

What is F-TEC Open Minds?

Welcome to Open Minds. Open Minds is a bimonthly newsletter dedicated to the promotion and celebration of British values. Alongside this we will be keeping you up to date with any current and ongoing issues, we aim to keep you well informed whilst giving you an awareness of what is happening within the world. Our goal is to create an inclusive community where everyone feels valued and respected.

What are British Values?

Fundamental British Values underpin what it is to be a citizen in a modern and diverse Great Britain, valuing our community and celebrating the diversity of the UK. These values are:

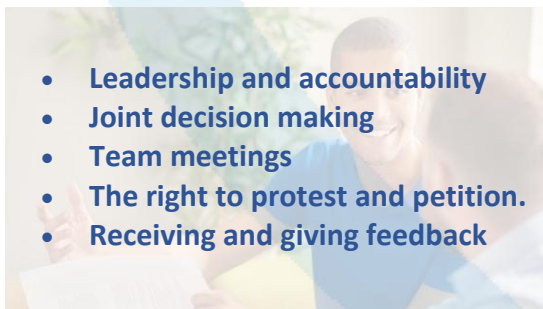
Democracy - A culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Rule of Law - The need for rules to make a happy, safe, and secure environment to live and work.

Respect and Tolerance - Understanding that we all don't share the same beliefs and values. Respecting the values, ideas and beliefs of others whilst not imposing our own on others. Below are some examples:

Individual Liberty - Protection of your rights and the rights of others you work with.

DEMOCRACY



- Leadership and accountability
- Joint decision making
- Team meetings
- The right to protest and petition.
- Receiving and giving feedback

RULE OF LAW



- Legislation
- Agreed ways of working, policies, and procedures
- How the law protects you and others
- Codes of conduct

RESPECT AND TOLERANCE



- Embracing diversity
- The importance of religion, traditions, cultural heritage, and preferences
- Stereotyping, labelling and prejudice.
- Tackling discrimination

INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY



- Equality and Human Rights
- Personal Development
- Respect and Dignity
- Rights, choice, consent, and individuality
- Values and principles

The Impacts of Social Media

Social media significantly impacts young people, posing risks like cyberbullying, mental health issues, and unrealistic comparisons. Excessive use can lead to anxiety, depression, sleep disruption, and poor self-esteem. While social media can facilitate positive social interactions and support, it also presents dangers like cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and online predators.

However, social media isn't all negative. When used safely and responsibly, it can foster positive social interactions, help maintain connections, and support identity exploration. It can also provide access to supportive communities and a platform for creativity and self-expression.

Below are some of the positive and negative impacts of social media, depending on how it's used.



Positive Impacts

When used mindfully and in moderation, social media can offer several benefits:

- **Connection** - It allows young people to stay connected with friends and family, even across long distances. It can also help maintain relationships and make new ones.
- **Support Networks** - Online communities can provide support, especially for individuals dealing with mental health issues, identity struggles, or those feeling isolated.
- **Creativity and Expression** - Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube give young users a space to share their talents, ideas, and interests creatively.



- **Learning and Awareness** - Social media can be a source of information and education, helping users stay informed about global issues and new trends.
- **Identity Exploration** - Especially during adolescence, social media can serve as a platform to explore different aspects of one's identity in a way that feels safe and supported.

Social media plays a significant role in the lives of young people today. While it offers many benefits, it also comes with notable risks. Its influence can shape mental health, social development, and self-perception in powerful ways.

Negative Impacts

If misused or overused, social media can lead to several harmful effects, including:

- **Mental Health Issues** - Excessive use is linked to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and poor self-esteem. Constant exposure to curated, idealised images of others' lives can lead to unhealthy comparisons and body image issues.
- **Cyberbullying** - Online harassment is a serious concern. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can happen 24/7 and reach a wider audience, making it harder to escape.
- **Body Image Issues** - Exposure to idealised and edited images can contribute to body dissatisfaction, unhealthy comparisons, and distorted self-image.
- **Unrealistic Expectations** - Social media often showcases only the highlights of people's lives, which can create unrealistic expectations about success, appearance, relationships, and lifestyle.
- **FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)** - Constant exposure to others' social activities and achievements can lead to feelings of exclusion, inadequacy, and anxiety.
- **Online Predators** - The anonymity of the internet can attract predators, posing serious safety risks.
- **Sleep Disruption** - Late-night scrolling and screen time can interfere with healthy sleep patterns, affecting overall well-being and academic or work performance.
- **Distraction from Real-Life Activities** - Social media can pull attention away from important tasks like work, physical activity, family time, and hobbies.
- **Exposure to Harmful Content** - Young people may come across violent, inappropriate, or misleading information that can impact their development and worldview.
- **Addiction** - The design of social media platforms can foster compulsive use, leading to dependence and difficulty disengaging from screens.



