoral time \* Parent seminars and communication with families to outline supports available
- Education for staff, students, parents. Policies and practices to restrict the use of technologies that detract from learning.
- We have implemented policies to remove phones, which has come with issues around increased anxiety of not having their phone readily available, student disengagement and attendance issues have risen, parents reporting that they are experiencing issues at home, social issues etc
- Mobile device policy, lots of education from various external resources for students/staff/parents, network/wifi access is restricted for students with firewall.
- Our school has a mobile phone policy where students must keep their phones in their lockers during the school day. We run student and parent workshops on safe internet and phone use as well as parent information sessions that also address phone use. We regularly distribute up to date research and findings with staff and parents. Pastoral care and health education programs also address phone use as well as the related wellbeing implications.
- Mobile phone policy (not to be used during school hours), parent forums, online safety education for staff, clear procedures for managing outcomes such as cyberbullying.
- We have mobile phone policy which aims to promote responsible use of phones. They are allowed to be used for 5 mins at recess and 10 at lunch. We run incursions on eSafety, use the local Police Liaison Officer to speak to students and use our regular meetings (Mentor Groups, Assemblies, Year Meetings) to speak into the space. Staff undertake professional development as well. We have in the past had parent workshops with experts such as Susan McLean. We are a BYOD school and so have strong internet protocols and checks in place.
- We have applied use of Yondr pouches in which phones are locked for all Secondary students during the school days. Boarders under Year 12 have their phones stored overnight. We conduct regular Mentor group discussions on healthy phone and social media use and utilise the eSafety resources.
- Strict adherence of mobile phone policy at school, requiring the device to be kept in lockers, and not in use at breaks. Online education programs, and guest speakers for students and parents - Susan McLean.
- No-phone policy - Y7 students hand in their phones to teachers at the start of the day, this decreases as they move to upper years. We confiscate any phone we see, and the students are expected to hand in their phone for the next week, and repeat offenders for 2 weeks. Unplugged classrooms for Y7 - 10. We provide cyber safety workshops. Our advice to parents are - no devices or social media until end of Y8, monitored and supervised use of social media in Y9/10.
- Our mobile phone policy is stringent and supported by parents and our school community- phones are off and away for the school day except for 5 mins at the start of recess and 5 mins at the start of lunch. Our online safety education begins in the junior school and is preventative in approach. Educating students about social media, their roles in online life and what to do if they are being bullied or see anything they are not ready to see
  - student workshops run by REACH on pro-social online and in-person behaviour; additional presentations throughout the year on school expectations regarding social media use - more explicit lessons on pornography and sextortion that run in

Years 7 and 8 - the time students are being first exposed to the matter whereas previously this would have happened in Y9 - parent workshops on current issues with cyberbullying, supporting their child being online, pornography etc - review of mobile phone policy

