

ONLINE BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS AGED 10-17 YEARS OLD IN GREECE **SURVEY 2018**

Greek Safer Internet Center
www.SaferInternet4Kids.gr



SaferInternet4Kids.gr
ΓΙΑ ΕΝΑ ΑΣΦΑΛΕΣΤΕΡΟ ΔΙΑΔΙΚΤΥΟ



STUDENTS AGED 10-17 YEARS OLD IN GREECE

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Introduction

Internet is an amazing place that opens up new horizons for knowledge, communication and entertainment. It offers young people excellent opportunities and a wealth of activities to enhance their skills and empower their knowledge and creativity.

Internet is an amazing world that has opened new horizons of knowledge, communication and entertainment in our lives. Through the internet, young people today have opportunities for a wealth of activities that can enhance their skills and empower their knowledge and creativity.

The internet, however, knows no limits and accepts no centralized control, and it is due to this openness that significant risks lurk. Online harassment, addiction, cyberbullying, theft of personal data and misinformation are just some of the challenges today's parents and teachers have to face in order to ensure a safe and quality 'digital life' for children.

Contributor to this effort is the Greek Safer Internet Center, which started its operation in July 2016 under the auspices of the Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas, and more specifically the Institute of Computer Science. The Center is the official Greek representative of INSAFE/INHOPE Pan-European Organization, which sets out the European strategy for a safe and quality internet.

The Greek Safer Internet Center provides information, assistance and support to young and adult internet users through the development of three distinct actions:

- Through the web portal www.saferinternet4kids.gr, one can get valuable informative about the safe use of the internet and social networks. The available resources can be used to interactively inform

children and young people of all ages. This awareness portal is aimed at both parents and educators as well as adolescents and children and includes appropriate multimedia material.

- Through the Help-line (available by phone at 210-6007686 and through the website www.help-line.gr), psychologists provide support and advice on specialized issues related to excessive internet use, cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, and other concerns regarding the use of internet, mobile phones and online games.
- The Greek Hotline for illegal internet content SafeLine (available at <http://www.safeline.gr>) receives reports about online child abuse material and illegal internet activity. Liaises with both the Cybercrime Unit of the Greek Police Authorities and INTERPOL through the European organization INHOPE. SafeLine is a piece of a big puzzle since combating illegal internet content and activity is a global issue not limited by national borders.

General Survey Data

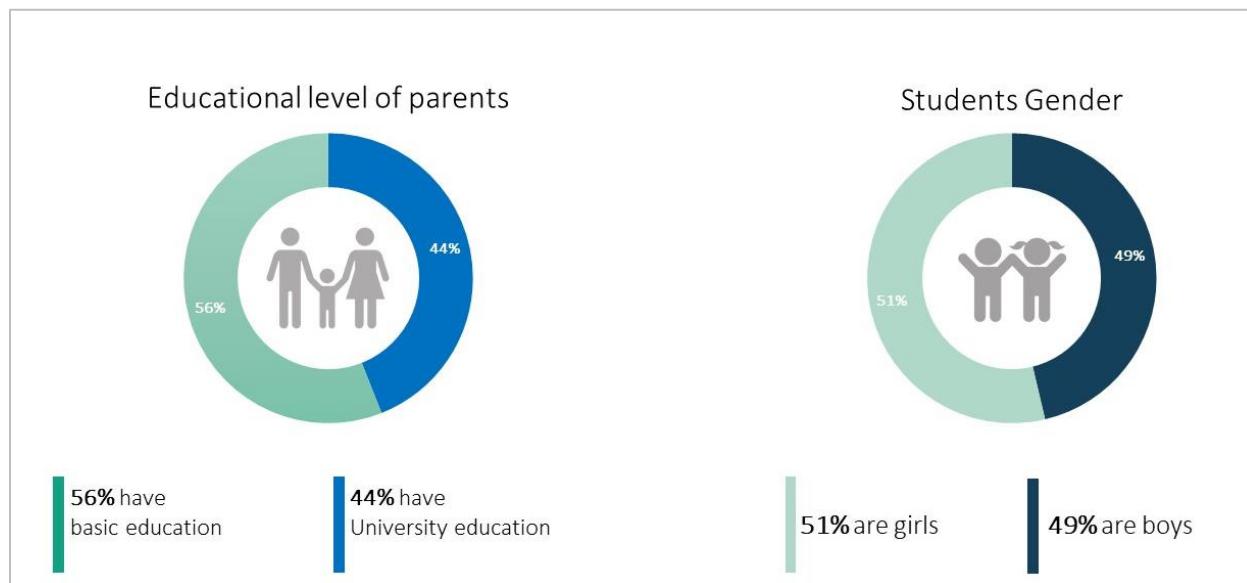
The survey took place in the period November – December 2018 under the approval of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs of Greece (approval number for research for primary schools F15/109951/173050/D1 and for Secondary schools 178261/D2).

