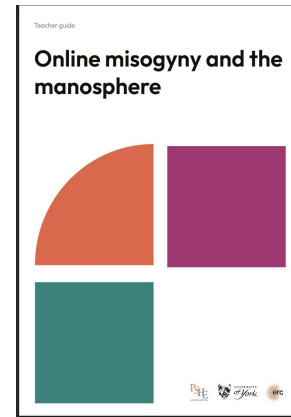
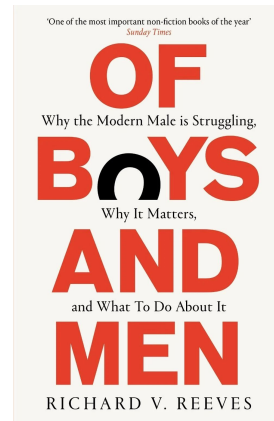
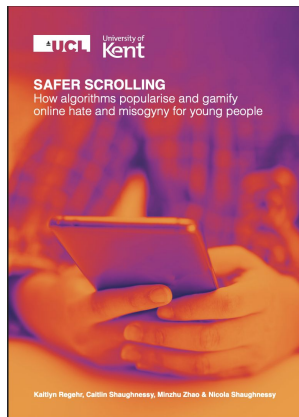




ISN LIVE: CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS: TALKING MASCULINITY IN SCHOOLS.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A YOUNG MAN IN 2025?

A mother of two boys from the Midlands:

"I have two teenage boys aged 18 and 19. I talk to them a lot about how they feel society views them. They feel that they are viewed as predators, lazy and toxic, but are told frequently that they are privileged."

THE MANOSPHERE

WHAT IS IT?



The 'manosphere'

Interconnected, misogynistic online communities cultivate ideologies of male and white supremacy that often incite violence

Source: mccaininstitute.org

Men Going Their Own Way:
male separatist movement
centered in North America

Pick-up Artists:
dehumanizes women as
sexual objects, claims
women need to be
sexually available for men
at all times

Incels:
"involuntary celibates,"
communities with the
belief that sex is an
entitlement, and without
it, hatred towards
women is justified



- Interconnected online ecosystem of influencers and communities
- Amplifying narratives about the roles of men and women
- Women as a root of men's problems within society
- Men as victims of structures within society



SOCIAL MEDIA

IS IT PROBLEMATIC?



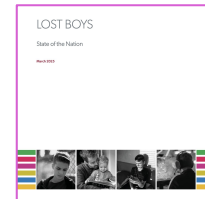
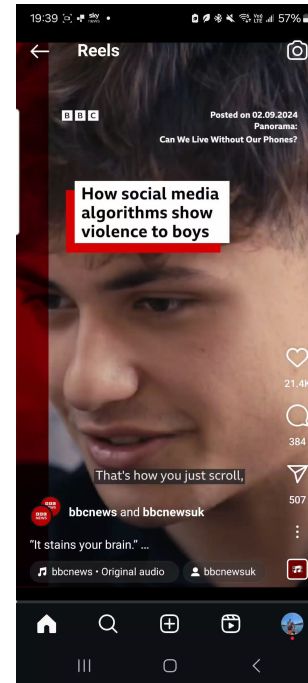
Social media

Social media and its algorithms push engagement, regardless of its positive or negative nature. One Canadian study, published in 2023, explored the association between social media use and psychological distress. It found that, of those who used social media for over three hours a day, 54 per cent of females experienced psychological distress, compared with 31 per cent of males.²³² Studies hold this position widely.²³³ The CSJ's recent report, Change the Prescription, also found that "people in the UK are 1.73 times more likely to report having a diagnosed mental health condition if they use social media every day, compared with never using social media."²³⁴ This report also highlighted other updates in the UK context, including evidence from the Education Select Committee that between 2020 and 2022, 25 per cent of children and young people exhibited addictive behaviour in relation to their screen usage.²³⁵ Overall, it is clear that "social media use is a cause of anxiety, depression, and other ailments, not just a correlate."²³⁶

