## 

**The impact of covid-19 on**

**children and young people**

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Learning and Cognition

Comparisons of pre- and post-pandemic learning reveal significant reductions in school performance (-0.19 standard deviations for mathematics, Contini, Tommaso, & Muratori, 2021) and time spent studying (a reduction from 25 to 23 hours per week, Gratz, & Lipps, 2021).

Learning losses varied based on parent’s level of education (Engzell, Frey, & Verhagen, 2021), whilst higher-performing students continued to develop their skills during school closures (Kuhfeld et al., 2020).

The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people has been largely affected by the pandemic. Specifically, reports of depression (Bignardi et al., 2021), anxiety and social isolation (O’Sullivan et al., 2021), psychological distress (Mactavish et al., 2021), post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (Anna Freud, 2020-21) and stress (Tang et al., 2021) were common. Further, 67% of 13- to 25-year-olds taking part in a survey by YoungMinds believed that the pandemic would have a long-term negative effect on their mental health (January 2021).

Certain children were identified as being at particular risk of experiencing mental health difficulties during the pandemic, including those with pre-existing conditions or needs (e.g., pre-pandemic mental health problems, OCD, ASD and/or autism), girls, young people of colour, LGBTQ+ young people, children experiencing poverty or those in care (Anna Freud’s *emerging evidence* series, 2020-21).

Behaviour

Social Development

Evidence suggests that children and young people have spent significantly less time in physical activity or play (only 4.8% of one sample met movement behaviour guidelines, Moore et al., 2020) and more time on their screens (an increase of approximately 30 hours per week, Xiang, Zhiruo, & Kuwahara, 2020).

Disruptions to sleep patterns and daily routines (Cellini et al., 2021) have also been seen, alongside an increase in hospital presentations for self-harming behaviours (an increase of 7%, Ougrin et al., 2021).

A small body of research suggests that the relationships, particularly friendships, of young people have both been missed (Luijten et al., 2021) and negatively affected (Li et al., 2021) by the pandemic.