The unit of analysis was Primary school students (fifth and sixth grade), Gymnasium (equivalent to middle/junior High school) and Lyceum (equivalent to senior High school) students. More specifically, **14,000 pupils** aged 10-17 years from 400 schools of Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion-Crete, Larissa, and Patras took part in the survey.



The sample extraction was based on the judging sampling technique¹. The selection of the analysis units was performed by researchers of the Greek Safer Internet Center of the Foundation for Research and Technology (FORTH), Institute of Computer Science, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to include a representative sample. It was conducted in the form of an anonymous online questionnaire, which was submitted by the analysis units (students) mainly during their Computer class and under the supervision of their instructor. The main variables of the survey are the educational grade of the analysis units (Primary school – 5th and 6th Grades / Gymnasium / Lyceum), gender (Boy / Girl), sampling area (Athens / Thessaloniki / Heraklion / Larissa / Patras) and the educational level of their parents (Basic Education / University Education).

51% of the respondents were girls and 49% boys. Of these, 19% were Primary school children, 67% from Gymnasium and 14% Lyceum students. The parents / guardians of 56% of the children who took the survey had completed Secondary education while 44% of them had a University degree.



The main goal achieved by the Greek Safer Internet Center of FORTH, was to capture children's online habits and to draw safe conclusions that will be used as guidelines for planning the Center's awareness policy in educating children, parents and teachers.

The aim is also to include the research results in the more general Cohort² study, providing insight on the way online habits and perceptions of children and adolescent in Greece change over time. As this is the largest sample survey ever on this topic at national level, it can also serve as a valuable tool for policy planning by decision-makers such as the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs in order to inform and educate students about the safe use of the internet. Furthermore, it is a useful tool in the hands of the educational community, as research reveals children's risky habits when using the internet, which can result to difficult or even dangerous situations.

¹ Deming, W. Edwards (1990). Sample Design in business research. John Wiley and Sons. p. 31. ISBN 0-471-52370-4.

² Meirik, O. "[Cohort and Case-Control Studies](#)". In Campana, Aldo (ed.). Reproductive Health. Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research.

General Results

Most parents in Greece do not realize the importance of setting limits and rules concerning internet use to their kids from very young age, and they lack the required vigilance on this topic.

Children make use of social networks at an ever-younger and not permissible age, often opening profiles, without their parents knowing it. A significant percentage of children put themselves at risk by adopting wrong practices such as accepting friendship requests from strangers, meeting people they got to know online, sharing very personal photos on the web, sharing material without thinking of the possible consequences. An important point emerging from the answers is the fact that one out of five children admit to have become the target of some kind of online harassment at some point in their 'digital life'.

Concerning the key issue of excessive use of the internet, almost half the children admit to neglect their activities for the sake of the internet, while about one out of three children either admits or believes to have an internet addiction problem.

Other results of the survey show that almost all children use the internet either daily or half days of the week. Nine out of ten children have mobile phones, the majority of children start to use the internet at the age of 7-8, an age constantly decreasing over time. One in five children begins to use the internet at the very young and sensitive age of 4-6 years old. Girls, as it appears from the survey, are mainly engaged in social networks and boys in online gaming.

From the responses, it is apparent that there are no significant differences in the results from variables such as sampling area and parents' educational level.

Proposed Actions from the Greek Safer Internet Center

Based on the survey results it is apparent that:

- Enhanced knowledge of safe internet use is important not only for children but also for parents. The Greek Safer Internet Center, through a series of awareness actions, will attempt to further sensitize the "hard-to-reach" parent target group in order to become more aware of the potential dangers hidden in inappropriate internet use, while emphasizing the benefits and added value of the internet as a powerful medium in every aspect of the life in the generations to come.
- There is a need for all teachers - regardless of their specialization - to be trained on safe internet use, in order to acquire the abilities and confidence that will allow them to effectively support children, as well as, to strengthen children's trust in educators for general internet usage issues.
- It is important to strengthen the knowledge of good practices related to internet use by children. The Greek Safer Internet Center, in collaboration with other stakeholders, will take initiatives to persuade decision-makers at the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs of Greece about the necessity of incorporating appropriate internet safety courses into school curriculums.