- Phones are not allowed to be used during the school day. We have run various workshops for students and parents on online safety, including Police School Liaison officers and other well regarded specialist presenters. This year we had a defence lawyer who is a parent of the school give a presentation on the legal side of online behaviour and what can result in criminal charges. We have codes of conduct and acceptable use of technology policy that must be read and signed by both students/parents.
- We have had a no phones at school policy in place for a number of years now. Students are not allowed to bring mobile phones to school camps - as we want them connecting with one another and nature. We regularly address technology issues with parents at parent teacher nights, in the newsletter and through parent forums.
- Mobile phone policy is no phones in classes at all. Year 7&8's are not permitted a phone on them at all during school hours. There is an ICT policy and social media guidelines that all students sign at the beginning of each year. The school has published position papers on social media and also the effect of screen time. There are parent workshops on this throughout the year. There is curriculum taught to all students in Health, Wellbeing and PE relating to social media and digital citizenship in Year 7-10. Students are reminded of online expectations in year level meetings. Sanctions such as detentions and suspensions are issued for breaches of the ICT policy.
- We reviewed our mobile phone policy a few years ago - but this is on the agenda to look at again in the term ahead. We have reviewed our student wellbeing program to greater attention to safe online practices. We utilise an online monitoring tool to help us ensure appropriate interactions when students are online using school laptops. We provide courses to support families as they help their children to navigate the digital world.
- We have a no mobile phone policy, we have a whole term dedicated to social connections in our wellbeing time to help relationships, informing parents. We also run cybersafety workshops for students and use a lot of the material from the eSafety Commissioner.
- Have a policy that is barely enforced leading to other rules in the school not being taken seriously either. Student voice was a big driver of this. Student Voice is one of the dumbest decisions or ideas to come out of education in decades.
- eSafety Commissioner resources, Newsletter information, Policies
- We have implemented a mobile phone policy, seminars and workshops for parents and students (including Inform and Empower, E-Safety Commissioner resources), a robust web-filtering service that extends into the home on devices used at school, our Bloum wellbeing platform gives the students an opportunity to notify staff if they feel that their wellbeing is declining and we discuss digital literacy during subject integrated conversations such as Positive Education. Our primary school device policy only allows (school) iPads to be used within the school setting, under strict supervision. Students do not Bring their Own Device until Year 7.
- Our School has an off-and-away policy for mobile phones during school hours. It has moderate success given the ubiquity of connectivity that learning and life now demands.
- We have increased education sessions by our own staff; primary and secondary use PYLO and external organisations to also run sessions with all year groups; we have added targeted parent nights on technology and added messaging about technology use to our usual parent nights. This messaging to students and families then takes away from the limited time we have to educate them about aspects of their learning or other school needs/initiatives.

- Mobile phone policy bans mobiles, high level laptop restrictions, six monthly education, esafety talks, use of police liaison officer, information nights for parents, specific staff with responsibilities in this area..
- Mobile phones should be kept in the student's lockers and not in the possession of the individual student between 8.25am and 3.05pm (i.e., the school day). Online safety is taught explicitly within classrooms as well as having leading experts (Paul Litherland) attend the school each year to work with students and their parents. The school adheres to strict rules around the use of school devices and the need for these to only be used for schoolwork within classes and in-home environments.
- We have a mobile phone policy. Keystroke monitoring software to alert the school to inappropriate use of student tablets. We have a parent wellbeing series and information evening. External presenters to both students and parents. Social media use and impacts is addressed in our Student Wellbeing Curriculum. We a social media policy and acceptable IT use policy.
- Mobiles must be in lockers and not visible at anytime during the day. Pastoral addresses online behaviour in the form of lessons. Restorative actions force reflection etc. Consequences reach suspension from school, obligatory submission of device upon entering the school. We have run parent sessions to support them especially around gaming.
- Mobile phone and electronic devices policy, bystander code of conduct, online safety training for staff and students, guest speakers, police education, training for staff and students in AI, parent education sessions,
- We have all the policies, all the education, all the programs, but the vast majority of issues are taking place outside the school grounds. Parents are not taking responsibility and because we don't allow phone use during school hours, all this 'stuff' happens outside of school, but we then have to deal with it the next day.
- We have a no phones during the school day policy. We hold seminars with guest speakers. We are attending student and teacher workshops to more fully understand the current use of social media by teens.
- Mobile phones are not allowed on campus and the school controls all data through servers and surveillance of school computers. However, many of the issues that emerge are on social media and outside of school hours. Education programs are undertaken with both students and parents but the ubiquitous nature of social media use beyond school inevitably brings issues that surface outside of school back into the school.
- The school has had a mobile phone policy since 2017. Students are allowed their phones before and after school and during break times. The premise of providing students with time with their phone during the day is for students to communicate with family, check messages and discuss after school plans, collecting of younger students etc. The focus of the time with the phone was family connection. We have engaged external cyberbullying supports to educate students on the safe use of social media and also the legislation around using social media to cyberbully and the ramifications for those found to be engaged in cyberbullying. We have engaged with Macquarie University of Psychological Sciences and CyBIT (CyberBystanders Intervention Training) in 2024. This project is currently at the survey stage with our students. Our community newsletters, visits to family and satellite campuses provide education to parents and families on the concerns of mobile phone use at school and social media. Our student and parent code of conduct policies discuss safe use of social media and the schools response to harmful social media postings.
- We have a mobile phone policy as well as a technology policy. We regularly write to our parents updating them of the latest trends on social media for them to be aware of. We have hosted an evening for parents, particularly in regards to the concerns around

exposure to pornography. We have ongoing education for students through our welfare program and targeted education for students and families who find themselves needing additional support.

