Social Media

Risks Associated with Social Media

Social media has the power to amplify some of the challenges faced in adolescence – links between social media use and:

- Addiction
- Increased sense of loneliness/difficulties connecting to others
- Poor sleep
- Attention difficulties
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Increased risky behaviours within relationships or within personal care
- Poor self-esteem

Advice for Parents

- Develop an open and interested attitude towards your child's social media use
- Get informed about the particular apps that your child is using
- Link in with the recommended websites suggested in this session and sign up for regular newsletters from them
- Share what you have learned with other parents – consider setting up a group chat to support each other with the dilemmas you may face
- Share what you learn with your children, send them online links to read articles themselves – they may find it easier to express their views via text than face to face.
- Set out clear boundaries around their screen time, privacy and online behaviour and identify with your child when they might recognise if social media is becoming a problem to them, rather than a pleasure
- Join in with social media, follow and friend your children and put up your own posts – use it as another way to stay connected to your child.
- If you have concerns about any form of online behaviour **ask** your child what problems they think it might cause, how they might respond/do things differently, don't automatically assume they understand why something is a problem. Use any opportunity to link their online behaviour to real life and relationships
- If your child is going through a time of mental vulnerability or has demonstrated they are using social media in a harmful way do not be afraid to intervene in order to keep them safe. They may not thank you at the time but the likelihood is they will in the future.