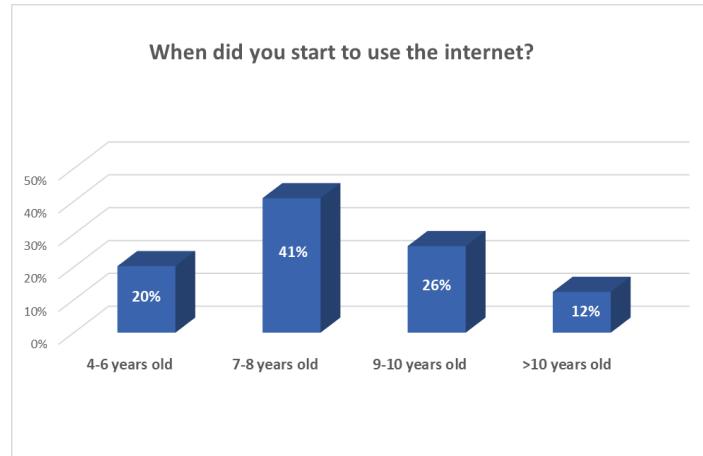
At the same time, the planning of the awareness policy of the Greek Safer Internet Center is based and will be further led in the future, by much of the research results. Targeted interactive educational material will be designed for all educational levels to be delivered to schools, while relevant material will be designed for the training of parents and educators.

Children and the Internet

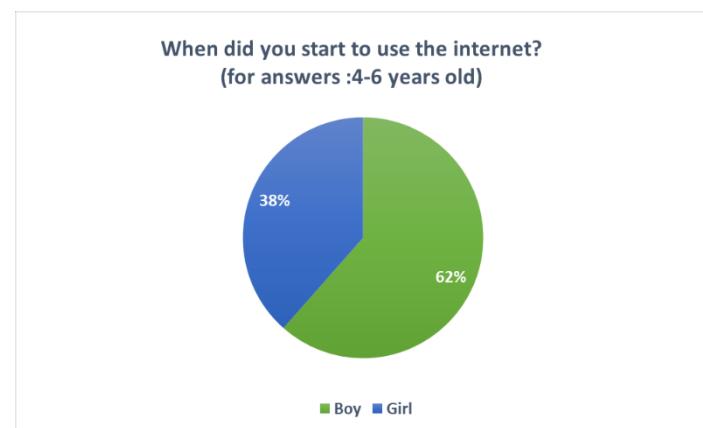
This section outlines the general attitude of children in Greece concerning internet use. Significant parameters in the analysis of the results are the age of children's first online engagement, their means of access, the type of preferred activity by age, the level of information they receive on internet risks, the source of this information, and the degree of supervision exercised by parents.

SURVEY RESULTS

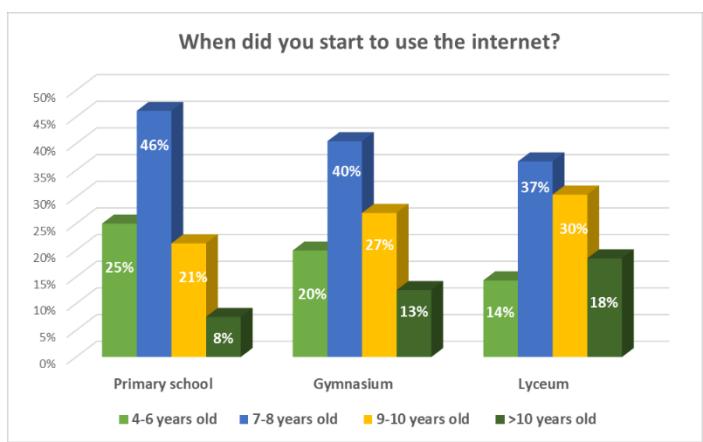
The majority of children (41%) start using the internet at the age of 7-8 years, while 20% of the children say they started using the internet at the very young age of 4-6 years.



Based on the data, the majority of children that start using the internet at the age of 4-6 is boys at 62%, while 38% are girls.



From the data it becomes clear that in recent years childrens' first contact with the internet occurs at an ever decreasing age. That is, 25% of the children currently at 5th and 6th grade of Primary school declare that they started using the internet at the age of 4-6 years, while the corresponding rate for children currently in Lyceum is 14%, which is significantly lower. At the same time, 8% of children currently at 5th and 6th grade of Primary school state that their first contact with the internet was at above 10 years of age, while this percentage is 18% for students currently in Lyceum.

