Social media

Students explore what social media and wellbeing mean, how social media could have an impact on wellbeing and actions that young people can take, both online and offline, to promote their own wellbeing.

Recommended age group:
11–16 (KS3/KS4)*

Learning outcomes

Students can:

- define the terms wellbeing and social media
- outline a range of strategies to improve wellbeing (including how to use social media responsibly)
- explain the importance of balance in online and offline activities

Preparation

Before delivering the lesson:

- visit the Rise Above website and familiarise yourself with its content
- read through Introduction to Rise Above
- read through Guidance for learning in a safe environment.

Learning objective

We are exploring what wellbeing means, how social media could have an impact on wellbeing and actions that young people can take, both online and offline, to promote their own wellbeing.

Resources

- Social media video
- Blank A4 paper and pens
- Access to the Rise Above website

Time

- 45 minutes approximately

Key vocabulary

- Social media, wellbeing, individual, community, sharing, identity, impact, actions, health, risks

*Please note:

If teaching this lesson with Year 7 students that there are age restrictions for joining social media platforms, in most cases students will be required to be 13 years of age.

Lesson stimulus (3-4 mins)

Write the following statement on the board, or use slide 2 of the presentation.

What are the biggest influences on a young person's wellbeing?

Ask students to discuss their thoughts in pairs.

Baseline assessment

How do you feel? (3-4 mins)

Show students the statements A-C and ask them to rate their confidence in each using a scale from 0-10 (0 = not confident, 10 = extremely confident).

You can choose how to conduct this activity. Students can complete it individually on paper, or verbally in pairs/groups. You could also use 'traffic lights' (red/amber/green) or self-assessment statements e.g. I can describe strategies to use social media to support wellbeing.

How confident are you in:

A) defining the terms wellbeing and social media?

B) outlining a range of strategies to improve wellbeing (including how to use social media responsibly)?

C) explaining the importance of balance in online and offline activities?

Core activity 1

💬 You said it! (20 mins)

A. Place students into groups and explain that each group is acting as a Youth Panel. They need to advise other students on using social media in a safe way that could support their wellbeing.

1. In groups ask students to produce two definitions that are relevant to young people – one definition for the term 'wellbeing' and one definition for the term 'social media'. Students are free to use symbols/emojis/numbers/text language.

2. Use slide 4 to share the definitions below and give students time to discuss their definitions and make any adjustments:

Wellbeing: When someone is safe, happy, can manage challenges, reach their potential, develop strong relationships with others and make a positive contribution to their community.

Source: Adapted from the Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008). Final Project Report. The Government Office for Science. London.

Social media: Technology that allows us to share ideas and communicate with others

Source: Adapted from the Cambridge English Dictionary

B. In their groups, students should draw a table with three headings:

- Potential benefits of social media
- Potential challenges of social media
- Solutions to promote wellbeing

C. Share the first part of the video with students and ask them to complete the first two columns in the table as they watch.

Pause the video at 02:07 and explain that social media can be used in positive ways. For example, to inspire change (social media has played a key role in lots of social movements) or to help people connect with and learn from others who might be going through the same things.

> **Discussion questions**
>
> - What were some of the opinions that the young people in the video have of social media use?
> - What are some of the potential benefits and challenges you think are most applicable to teenagers your age, and why?
> - What strategies can a young person use to promote their wellbeing?

Core activity 2

🎙 Podcast it! (15 mins)

1. Show students the next part of the video on slide 8 which includes some self-care actions that young people can take to promote their wellbeing and ask them to complete the third column of their table.

2. Share the list of actions that promote personal wellbeing, on slide 9, and ask the groups if they can add anything else to their table.

3. Explain that groups are going to be creating a short podcast/radio show to share the practical advice they have learned in the lesson with the rest of the school. They could script, storyboard, or (if feasible) record their podcast.

Actions that promote positive wellbeing:

- Exercise, sport and physical activity
- Eating healthily
- Getting enough sleep
- Relaxation techniques
- Getting involved in social action
- Helping others
- Doing things you enjoy
- Exploring nature
- Learning new things
- Creative expression
- Spending real time with friends
- Staying in touch with friends online
- Doing family activities
- Doing homework or school projects
- Seeking support

The podcast must include the following information:

- Which types of social media young people may use most often
- Practical advice on how the young person could use social media to support their wellbeing
- Some of the potential benefits and potential challenges that young person may face when using social media to support their wellbeing
- An explanation of the importance of balance in online and offline activities.

It could also include:

- Specific advice for a special guest, such as a student who has just moved to the UK and joined a new secondary school.