Qualitative research suggests that algorithms are feeding increasingly violent and misogynistic content.²³⁷ This provides fertile ground for not only violence against women and girls but also radicalisation. 13 per cent of all those being investigated by MI5 for involvement in UK terrorism are under 18, a threefold increase in the last three years. MI5 Director General Ken McCallum argued that this was "driven by propaganda that shows a canny understanding of online culture."²³⁸ Commenting on the rising number of young men being radicalised online (of the 43 juvenile arrests since 2016, 42 were boys), George Chesterton stated in the Telegraph:²³⁹

"As anyone who remembers their adolescent years will appreciate, they are not only influenced by family but peer groups; can become profoundly affected by social isolation, mental health challenges – or simply the warping of otherwise normal teenage preoccupations such as rebellion against authority. Often that search for belonging and identity ... is happening in almost exclusively digital spaces."

Social media is not only making young people sadder, it is exposing them to new modes of harm in an often completely unsupervised manner.



- Researchers at Dublin University created fake accounts on TikTok and YouTube
- Accounts were posed as 16- and 18-year-old boys, with preference for gym and gaming content OR anti-feminist content (e.g., Andrew Tate etc)
- **ALL accounts were shown manosphere related content within 25 minutes across all conditions and platforms**
 - Content was dominated by influencers
 - Content also included conspiratorial and right-wing extremism



<https://antibullyingcentre.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/DCU-Toxicity-Full-Report.pdf>

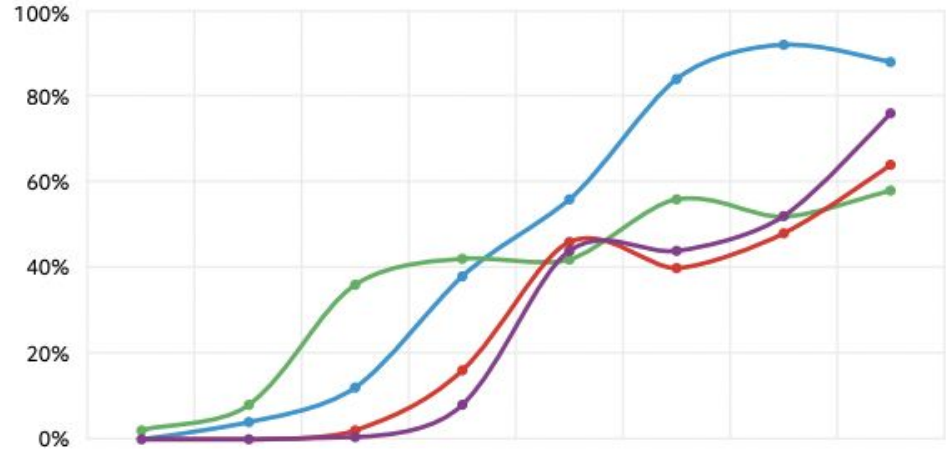
TikTok:

- 1 user aged 16 who sought out content traditionally associated with boys and young men, e.g., gym content, sports, and video games.
- 1 user aged 18 who sought out content traditionally associated with boys and young men, e.g., gym content, sports, and video games.
- 1 user aged 16 who sought out content associated with the manosphere, e.g., Andrew Tate, Red Pill.
- 1 user aged 18 who sought out content associated with the manosphere, e.g., Andrew Tate, Red Pill.
- 1 control account aged 16 that did not deliberately seek out or engage with any specific content.



Figure 1. Graph charting the increase in overall toxic content recommended to the TikTok accounts over the course of the experiment.