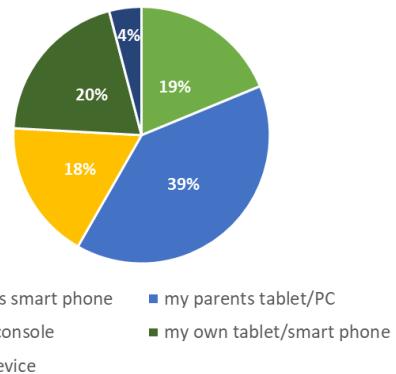


The first device that 39% of children use to surf the web is their parent's tablet or PC, followed by their own mobile phone or tablet at 20%, their parent's mobile phone at 19%, a game console at 18%. A more detailed data analysis reveals that apart from their parent's tablet/PC that is the predominant answer for children of all educational levels, for younger children their parent's smartphone appears to rank first as their first electronic device, while for older children this device appears to be a game console. There is an obvious trend here for smartphones to dominate over other electronic devices in recent years.

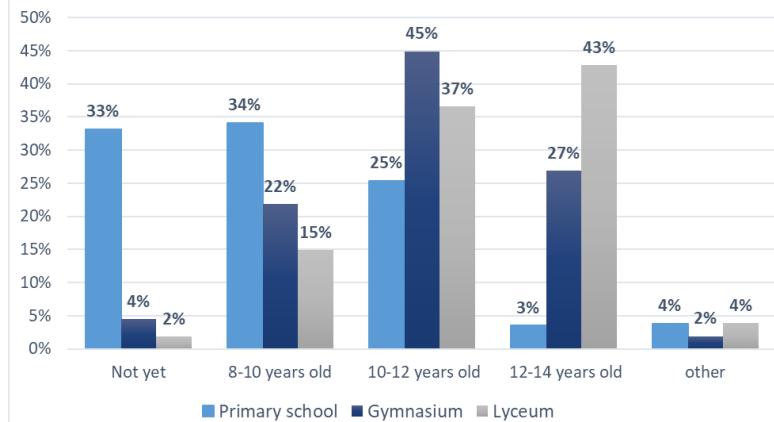
90% of children own a mobile phone. 40% of children acquired their own mobile phone at the age of 10-12 years, while 23% of them acquired a phone at the age of 8-10 years. Among Lyceum students, only 2% declare not having their own mobile phone.

A mobile phone is the main device children use to access the internet at 73%. Data show that 84% of students access the web through a mobile phone in Lyceum, 79% in Gymnasium and 44% in Primary school. 55% of girls and 45% of boys go online through their mobile phones. Tablets and laptops seem to be mainly used by children in Primary school with a percentage of 30% and 16% respectively.

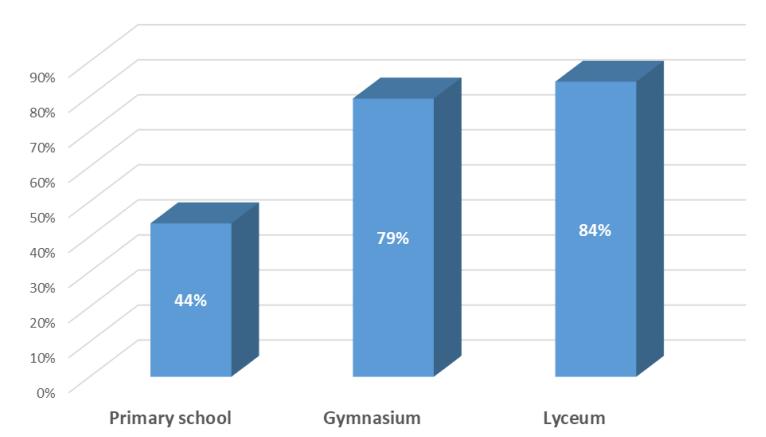
What was your first device when you started to use the internet?



