



# The Opinion Kiosk

**A research project conducted by  
The Isle of Wight Youth Trust on behalf  
of  
The Isle of Wight Child and Adolescent  
Mental Health Service.**

**Summarised Report**

## INTRODUCTION

The Isle of Wight Youth Trust undertook a research survey on behalf of the CAMHS Operational Group between December 2007 and April 2008, using the 'Opinion Kiosk'.

The Opinion Kiosk is a software package that was developed by the Isle of Wight Youth Trust in partnership with Portsmouth University and is integrated within the [www.greengoldfish.com](http://www.greengoldfish.com) website.

The purpose of the report was to gain an initial "snapshot" of emotional health amongst young people on the Isle of Wight so service need and benchmarking could be developed and improved in order to provide appropriate support.

A total of **13** middle schools were visited between February and April 2008 and **792** valid responses were received.

The participating schools were:

- Bishop Lovett Middle School, Ryde, Isle of Wight
- Kitbridge Middle School, Newport, Isle of Wight
- Downside Middle School, Newport, Isle of Wight
- Lake Middle School, Lake, Isle of Wight
- West Wight Middle School, Freshwater, Isle of Wight
- Forelands Middle School, Bembridge, Isle of Wight
- Osborne Middle School, East Cowes, Isle of Wight
- Nodehill Middle School, Newport, Isle of Wight
- Mayfield Middle School, Newport, Isle of Wight
- Solent Middle School, Newport, Isle of Wight
- Swanmore Middle School, Ryde, Isle of Wight
- Ventnor Middle School, Ventnor, Isle of Wight
- Sandham Middle School, Sandown, Isle of Wight

Archbishop King, Trinity and Somerton Middle Schools were not able to be included on this occasion as they were unfortunately unable to take part in this survey due to other commitments.

All surveys (with the exception of Forelands Middle) were completed online using the Opinion Kiosk software accessed with a PASSWORD through [www.greengoldfish.com](http://www.greengoldfish.com) and took approximately 45 minutes to complete.

In order to gain an accurate reflection of the issues that were facing young people on the Isle of Wight, it was important that the respondents remained anonymous.

The surveys were all completed confidentially and this was explained to all pupils before the survey was undertaken. All pupils were given the opportunity to “opt out” of taking part in accordance with our research governance agreement.

This report is designed to be a glimpse into some of the issues that may face the Isle of Wight young people as they make the transition into becoming young adults attending High school.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the pupils and teachers of the 13 schools that I visited for their enthusiasm towards the research project and for the flexibility and assistance that they afforded me in compiling the responses and data required to produce this report.

A downloadable copy of the full report can be downloaded from

[www.greengoldfish.com](http://www.greengoldfish.com).

## **ISLE OF WIGHT YOUTH TRUST**

The stated aim of the Youth Trust is “to provide for the advancement of education and training, the preservation of health and the relief of poverty, distress and sickness amongst young persons in the Isle of Wight”.

Effectively, the purpose of the Youth Trust is to improve the quality of life of young people (up to the age of 25) living on the Isle of Wight by providing a wide range of services.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

The key findings of the report were as follows:

### **LEARNING**

#### School

Most students felt that 'Fun Teaching' and computers were the most important factors in helping them to achieve success in school. Boredom and noise were a contributing factor in preventing them from learning. Travel to and from school did not seem to be an issue for respondents.

Libraries didn't seem to be a contributory factor in regards to learning. However, with the increase in available IT equipment and the information available on the internet, this would point to most research being conducted online.

#### Home

Pupils highlighted computers and support from parents and guardians in helping them to learn effectively at home, with a fifth of respondents also highlighting that music helped them with their studying.

Again, the availability of computers and the internet at home would probably indicate why books did not feature highly as an aid to study at home. The major distractions, however, are television, followed by computer games and mobile phones. Approximately 20% of respondents felt that the homework set and the lack of a computer prevented them from learning.

84% of respondents believed that the amount of sleep they get affects their performance at school. The majority of students thought that seven to nine hours sleep per night or more was adequate to perform well at school and even more actually say they are achieving that amount every night

### **BULLYING / SAFETY**

Bullying seemed to be a big issue to the pupils at all Island Middle Schools surveyed. There was a consistent understanding of the types of behaviour that constituted bullying, with violence, name calling, threats and cyber bullying all equally recognised. The majority of respondents felt that just one incident is classed as bullying.