TikTok (Overall content prevalence)



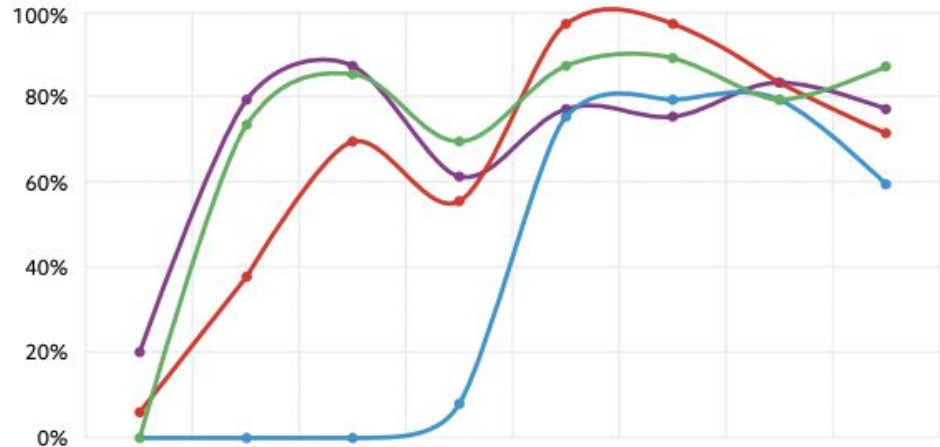
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6	Round 7	Round 8
16 (Gen)	0%	4%	12%	38%	56%	84%	92%	88%
18 (Gen)	0%	0%	2%	16%	46%	40%	48%	64%
16 (MC)	2%	8%	36%	42%	42%	56%	52%	58%
18 (MC)	0%	0%	0%	8%	44%	44%	52%	76%

YouTube Shorts:

- 1 male aged 16 who sought out content traditionally associated with boys and young men, e.g., gym content, sports, and video games.
- 1 male aged 18 who sought out content traditionally associated with boys and young men, e.g., gym content, sports, and video games.
- 1 male aged 16 who sought out content associated with the manosphere, e.g., Andrew Tate, Red Pill.
- 1 male aged 18 who sought out content associated with the manosphere, e.g., Andrew Tate, Red Pill.
- 1 male control account aged 16 that did not deliberately seek out or engage with any specific content.



YouTube Shorts (Overall content prevalence)



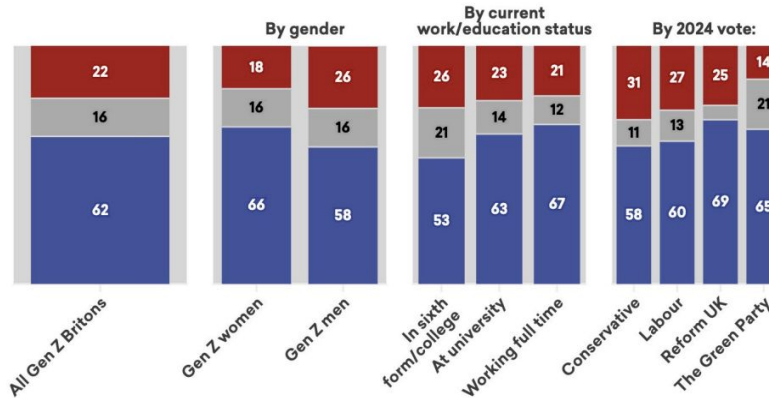
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6	Round 7	Round 8
16 (Gen)	0%	0%	0%	8%	76%	80%	80%	60%
18 (Gen)	6%	38%	70%	56%	98%	98%	84%	72%
16 (MC)	0%	74%	86%	70%	88%	90%	80%	88%
18 (MC)	20%	80%	88%	62%	78%	76%	84%	78%

... and for Gen Z

Gen Z Britons overwhelmingly think social media does more harm than good to young people

On the whole, would you say that social media does more harm or more good for young people under the age of 16?

● Social media does more harm than good ● Don't know ● Social media does more good than harm



"Sometimes you have, like, the urge to improve your life... But then sometimes I just feel a bit guilty that I could have done something else."
 Laura, 23, Ilford North

Almost half of Gen Z cite either social media or harmful online content as a top-three negative influence on teens' mental health.

50% of Gen Z say they wish they had spent less time on their phones growing up

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

What's the bigger picture?