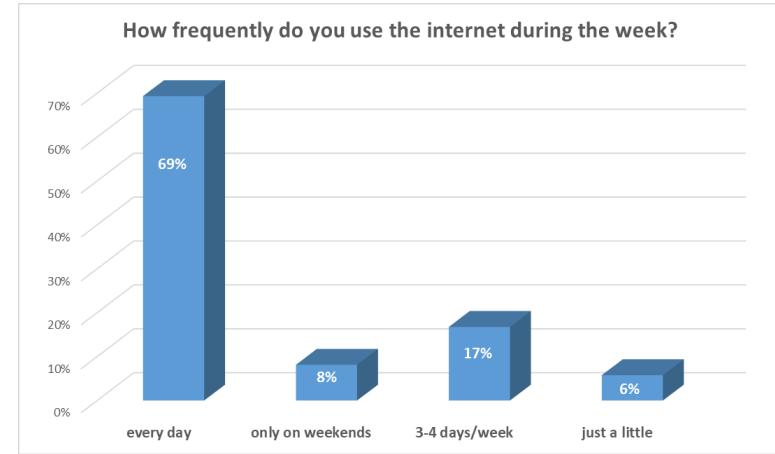
At what age did you get your own smart phone?



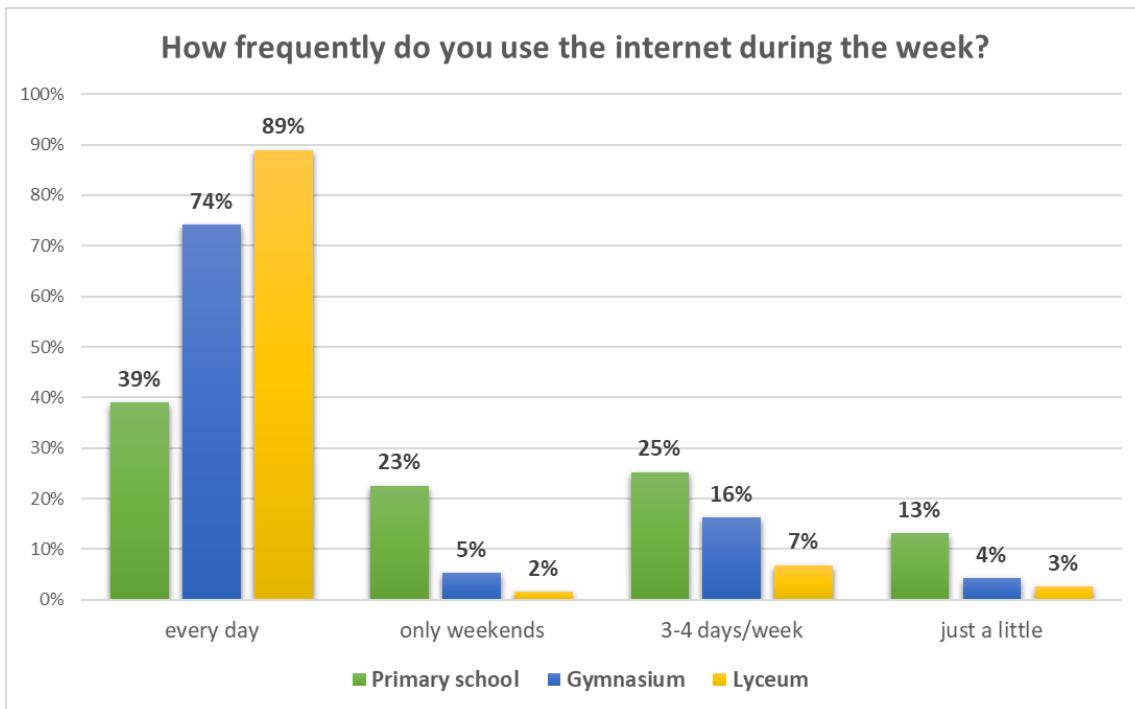
Smart phone being the main device to surf online