- Mobile phone policy - only teacher directed use.
- Mobile phone policy, parent education sessions, access to online tools for students, staff and parents, meetings with parents, meetings with external professionals, onsite blocking of some sites, ICT monitoring of site access.
- Mobile phone policy to eliminate use of phones during the school day, cyber safety lessons from P-8, guest speakers for senior school students, parent information sent in newsletter
- Mobile devices are to be turned off and not seen between 8:15 and 3:15. School laptops are programmed to disconnect at certain times in the evening (allocated by age), staff, student and parent information sessions from YSafe, assorted education programs on the safe use of social media.
- Mobile phones to remain in lockers, really focusing our energy on a positive learning environment, student code of conduct to impress upon our students the importance of high standards of behaviour in an attempt for this to translate across to social media/online platforms.
- Mobile phone policy implemented and does not allow students access to phones during the day. Education programs provided around cyber bullying, their online profile, and e-safety. Technology free weeks adopted.
- We have developed a mobile phone policy. We have implemented a series of education initiatives for students and for parents. We have had to make changes to our student code of conduct, our parent code of conduct, and our enrolment contract.
- Students are required to leave their phones in their lockers. We have parent forums on social media usage. Parents in the junior school are required to attend a compulsory information session before their child receives access to technology. We also create podcasts on social media usage for parents to access.
- Continued implementation of our school mobile phone policy. Presentation by Wayne Holdsworth 'Smacktalk' for Year 9, 10, 11. Online/Cybersafety presentations by Victoria Police Proactive Unit and Optus Digital Thumb-Print Presentations
- No phones during the day. these are handed in before the school day commences. No laptops during recess and lunch. Continual education on focus and limiting distractions.
- Parent and staff education. Specialist programs and speakers, including the Police. Student consultations. Not sure what impact it is having?
- Online safety education; student and parent education related to mobile phones and health issues (using Jonathon Hights work); mobile phone policy enforcement (difficult).
- Mobile phone policy ban in school hours presentations by outside organisations for all stakeholders Life Skills and assembly presentation.
- Mobile phone policy; parent information seminars; cybersafety seminar for students
- No mobile phones in class or during breaks.
- Mobile phone policy communicated to students and parents.

**Acknowledging that governments and social media platforms as well as parents and schools have a role in protecting young people from the harmful effects of social media, what new measures might be helpful to schools, eg more robust age verification regulation, raising the age restriction from 13, public education campaigns, additional resources for teachers and students, online safety professional development, more parental guidance tools . . . ?**

- Additional resources for teachers \* Consistent requirements for all schools regarding device usage \* Access to professional development that's collaborative where individuals can share their experiences and learn best practice
- A significant investment in parent education and empowerment is key. Schools are better equipped to manage the problem than families.
- I think age verification would be great. Along with education. Education needs to happen at parent level as well.
- Raising the age restriction to 16 could help students make more mature social media usage decisions. This would need to be supported with a robust age verification regulation. We have found plenty of resources from credible organisations helpful. However, public education (think speeding, drink-driving advertisements) could be improved. Many people from all age groups only understand the legislation once they breach it, let alone the damage that can be caused by sharing and comparing social media products.
- While I feel that mobile phones and social media are potentially very dangerous in the hands of young people, I am skeptical about the success of raising the age verification laws. I would prefer to see an increase in education campaigns about what our young people are actually seeing online and a concerted effort by government to fund research into the harmful effects on youth MH. From there, public education campaigns around digital wellbeing and the need to "protect" our children would need to be funded. It is naive to think that raising the social media age to 14 or 16 will fix anything. Young people are savvy and find a way to access the content via geoblockers or general internet searches. Our efforts need to be driven into education around wellbeing routines and respect for ourselves and others.
- Increasing the age restriction, continued support from professional organisations such as eSafety including resources, public education campaigns.
- Age verification is essential. Primary aged students are accessing social media apps, unhelpfully. Education and discussion, including students and also parents is essential. Parental guidance is needed as out of school is the biggest problem. Some parents are poor role models for their children.
- Raising the age would be relevant - but I fear it is too late. And are parents able to support this - schools will easily support this?
- Greater free education programs for schools, provide local off-device activities for young people to engage with. Dumb smart phones for younger students - can make calls, take photos but no apps can be downloaded.
- I think that all of these mentioned measures and tools would be helpful but stronger parent education and support for them would be helpful as a number of parents I speak to often feel helpless when trying to manage their child's use of social media and technology
  - public education campaigns: schools cannot do this alone. Parents want and need support.
  - is 13 the right age for social media? Can time on platforms be limited by the platforms themselves based on age of users. This would need stronger age verification.
  - regulating social media platforms so content is appropriate - suicidal ideation and pornography are readily available