Real-Life Examples

To highlight the negative impacts of social media on young people, see some key examples below -



Cyberbullying - Research indicates that many young people have experienced cyberbullying. This form of online harassment can lead to serious mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation.

Social Comparison - Studies have shown that social media use is closely linked to increased social comparison. Constant exposure to carefully curated posts and idealised images can negatively affect self-esteem and body image, particularly among teens.



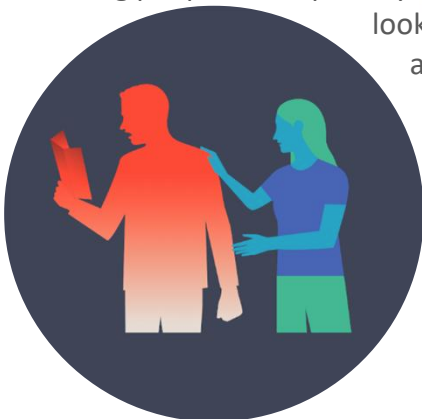
Sleep Disruption - Excessive use of social media, especially before bedtime has been associated with poor sleep quality. Interrupted or inadequate sleep can increase the risk of developing anxiety and depression over time.

Online Radicalisation

Online radicalisation is when someone starts to believe in extreme, often harmful or violent ideas because of what they see online. This can happen through videos, posts, forums, or group chats that promote hate, discrimination, or violence.

It usually starts small, like watching certain videos or reading controversial posts. But over time, people may be exposed to more extreme content or even influenced by others to support dangerous beliefs or take harmful actions.

Young people are especially at risk because they're often exploring who they are and looking for a sense of identity or belonging. Extremist groups take advantage of that by offering a false sense of purpose or community.



This kind of influence can lead to real-world problems like spreading hate, encouraging discrimination, or even acts of violence. That's why it's so important to stay aware, think critically about what you see online, and talk to someone you trust if something doesn't feel right.

Andrew Tate and Online Extremism: A Growing Concern

Andrew Tate, a former kickboxer and reality TV personality, has become a prominent figure in online spaces, particularly among young men. Through platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and his paid programs, he promotes a worldview that many experts and authorities consider to be extremist.

Tate's Influence on Young Audiences

Tate's content often centres on themes of hyper-masculinity, misogyny, and conspiracy theories. He teaches that women are inferior and that men should dominate them, both socially and sexually. His programs, such as "Hustler's University," charge subscribers for access to these teachings. Despite being banned from several social media platforms, his content continues to circulate widely through reposts and fan accounts.



Expert Concerns and Legal Actions

Authorities have expressed alarm over Tate's influence. Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth of the National Police Chiefs' Council described the situation as "quite terrifying," noting that young men are being radicalised into extreme misogyny in ways similar to terrorist recruitment methods. Former counter-terrorism expert Philip Grindell warned that children watching Tate's videos is a "red flag," likening it to following extremist figures.

Tate is currently facing multiple legal challenges, including charges of rape and human trafficking in Romania. He denies all allegations, asserting that the women involved consented to the activities in question.

Recognising the Signs

Everyone should be vigilant for signs that someone may be influenced by any extremist content. These signs can include:

- Adopting language that dehumanises or objectifies others, particularly women.
- Expressing beliefs that justify or glorify violence.
- Isolating from diverse perspectives and communities.
- Engaging with or promoting conspiracy theories.



Andrew Tate's growing influence is a clear example of how powerful online content can be, especially for young people. His messages often spread harmful ideologies, including misogyny and extreme views on gender and power. These kinds of ideas don't just stay



online they can affect real lives, shaping attitudes, encouraging discrimination, and even leading to violence.

This shows why it's so important to understand how online radicalisation works and to stay alert. Creating safer online spaces takes awareness, open conversations, and a willingness to question what we see and share online.

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Segments from this article taken from:

<https://childmind.org/article/how-using-social-media-affects-teenagers/>

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