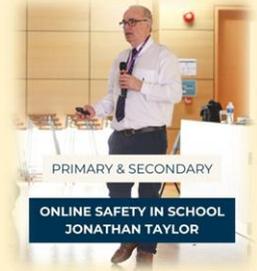# 🛡️ Online Safety for Schools

🛡️ What is Doom Scrolling

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What is Doom Scrolling?

Doom scrolling is the habit of continuously scrolling through negative or distressing news, social media posts, or online content for long periods — often late at night or when feeling anxious, bored, or curious. It usually leaves the person feeling worse rather than better, even though it can be hard to stop.

❌ 10 Negative Effects of Doom Scrolling

1. **Increases anxiety and stress** from constant exposure to bad news.
2. **Harms sleep** (especially when done late at night on phones).
3. **Lowers mood** and can contribute to sadness or hopelessness.
4. **Creates a distorted view of the world** (makes dangers seem more common than they are).
5. **Reduces productivity** by wasting time unintentionally.
6. **Encourages comparison** with others' lives, harming self-esteem.
7. **Can become addictive** due to endless feeds and algorithms.
8. **Shortens attention span** through constant rapid content switching.
9. **Triggers emotional overload** (anger, fear, frustration).
10. **Reduces real-world interaction**, increasing isolation.

✅ 10 Possible Positive Aspects (<u>When Managed Well</u>)

1. **Keeps people informed** about current events.
2. **Raises awareness** of important global or social issues.
3. **Can help identify risks** (weather alerts, safety warnings, scams).
4. **Encourages empathy** by seeing others' experiences.
5. **Supports learning** about world affairs or mental health topics.
6. **Helps some users feel prepared** rather than unaware.
7. **Can connect users** to supportive communities discussing issues.
8. **Promotes action**, such as charity, volunteering, or advocacy.
9. **May validate feelings** when others share similar concerns.
10. **Provides conversation topics** for school, work, or social discussions.
    (These positives usually happen only when scrolling is limited and intentional.)

🛡️ 10 Things Young Users Should Do to Protect Themselves

1. **Set a time limit** for social media/news apps (e.g., 15–30 mins) (60 min MAX).
2. **Avoid scrolling before bed** — switch off at least 1 hour before sleep.
3. **Notice how content makes you feel** — stop if mood drops.
4. **Curate your feed**: unfollow accounts that post constant negativity.
5. **Balance content** by following positive, educational, or hobby accounts.
6. **Take regular breaks** (stand up, stretch, or drink water).
7. **Turn off push notifications** for news/social apps if overwhelming.
8. **Talk to someone** (parent, teacher, friend) if content causes worry.
9. **Remember algorithms push extreme content** — it's not the full reality.
10. **Replace scrolling with an activity** (sport, reading, music, friends).
11. **NOT EVERYBODY WILL BECOME AN ONLINE CONTENT CREATOR**

DOOM SCROLLING – STUDENT GUIDE

What is Doom Scrolling?

Doom scrolling means spending lots of time scrolling through negative or worrying news or social media posts, often without meaning to. It can make you feel stressed, tired, or upset.

Why Can It Be Harmful?

- It can increase anxiety or worry
- It can affect sleep if you scroll late at night
- It can make the world feel more dangerous than it really is
- It can waste time you planned for homework or hobbies
- It can lower confidence or mood

Can It Ever Be Helpful?

Yes — in small amounts it can:

- Keep you informed about important events
- Help you learn about safety or world issues
- Show different viewpoints
- Help you understand how others feel

The key is **balance and control**.

How Students Can Protect Themselves

✓ Set a daily scrolling limit
✓ Avoid phones before bedtime
✓ Stop scrolling if content makes you feel worried or low
✓ Follow positive and educational accounts too
✓ Take breaks and move around
✓ Turn off unnecessary notifications
✓ Remember: social media shows highlights and extremes, not full reality
✓ Talk to an adult if something online worries you
✓ Choose real-life activities instead of endless scrolling
✓ Ask yourself: *"Is this helping me or harming me?"*

Remember:

You control your screen — it shouldn't control you.

DOOM SCROLLING – PARENT GUIDE

What is Doom Scrolling?

Doom scrolling is when a young person repeatedly scrolls through negative or distressing online content, often late at night or for long periods. This behaviour is increasingly common among children and teenagers.

Signs Your Child May Be Doom Scrolling

- Spending long periods on their phone without purpose
- Appearing anxious, withdrawn, or upset after using devices
- Difficulty sleeping or staying up late online
- Talking frequently about worrying news or online issues
- Becoming irritable when asked to stop scrolling

Why It Matters

Excessive exposure to negative online content can:

- Increase anxiety and fear
- Affect sleep and concentration in school
- Distort their perception of safety and risk
- Reduce time spent on healthy offline activities

How Parents Can Help

✔ Keep devices out of bedrooms overnight where possible
✔ Encourage device-free wind-down time before sleep
✔ Talk regularly about what they see online
✔ Reassure them that algorithms promote dramatic content
✔ Help them unfollow harmful or negative accounts
✔ Promote balanced screen habits rather than total bans
✔ Model healthy phone use yourself
✔ Encourage hobbies, sports, and social activities
✔ Use screen-time tools if needed
✔ Create a safe space for them to share worries

Key Message for Families

The goal is not to stop internet use — it is to help young people use it safely, consciously, and in balance.

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