- More Parental guidance tools - parents need to take responsibility and have boundaries and learn to say no to their children to protect them. Perhaps if parents were held responsible for their children's behaviour they might supervise their children's online activities more.
- Yes more robust age verification is essential and more parental guidance tools. However, I also think that if parents choose to buy their child a device/ allow them unfettered access to social media before the recommended time, schools should also have some protections/ rights to push back on this. If parents are ignoring government advice and research, as a school, we cannot solve the issues we are being presented with. Schools are increasingly having to take on a burden of responsibility for something that we have advised against. Schools are already teaching students about this well. More teaching about technology/ social media in school is not the solution and takes time away from other more important learning both in and outside the classroom.
- Public education campaigns, more parental guidance tools, additional resources for teachers and students, online safety professional development.
- Definitely raising the age of access to social media platforms to 16 years would be a good start. There needs to a rigorous process for joining these apps. Public campaigns to familiarise the broader community about how to support good online behaviours would be helpful.
- Additional resources are always helpful. Personally I believe restricting social media to a higher age bracket would be excellent. Public education campaigns would be good but not around fear but rather educating.
- Schools should ban all phones and block social media on devices. Other than that the government and schools should stick their nose somewhere else. All of your suggestions are a complete waste of time.
- Raising age restriction to 16
- We need an all-in approach, where students of the same age are taken off platforms, with clear policy leadership and direction. Tech companies need to be regulated by more robust policy and parents, ultimately, need clear guidelines and support to direct and monitor their child's social media use. I believe that strict age guidelines, such as min age of 14, or ideally 15 or 16, before access to social media would see a huge change in the mental health of our young people.
- More robust regulation of social media content (mandated restricted hours, censored content - eg misinformation, harmful material) more robust age verification regulation, public education campaigns about the dangers of social media, in-app advertising .
- More robust age verification; raising the age to 16; national or state policies to ban all smart phones in schools apart from educational use; more parental guidance tools; guidelines that enforce that conflict on social media is dealt with by parents (eg reporting to authorities) and a police matter as the law states ('offence using carriage to harass etc') such as would happen over 18 or in the workplace.
- It just feels like an enormous task- many schools are doing everything they can to educate. Can we take a good hard look at this and say that overall, social media is harming children and young people and they should not have access to it until they are older. I don't know any Principals who are not concerned about this.
- Rising the age of social media use would be an option as well as education programs targeting students on the specific harmful effects of this. Public education campaigns need to be at a grass roots level and target students on a smaller scale to ensure this is effective. Additional resources for teachers which would make cross curricular teaching of this material, outside of the Health Curriculum would be beneficial. Ease of access to parent tools would need to be targeted for parents to be firstly, educated and then

empowered to assist their children from a young age. I believe this is happening far too late with children accessing smart phones far earlier than previously believed.

