



Welcome to Nailsea School's **Wellbeing Bulletin**

The aim of this bulletin is to share with you useful information, strategies and resources in order to support our students mental wellbeing.

The article below is an abridged version of a piece by Rachel Ehmke. You can read the article in full [here](#).

SELFIES AND SELF ESTEEM

Self-esteem is a key motivator behind posting selfies to social media. But for those who didn't get as many "likes" as they anticipated, their self-esteem took a turn for the worse.

According to a poll in 2015, the average female aged between 16-25, spends 5 hours a week taking selfies.

Taking selfies can be an elaborate process, with the manipulation of images starting before the image is even taken, through adjusting lighting, "the pose" and the use of makeup to cover blemishes, not to mention apps you can use for more drastic procedures, like changing your bone structure, slimming your waistline, erasing pimples and more. With the tricks of professional photographers at our finger tips, the images that end up on our social media accounts are unlikely to be a true representation of ourselves. On average women take 7 shots to get that one 'perfect' image. With the likes of Kim Kardashian saying it takes about 15 to 20 shots to get her Insta perfect pics.

Selfies can be silly and light hearted of course, but we need to be aware that there is a darker side, when photos become a measure of self-worth. Until recently, we were used to worrying about how young people will be affected by seeing too many air-brushed images of models in magazines. But now young people themselves are the models and they're wielding their own image-editing software. This leads to a lot of self-scrutiny, as they try to perfect their own images and compare these to the pictures their peers are posting.

Self-esteem often takes a hit when you start comparing yourself too much to other people, which is something social media seems to be made for. Thanks to social media, that time alone that most adults grew up with seems to be a thing of the past. Any spare moment young people have now, might easily be filled with time on Instagram or Snapchat, which means that they open themselves up to playing the 'comparison game'. It can make you start to over analyse your own social media presence, counting the likes your latest post got and pushing yourself to look effortlessly perfect too, regardless of how you're really feeling. Even if the pictures that a young person posts on social media get plenty of likes, they might still feel insecure — especially if they are already feeling insecure and the aim of their selfie was to boost their already fragile self-esteem.

While social media might not be causing a mental health disorder, it can pull young people closer into a diagnosable range, if they are already struggling.

The problem of selfies is well known among various professions and most recently it is surgeons who have seen a new trend in procedures to enhance/improve selfies and pictures on social media platforms. This rise in fixating on appearance due to social media has coined its own term 'selfie dysmorphia'. While this isn't a real diagnosis, it is a term that recognises that more people are experiencing a dysmorphia, or idea that there is something fundamentally flawed in their appearance. It also gestures to a diagnosis that is real: body dysmorphic disorder, which is a mental health disorder related to OCD. While most children won't develop body dysmorphic disorder, or even so-called selfie dysmorphia, they can still exist somewhere on the spectrum of fixating on their appearance, just as they might be struggling with anxiety and depression, whether or not they are at a clinical level.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Be more mindful

Be mindful about our phone use. Before you pick up your device, understand why you're picking it up. What emotional state are you in? Are you anxious? Picking up that phone to check to see what's on social media is probably going to heighten that anxiety. The same with sadness. It's just going to make it worse. Use your phone with a purpose rather than just to fill time.

It's not all about appearance

Don't hold back from complimenting your friends or child on their appearance, but make an effort to compliment them at least as much for the things they do and how hard they work. While it is good for anyone's self-esteem to know people like the way they look, it is also just as crucial to have many sources of self-esteem.

Success away from social media

Having a personal interest in something and seeing how your skills grow with time and effort, makes you feel proud of what you can do, and takes the focus away from achieving perfection, which is impossible. It also encourages young people to look inside themselves for their self-esteem

If you are struggling and feel that you need support you can contact the pastoral team on the email addresses below:

Safeguarding Team: Safeguardingteam@nailseaschool.com

Mr Mawford (Safeguarding Lead):
cmawford@nailseaschool.com

Miss Cadwallader (Deputy Safeguarding Lead):
lcadwallader@nailseaschool.com

Alternatively if you would prefer support outside of school please see the directory of services on the school website for outside agencies or contact your GP. If you worry that you cannot keep yourself safe, please call 999.

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