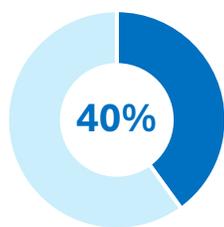


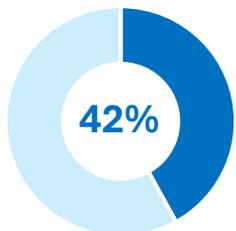
# Adolescent Digital Media Use in Westborough

Highlights from the 2023 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (Grades 7-12)

Frequent smartphone use\* (3+ hours/day) is reported by:

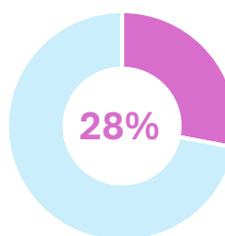


40% of middle school youth

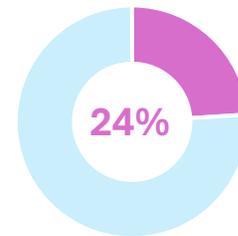


42% of high school youth

Frequent social media use\* (3+ hours/day) is reported by:



28% of middle school youth



24% of high school youth

Girls report more smartphone and social media use, and boys report more gaming. For example, in middle school:



Frequent smartphone use is reported by:  
46% of girls  
35% of boys



Frequent social media use is reported by:  
33% of girls  
23% of boys



Frequent gaming is reported by:  
15% of girls  
27% of boys

Note: Patterns are similar in high school.

Digital media use can have negative consequences on school performance and physical health.



|  | Students report worsening of: † | % of middle school students | % of high school students |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
|  | Attention in school             | 29%                         | 45%                       |
|  | Sleep                           | 48%                         | 59%                       |
|  | Physical health                 | 24%                         | 31%                       |



Social media use can also have benefits.

Among high school students, social media helps them:

70%  
Feel more connected to peers

27%  
Get support during a challenging time

58%  
Find people with similar interests or hobbies

23%  
Speak up about things that are important to them

Note: Middle school youth also report benefits.

Frequent social media use is linked to poor mental health.



- **Anxiety symptoms** † are reported by 30% of frequent users vs. 13% of less frequent users in middle school.
- **Depressive symptoms** \*\* are reported by 33% of frequent users and 14% of non-frequent users in high school.

For questions or support regarding digital media use and its consequences, reach out to your school's counseling department or nurse's office, your pediatrician, or a mental health specialist in your community.