- More stringent age verification processes. Partnering with parents to increase parental engagement and responsibility. Social media companies to better police age restrictions while also increasing the age that people can access their platform.
- More robust age verification regulation, raising the age restriction from 13, public education campaigns, additional resources for teachers and students, online safety professional development, more parental guidance tools.
- More robust age verification regulation. For children between 13-16, parents needing to verify using an approved ID, the child's account and receiving alerts when they are active on social media- something to make parents more aware of how and when their children are using these platforms. I don't believe raising the age will help, because in our experience, parents already allow children who are under 13 to access these apps.
- I think like voting or consumption of alcohol, but an age limit in place not just for apps but for devices and I would say 15, but I know this is a long shot.
- More robust legislation in the area of age and access, responsible hosting guidelines by companies who run social media platforms would help. Parental education, encouraging them to say NO!
- More robust age verification would be a decided benefit in addition to raising the age restriction from 13. Any additional education campaigns and programs would also be of assistance.
- Increasing the age for young people to have access to social media Broader sharing of statistics of the harmful effects of social media and the links with mental health symptoms in young people. Targeted educational programs for parents including programs with a cultural lens for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Desired etiquette and use of social media and the impact of negative social media use included in the Australian Curriculum for late primary and middle secondary students. Promotion of the positive uses of social media for all levels of society (connection to interest groups to meet face to face, promotion of businesses, online business, networking, etc).
- Whilst I would like to see the age raised to 16, without any level of regulation around this it will seemingly make no difference. At the start of year 7 we surveyed our year group and 98.4% of the cohort had social media, with only 16% being of the required age of 13 to access this. We need robust age verification, update laws and social media platforms being held accountable in a court of law for the illegal practices occurring on their sites.
- Raising the access age.
- More robust age verification, raise age restrictions- parents don't care if their children are on sites before its age appropriate or they can't stop them. Make it a law.
- More parent education about the dangers and risks for young people, parent guidance, tools to restrict phone access, raise age restriction, more education for young students about dangers , risks, reality. With the introduction of AI this is more important than ever. students need to well equipped to be able to discern what they engage with.
- I would like schools to ban smart phones and smart watches at school. Non-smart mobile devices can be allowed but with strict policy guidelines (as per current policy at our school). Age verification is difficult to enforce, parent support of school positions is also often difficult.
- We need to empower our parents to join with schools to set the boundaries around the use of social media, to be supported by public awareness campaigns. We need to highlight the risks this high and negative use of social media has on our students. We need to understand the impact on our young people and then educate our communities. I am confident that once empowered with knowledge adults can be in a better position to act protectively towards their children.

- Technology free weeks built into the curriculum.
- More significant regulation around age verification is a must, but this must be backed up by enhanced policing and enforceable action creating disincentives for the associated platforms, for parents, and for individuals targeting our young people. Age restrictions for social media should change from 13 to 16 as a minimum. Resourcing for schools must be improved. Public education on the harms of social media and overall screen time should be regularly communicated (similar to warning signs on cigarette packets).
- Some measures may include -1. Integrating comprehensive digital literacy programs into the curriculum. 2. Schools can provide regular workshops for parents to help them understand and monitor their children's online activities effectively. 3. Establishing clear policies and protocols for addressing cyberbullying and harmful content is also crucial. 4. Additionally, schools can collaborate with mental health professionals to offer on-site counselling and support for students affected by social media-related issues. 5. Advocating for stronger regulations and safer practices from social media platforms could help create a healthier online environment for students. 6. Partnering with local organisations, mental health professionals, and social media experts to provide resources, workshops, and seminars for students, parents, and community members may assist. By fostering a community-wide dialogue, the campaign can promote a unified approach to supporting young people.
- Definitely more robust age verification regulation and raising the age restriction. More social media/technology addiction professional learning for teachers and parents. More parental guidance tools to equip parents to tackle it at home.
- Raising the age would be helpful more robust age verification limiting sites that can be accessed. Stronger penalties for people who write inappropriate things about others.
- What's not being or has been tried? In our demographic parental support is rare which adds to the problems!
- More robust age verification regulation, raising the age restriction from 13, public education campaigns, additional resources for teachers and students, online safety professional development, more parental guidance tools; greater legal avenues for law enforcement when breaches occur at system /company level.
- Robust age verification, quicker response to removing harmful content online, ban on targeting students re ads, content that is harmful, more parent responsibility and guidance.
- More robust age verification regulation, public education campaigns, additional resources for teachers and students.
- Restrict to Adults not before 18 years
- Training in school, reminders to parents about their role