Time permitting, they can present their podcast to the class. Teachers should remind students about the importance of the scenarios being completely depersonalised.

Discussion questions:

- **What are the main factors that promote wellbeing?** These will vary for different people, but factors that have been shown to have an impact on a person's wellbeing in research include connecting with others, being physically active, learning new skills, helping others and being mindful. Note that this list only refers to factors an individual can take action on.
- **Is there such a thing as too much social media? If so, what would that look like?** Students can share their thinking. If time on social media is taking a person away from offline activities that improve their wellbeing, such as physical activity spending time with friends and family or good quality sleep, this may be considered too much. Note that research has found a link between significant time spent on social media and screens and a lower sense of wellbeing. However, it is not known if significant screen time and social media use *causes* a lower sense of wellbeing.

Further challenge

- **How might a person's wellbeing change over time?** Make sure students understand that a person's wellbeing is not fixed – it will change at different times of life, from month to month or from year to year.
- **Why might a young person's family be concerned about social media use? Are these valid concerns? Why/why not?** Again, concerns may arise if the time a young person devotes to social media stops them from doing other activities that support their wellbeing.
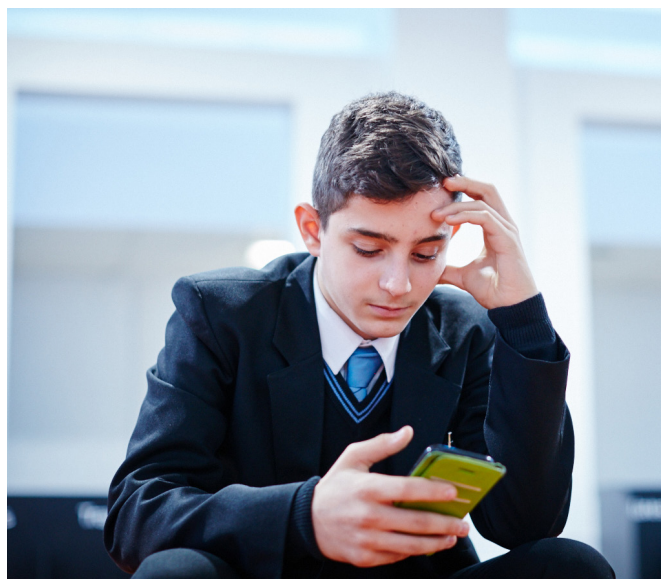
Plenary

✏️ Rewind (3-4 mins)

Re-visit the stimulus question from the start of the lesson.

Ask students to decide whether they still agree with their original answer or whether they now have different views based on the lesson?

What are the biggest influences on a young person's wellbeing?

Students can discuss their reasons with the person next to them or in a group.

Assessment for learning

🙂 (3-4 mins)

Students should reflect on their learning and respond to the three statements on a confidence scale of 0-10 once more (0 = not confident, 10 = extremely confident).

You can choose how to conduct this activity. Students can complete it individually on paper, or verbally in pairs/groups. You could also use 'traffic lights' (red/amber/green) or self-assessment statements e.g. I can describe strategies to use social media to support wellbeing.

How confident are you in:

A) defining the terms wellbeing and social media?

B) outlining a range of strategies to improve wellbeing (including how to use social media responsibly)?

C) explaining the importance of balance in online and offline activities?

Let students know that it can be very common to struggle with wellbeing, but if they are worried about it or if a lack of positive wellbeing is making things difficult, they can make an appointment with a GP or speak to a trusted adult about what they can do. You may wish students to reflect on support services in school, for example tutors, heads of year or school counsellors. They can also contact Childline on 0800 1111 or visit **www.childline.org.uk** for free 24/7 advice.

Childnet and Thinkuknow have useful advice for children on this topic. Teachers and families can visit NSPCC and Net Aware.

Extended learning projects

1. Students create a social media mood diary, where they record their experiences before and after using different types of social media. This must be an individual task that students need not share with the class, but is simply used as their own personal reflection tool.

2. Class debate 'does social media make the world a better place?'. Students could run the task within their Youth Panels or you could ask them to take on different roles during the debate, such as teacher, social media company owner, health professional and parent being present in the panel. Students'

debate should reflect the balance discussed in the lesson. Including some positive consequences of social media (for example, social movements) as well as the risks associated with social media, for example cyberbullying, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) or too much screen time getting in the way of important healthy activities (like sleep or time with others).

3. Set students a home task – can they keep track of how much time they spend online? Do they notice any patterns? Prompt students to try this at home and report back on their experiences.