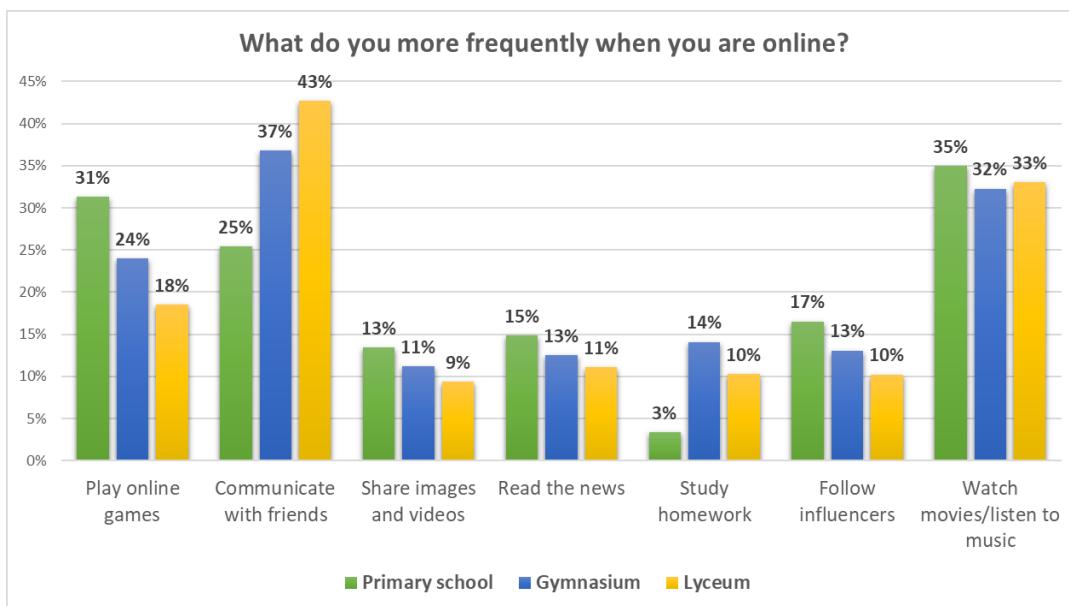
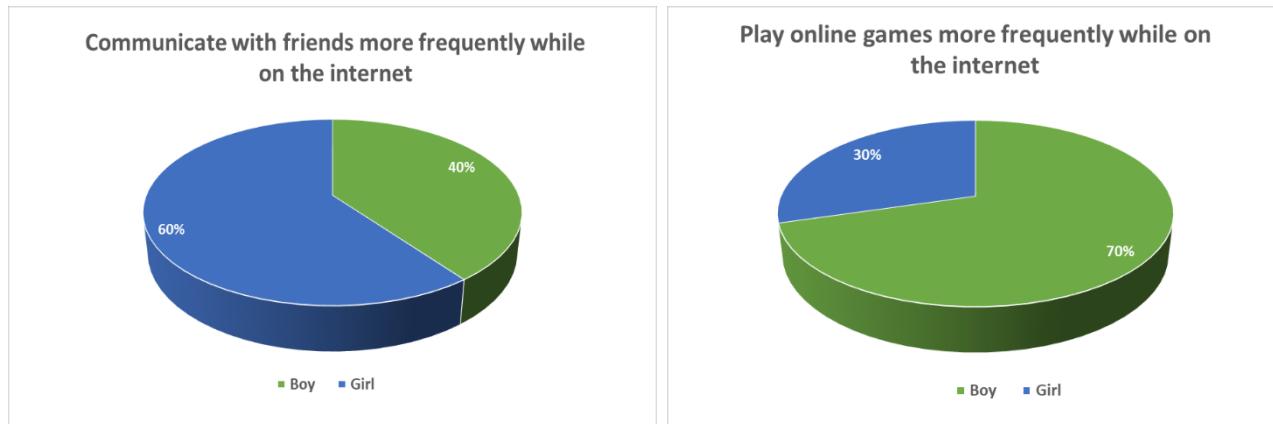
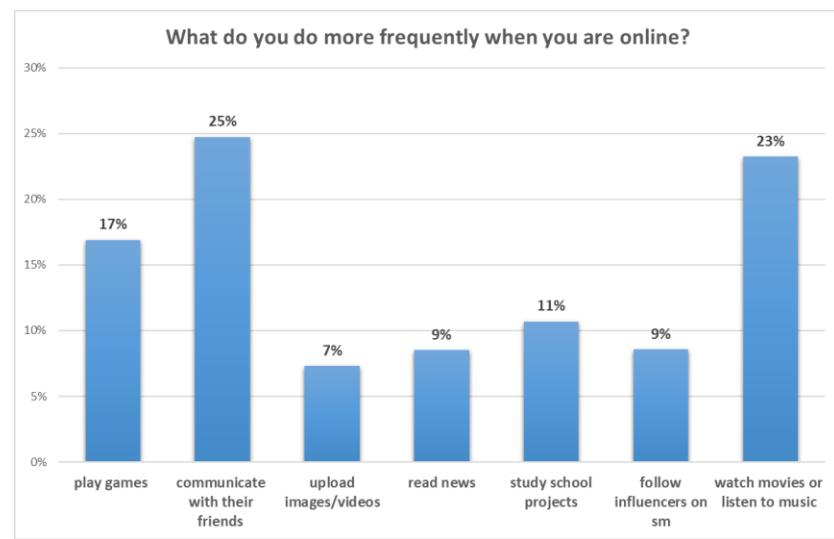
69% of students access the internet daily, about 17% use it about half days of the week, 8% only on weekends, and 6% use it just a little.