Researchers report stunning surge of misogyny after the election

Dec 10, 2024 6:30 PM EDT

A third of teachers reported misogyny among pupils last week, survey suggests

Share Save

9 April 2025

Kate McGough Education producer and Elaine Dunkley Education correspondent

How the 'manosphere' is fuelling teen misogyny inside Australian schools

By Stobhan Marin

Compass Teenagers

Jul

70% of female teachers have faced misogyny in UK schools, poll shows

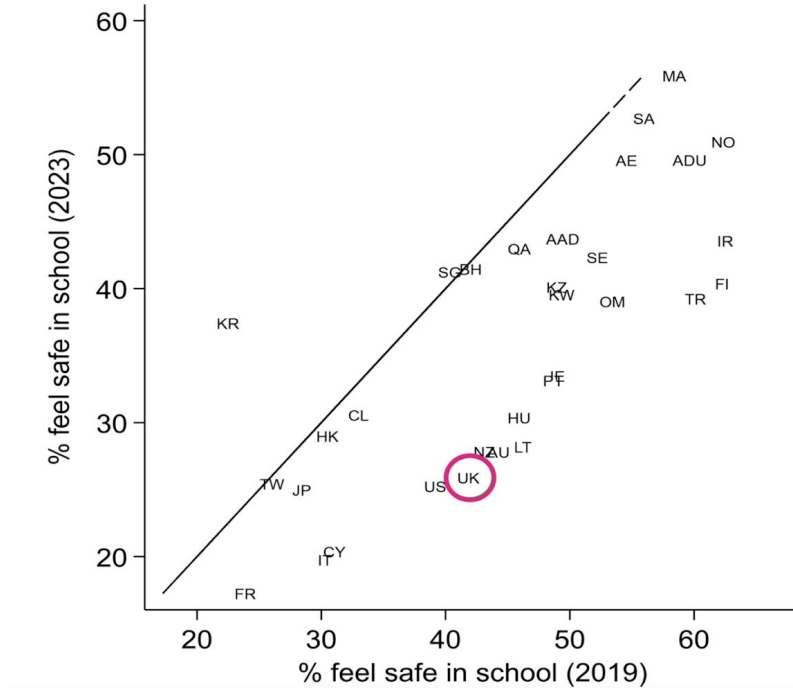
Survey confirms culture of sexual harassment in classrooms amid influence of 'incel' movement



Table 1. Percentage point decline in children strongly agreeing they feel safe at school between Year 5 and Year 9

Country	Percentage point decline
Portugal	-37%
Cyprus	-32%
England	-31%
Chile	-29%
Australia	-27%
Italy	-26%
Hong Kong	-26%
Ireland	-24%
New Zealand	-24%
Georgia	-24%
USA	-23%
OECD average	-23%
Oman	-23%
France	-22%
Turkey	-22%
Finland	-21%
Czech Republic	-21%
Morocco	-20%
All country average	-20%
Kuwait	-20%
Bahrain	-20%
Taiwan	-18%
Japan	-18%
Korea	-18%
Hungary	-17%
Qatar	-16%
Sweden	-15%
Lithuania	-14%
Dubai	-14%
Kazakhstan	-14%
Norway	-13%
UAE	-12%
Abu Dhabi	-12%
Saudi Arabia	-12%
Singapore	-6%

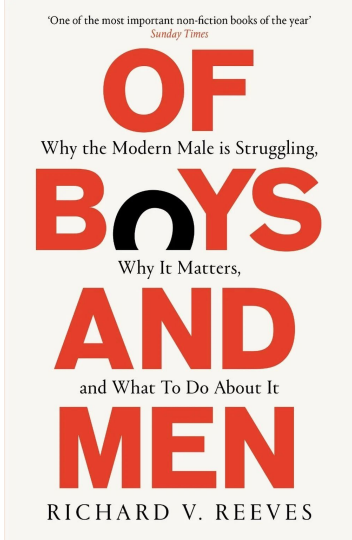
Figure 2: The decline in 14-year-olds' feelings of safety at school between 2019 and 2023
England compared to other countries



ARE BOYS AND YOUNG MEN ALONE TO BLAME?

What are other contributing factors?





