



See the Signs

Digital distress or poor mental health linked to tech use —

What to look out for and what to do about it

See the Signs — 5 Red flags



1. **Increased secrecy around devices**

Hiding screens, turning off devices when approached, or using multiple accounts

2. **Sudden changes in mood or engagement**

Unusual irritability, withdrawal, or loss of interest in class or peers

3. **Sleep disruption**

Students are consistently tired, late to school, or unable to concentrate

See the Signs — 5 Red flags



4. Obsession with particular platforms or AI bots

Referring to AI friends for emotional support or mimicking online personas

5. Avoidance of online activities or total disengagement

Shutting down digital participation after a harmful incident (e.g., being targeted in group chats)

See the Signs — **Student Behaviours to Monitor**



It's important for all staff to observe and report subtle behavioural shifts linked to digital wellbeing concerns.

Signs to Monitor:

- **Fluctuating academic performance not explained by other known factors**
- **Friendship changes or isolation, especially when linked to group chats or online games**
- **Language changes or online slang referencing harmful content or AI platforms (e.g., 'Replika,' 'Character.Ai')**

See the Signs — **Student Behaviours to Monitor**



Signs to Monitor:

- **Reliance on digital escapism - using devices to cope with real-world stress**
- **Over-identification with digital avatars, influencers, or chatbots**

Tip: Cross-reference student comments, online trends, and usage patterns with real-time monitoring insights if your school has visibility tools enabled.

See the Signs — **what to do** — 3 quick wins for schools



3 low-resource strategies schools can act on now:

- 1. Update your wellbeing alert systems with keywords to include emerging AI slang**
Monitoring systems are evolving to identify AI-specific language, which can be helpful for schools for early intervention purposes
- 2. Run a 15-minute staff update on ‘Signs to Watch’ using this slide deck**
Builds staff awareness without burdening time, promoting whole-school vigilance
- 3. Launch a student-led ‘See the Signs’ week**
Consider some of the resources provided in this report to create a campaign-in-a-box activity to kick off valuable conversations and student advocacy with minimal planning