An interesting aspect, reading through the text responses, was that it seemed to be the fear of bullying as opposed to actual incidents occurring that worried pupils. Many of the respondents offered their insight into why they thought bullying occurs, and a real awareness of the sadness it can cause. A small number did say that they had sometimes felt that they had been victims of bullying.

Approx 40 % of students felt safe at home and a quarter said they felt safe with an adult and at school, however being on the bus and on the street posed the biggest worry for their safety with only 6% saying they felt safe.

## **SELF IMAGE / WELLBEING**

### Image

When with their friends, almost half of all the pupils who responded to the survey felt happy and confident with their image, although some also listed words such as 'intimidated' and 'embarrassed'. This would suggest that behaviour and relationships could sometimes conflict.

Self image seemed to be an issue for most, with only 12% of pupils saying that image was not important to them. The majority of respondents stated that they had felt that others would see them as having an OK or Good image. This was an almost identical response as to how they view themselves.

Almost half of pupils felt that their image affected their life sometimes, with around 40% saying that image affects them regularly, if not a lot.

### Emotional Wellbeing

Almost half of respondents recognised that emotional health is how you are feeling about yourself and your emotions regardless of physicality. Interestingly, 10% of pupils felt that their friends' opinions were also of consideration.

## **THE FUTURE**

The transitional period from primary school to middle school seems to have been a time of worry for most of the pupils and this seemed to be reflected in regards to the transition to high school. Although exams and the increase of coursework were a worry, the fear of bullying or feeling vulnerable whilst being split from their peer group seemed to be quite a common answer.

Encouragingly, many look forward to meeting new people and experiencing new classes and often responded with an air of adventure.

Almost 90% of respondents felt positive about their future overall, looking forward to a wide array of jobs and opportunities in various fields and far flung countries.

Although career aspirations in fields such as sport, music and drama were quite common, these were outnumbered by desires to work for the Police, Army, NHS, and careers in Law, Veterinary Science, Engineering or, simply, to have employment, family, a car and a home.

Approximately half of all pupils saw themselves as being the most important person in helping them to achieve their goals by the age of 21, followed closely by their Parents / Guardians.

## **CONCLUSION**

I hope this report has made for some interesting reading and that the responses gathered will give you a good insight into the kind of issues and pressures that are facing Island young people during their transition into adulthood.

It seems computers and the internet have now fully integrated themselves within both the school and home environments and are regarded by most as the first port of call for both information and entertainment.

Schools actively encourage learning through education based games and give students a good understanding of various software packages ranging from office based applications through to web design and video making. This makes for an interesting and responsive experience in the classroom and I was very impressed with the facilities within all of the schools that I visited and the availability of use for pupils, especially those who did not have those facilities available to them at home.

Pupils were very honest in their responses and although on one hand technology is helping them further their skills and knowledge through ICT, Mobile Phones, TV and Video Games are all identified as distractions whilst learning.

With constant media attention focussed on celebrities and how they are supposed to look, it come as no surprise that Image is a major factor that contributes to the pressures that face the young people on a regular basis and this can also be recognised in some of the responses regarding bullying.

The fear of bullying is perhaps the biggest worry for the young people that were surveyed, but it is important to note that this does not mean that the Island has a significant bullying problem. It is probably quite comparable to the general public's fear of becoming victims of crime compared to actual incidents occurring and this should be considered when looking at this issue.

Looking forward to the future, aspirations for employment and financial stability at 21 seem to be high amongst Island young people. A whole range of rewarding

and challenging careers were identified and most young people feel they will be the most important people in helping them to achieve their goals.

Although they seem to worry about leaving friends and meeting new people as they join high school, many talk with a sense of eagerness and adventure about the new journey that their life is taking and experiencing some of the opportunities that lie ahead. This is not dissimilar to how most of us feel when starting new jobs or moving on so it's perfectly natural to go through these emotions throughout life when experiencing new things.

This report was designed to scratch the surface of issues that face the Island young people and I believe we have achieved a balanced report that highlights both the positive outcomes and possible areas for further research.

With anonymity assured to all respondents, we have gained an accurate, useful and reliable insight into some of the pressures that face them as they prepare for high school along with their thoughts, comments and attitude towards the challenges that they may have to overcome as they become older.

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