LOST BOYS

State of the Nation

March 2025

The Real Face of Men's Health

2024 AUSTRALIAN REPORT

Young Men Are (Quietly) Giving Up...Here's Why!

The Diary Of A CEO ✓
12.3M subscribers

Subscribe

👍 49



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOLS



What might be a marker of engagement by a young person?

- Increasing social isolation
 - Spending more time alone in their room online
 - Sexism, misogynistic, intolerant views expressed
 - References to specific individuals online and an interest in following their advice
- It's important to acknowledge the vast majority of young people **will never** access the most extreme communities or engage in violence
 - Yet, they are very likely to be exposed to extreme content in some capacity



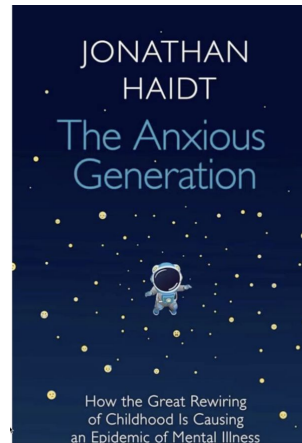
Embedding critical thinking in social media use

- Indirectly embedding critical thinking to challenge students to think about claims online
- Source, content, author



Building stronger communities

- Social support structures are key protective factors for engagement in extreme online communities
- Recognising that mental health is an important factor but not in the way it is always reported



Creating conditions for open and honest conversation

- Creating a sense of safety in conversation is the most important factor in facilitating safer online environments
- What happens when someone encounters something that brings them discomfort?
- Evidence shows restrictive mediation strategies can reduce likelihood of disclosure

o Cricchio, M. G., Palladino, B. E., Eleftheriou, A., Nocentini, A., & Menesini, E. (2022). Parental mediation strategies and their role on youths' online privacy disclosure and protection: A systematic review. *European Psychologist*, 27(2), 116–130. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040.a000450>

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Statutory guidance for governing bodies,
proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior
leadership teams, and teachers

July 2025

- PARENT CURRICULUM

ENGAGE YOUR OLDER STUDENTS IN THE
DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUNGER STUDENTS

NON-JUDGEMENTAL SPACE

APPROACH WITH CURIOSITY



DO NOT ATTRIBUTE POOR BEHAVIOUR TO TOXIC MASCULINITY

- Masculinity is not a bad word.
- It is not bad to be masculine. We wouldn't tell a girl she shouldn't be feminine
 - There are positive characteristics of masculinity (characteristics that can also apply to women) that should be celebrated and encouraged such as leadership, courage, integrity, responsibility, self-reliance, strength and ambition, along with qualities like empathy, compassion, and emotional intelligence,
 - We must celebrate these qualities and help our young men find purpose and community.

FURTHER LEARNING

- <https://www.bbc.com/audio/play/p0kz4shz>
- <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/library/lost-boys>
- <https://cdn.movember.com/uploads/files/Media%20Room/AU/The%20Real%20Face%20of%20Mens%20Health%20Report%20-%20Movember%20AU.pdf>
- <https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Help%20and%20advice/Inclusion/Safer-scrolling.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=li70iz1NaDY> - Diary of a CEO – young men are (quietly giving up)
- <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/sex-is-kind-of-broken-now-children-and-pornography/>
- <https://www.moreincommon.org.uk/media/flrnzo5x/public-attitudes-to-smartphones-social-media-and-online-safety-1.pdf>
- <https://antibullyingcentre.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/DCU-Toxicity-Full-Report.pdf>
- <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/04/the-rise-of-teenage-girls-feeling-unsafe-at-school/>
- Regehr et al. (2023). Safer Scrolling: How algorithms popularise and gamify onlinehate and misogyny.
- Ofsted (2021). Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges.
- Children’s Commissioner (2023). Pornography and young people report.
- Reset Australia (2022). YouTube recommendation systems and misogyny.
- Amnesty International (2023). TikTok and algorithmic harms.
- Equimundo (2022). The State of UK Boys: Understanding and Transforming Gender.