### Do you have any other comments you wish to make?

- Evidence is clear of the impacts, however options to assist with the addiction and access to options is the barrier - how can we reengage our young people in living and pursuing their passions outside of their phones.
- We often feel like we are fighting a battle without support. All the issues we deal with from social media do not occur at school. Schools do not provide access to social media. However, the fallout is brought to school for us to deal with.
- The adults of Australia need to take their blinders off and seek to understand what the young people are viewing on social media. We have given the youngest and most vulnerable of our nation, handheld weapons from which they can inflict untold damage onto themselves and each other. Parents need to be empowered, encouraged, and supported to put time limits and guidelines around phone usage in the home. Governments need to resource research and programs to enable this to occur. Social media can be an

extraordinary tool for connection and discovery when used well. On the flipside, it can be unbelievably destructive and left unaddressed, our nation will suffer.

- Raising the age of usage of some apps will be hard but the mental health of our young people is too important to ignore.
- To simply link social media and mental health issues is naive without consideration of other societal factors. Ultimately this is a societal issue which we all have to address, not schools alone although we bear the brunt of the fallout!
- There needs to be some thought placed on the value of laptops in the classroom too and how this is managed by schools. Many students are being required to be on a screen for more than the recommended hours per day. When they are on devices in class, they are being distracted by social media and other online activities, no matter how strong the school's firewall is. Pre-service teachers, need training in how to use laptops to promote critical thinking and not just 'busy work'. Schools need robust teaching and learning policies about how laptops should/ should not be being used in the classroom. Mobile phones were a good first step, however more research needs to be done into the efficacy of laptops as learning tools.
- We do live in an age where this is a part of their generation. Rather than trying to get rid of everything (which I think would be a failed cause), we should try work with social media platforms to help us and help our students understand social media platforms better.
- Yip, cellphones and social media in schools in any capacity Sucks!
- Thank you for your work and please make sure that governments and policy makers listen and take action. This is a crisis and needs a timely and transformative response.
- The impact of social media in schools and on students, families and teachers needs to have an overarching and co-ordinated response and plan from government levels and other national and state bodies, at a policy level. Leaving schools to deal with this individually or in a 'siloed' response is not efficient, nor will it address the rapidly changing world of technology as needed.
- Thanks for putting in the submission - as a society we have to do better for the children and young people in our care.
- The message needs to be strong from the government towards the community and especially parents on what needs to be done moving forward to help our Australian children to understand the new tech world. This includes having a very real campaign which discusses the negative mental health impacts for the next generation of children from the use of devices and the consistent social media use.
- I believe this is the most serious challenge facing us and our students today. Students won't watch the news, read a newspaper, but will draw information without discernment. Critical thinking has never been more important.
- Great survey and let's see if we can have some impact.
- This is an urgent problem for our society and needs to be addressed. We are enabling a generation who will not cope in so many ways and we know it.
- Schools are doing a lot in this rapidly changing space. Parents need to be equal partners and need education and support from the government.
- I am not convinced that letting students use mobile technology as a learning tool in class is an effective approach. As parents often find it difficult to manage their child's mobile phone or other device usage, schools need to step in.
- We need to do something about this, I welcome the review and I feel engagement in this issue is a great priority and fully support and look forward to the outcomes.
- To reduce the impact of social media usage in schools, a multifaceted approach is essential. By promoting a balanced and mindful approach to social media, schools can help mitigate its negative impacts on students' attitude towards school and mental well-being.

- The introduction of mobile phone policies that restricts students from access their phones during the day is a great step in the right direction in teaching students that it is ok to switch off from technology, and to be more social - in person!
- Leading schools is challenging enough and social media makes the world a tougher place to be!
- Laws need to be strengthened to allow for better enforcement.