39% of Primary school students use the internet daily, about 25% use it about half days of the week, 23% only on weekends and 13% use it a minimum level. Among Gymnasium students, 74% use the internet on a daily basis, about 16% use it about half days of the week, 5% only on weekends and 4% just a little. Among Lyceum students, 89% use the internet daily, 7% about half days of the week, 2% only on weekends and 3% just a little.

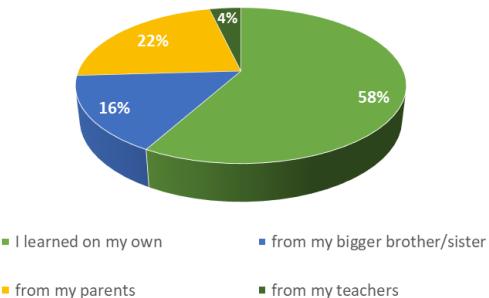


In the question, "What do you more frequently when you are online?" children respond they communicate with their friends (25%), watch movies or listen to music (23%), play games (17%). Girls mostly talk to their friends (60% vs. 40% of boys), watch movies or listen to music (63% vs. 37% of boys) while boys mostly play games (70% vs. 30% of girls). Playing games comes first in the preference of Primary school children, while the favorite online activity of Gymnasium and Lyceum students is communicating with their friends. Children from all educational levels enjoy watching movies/listening to music on the internet.



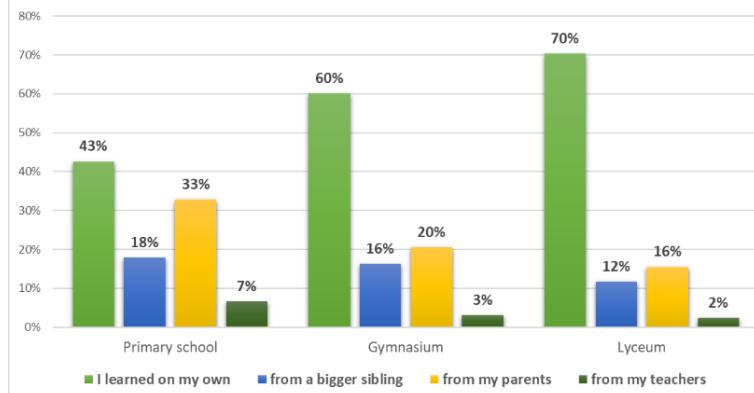
The majority of children (58%) declare they first get on the internet on their own and without any guidance. A percentage of 22% state they had the help of their parents, 16% of an older sibling and only 4% got help from school or an educator.

Did you get any guidance in the process of learning how to use the internet?



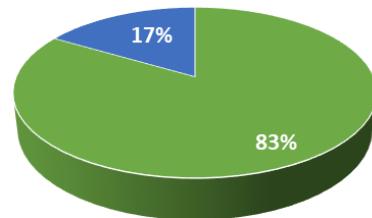
From the analysis of the results, it becomes evident that, as time passes, children continue, to a large extent, to start using the internet on their own. Primarily parents and, secondarily, older siblings take on over the task of guiding children in this endeavor. According to the answers, only 7% of Primary School, 3% of Gymnasium and 2% of Lyceum students had the assistance of an educator when they first started using the internet.

Did you get any guidance in the process of learning how to use the internet?



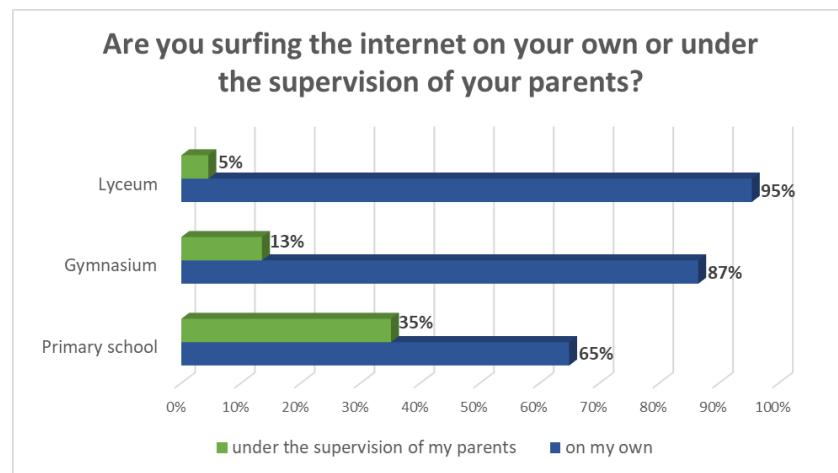
83% of the children (50% boys - 50% girls) say they go online without any supervision, and a deeper analysis of the results reveals that even for children of Primary school, a large percentage of them are not supervised by their parents.

