



Secondary: Real Friends

Is your online behaviour effecting you offline?

What's the issue?

Our smart phones and the other mobile devices we use are fantastic. But if they start to take over our lives, then we're in problem territory. If the way we're using them is having bad effects on our health and relationships, we need to stop and think about what's going on.

Why does it matter?

- Spending too much time online can be a health hazard! Recent research (Nov, 2012) from Edith Cowan University in Western Australia has recorded that 7% of Australian children aged 13 have spent so much time online that they have missed out on sleep and meals.
- Spending too much time online can disrupt your relationships with family and friends in the offline world.
- Spending too much time online can interfere with the quality of your homework or even just getting it done.
- Being a good friend—really caring about the wellbeing of your friends—sometimes means challenging what a friend is doing and talking about it with them.



Advice

Be a real friend to others

Suggest your friend thinks privately about their answers to the questions below which help people recognise if they really have a problem with their online behaviour. If they answer yes to most of them they might need some professional support to get the balance right.

- Are you spending more and more time online?
- Do you lose track of time when you're online?
- Do you think about being online when you're away from your device?
- Do you log on as soon as you wake up?
- Are you not getting around to finishing homework or jobs at home?
- Are you skipping meals to go online?
- Are you online when most people are sleeping?

Find out in advance ways that your friend can be given support in this situation—seek advice from counsellors, level co-ordinators or teachers at your school so that you have something positive and concrete to suggest in your conversation.

Be a friend to yourself

- Keep an eye on the balance between your own online and offline activities.