

Examining adolescents' social connection, social media use, and in-person interactions with peers.

02/03/2026 to 01/09/2026

Information sheet for participants and parents/guardians

My name is Freya Barrow, and I am inviting you to take part in my research project, 'Examining adolescents' social connection, social media use, and in-person interactions with peers'. I am a Master's student at University College London and am also a previous student of Vyners School.

I am hoping to find out more about the relationships between social media use and social connection among adolescents. The questionnaire will ask about social media use, frequency of in-person interactions, and feelings of social connectedness. This will be made clear before each set of questions.

I very much hope that you would like to take part. This information sheet will try to answer any questions you might have about the project, but please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Who is carrying out the research?

Student Researcher: Freya Barrow, email: freya.barrow.25@ucl.ac.uk

Project supervisor: Dr Karishma Jivraj, email: k.jivraj@ucl.ac.uk

Why are we doing this research?

This research is part of my postgraduate dissertation project and aims to understand the relationships between social media use, in-person interactions, and social connection among adolescents.

As social media has become a central part of adolescents' daily lives, understanding how online and in-person interactions work together is an increasingly important area of research. While social media is often discussed in relation to potential risks, this study will also explore the conditions under which social media use may support social connection.

Why am I / my child being invited to take part?

This study is interested in understanding the online and in-person social experiences of secondary school students in Years 8 to 11.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

If parental consent is given and if the student chooses to take part, they will be asked to complete three short questionnaires:

- A short demographic questionnaire
- A social media use questionnaire, which includes questions about passive use (e.g. scrolling through posts) and active use (e.g. messaging friends).
- An in-person interactions questionnaire, which asks about interactions with peers both in and outside of school.
- A social connection questionnaire, which asks about how connected the student feels to people around them.

There are no right or wrong answers. The study focuses on the students' own experiences.

Will anyone know I have been involved?

All responses will be confidential. The student may choose not to answer any questions and may stop taking part at any time during the questionnaires.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

There are no expected risks associated with taking part in this study. The questionnaires ask about everyday experiences such as social media use, in-person interactions, and connection with peers. However, if at any point a student feels uncomfortable, they may skip any questions they do not wish to answer and may stop taking part at any time.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of this research will be used as part of the researcher's postgraduate dissertation at University College London. The findings may be discussed with academic supervisors for assessment purposes. A summary of the findings can be made available to the school upon request; individual data will not be identifiable.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you choose to take part. We hope that if you do choose to be involved, you will find it a valuable experience. There will be no negative impacts if you decide not to take part. Once the questionnaire has been completed, you will be able to contact the researcher up to two weeks later to withdraw your individual responses if you wish.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information from research studies can be found in our 'general' privacy notice for participants in research studies here.

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices. The lawful basis that will be used to process any personal data is: 'Public task' for personal data and 'Research purposes' for special category data. We will be collecting personal data such as: year group, age, and sex.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at dataprotection@ucl.ac.uk.

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at freya.barrow.25@ucl.ac.uk

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

The link to the Questionnaire can be found [[here](#)].

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

If you are happy for your child to participate in this study, please complete this consent form by ticking each item.

To allow your child's data to be withdrawn if you or your child change your mind, please create a four-digit code for them to enter before they complete the questionnaire. This code will be used to find and remove their data if requested. Withdrawal requests can be made up to two weeks after participation.

- I have read the information above and understand I can email the researchers with any questions.

- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw during the study and up to two weeks after completion of the questionnaire.

- I consent for my child to take part in the study.

Child's four-digit identification: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please email the completed consent form back to Freya Barrow, freya.barrow.25@ucl.ac.uk