Are you surfing the internet on your own or under the supervision of your parents?

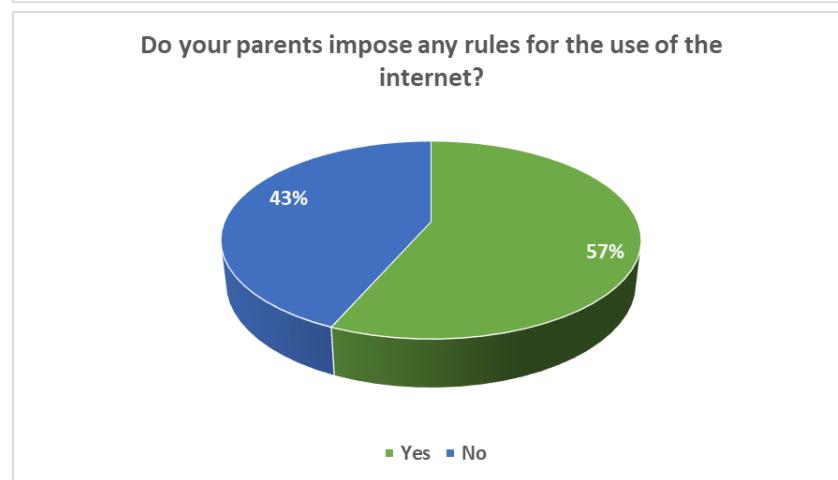


■ on my own ■ under the supervision of my parents

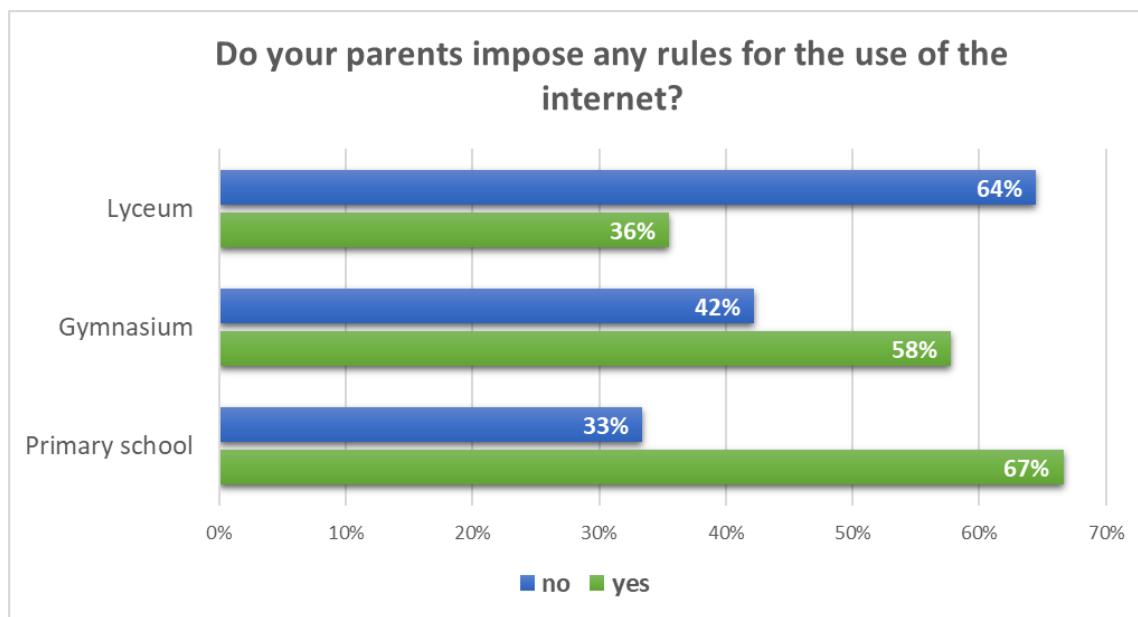
More specifically, from the respondents, 65% of Primary school, 87% of Gymnasium and 95% of Lyceum students, do not have any supervision regarding internet use.



As a result of the children's answers, almost half of parents (43%) do not set limits for their children (48% for girls - 52% for boys) regarding internet use.

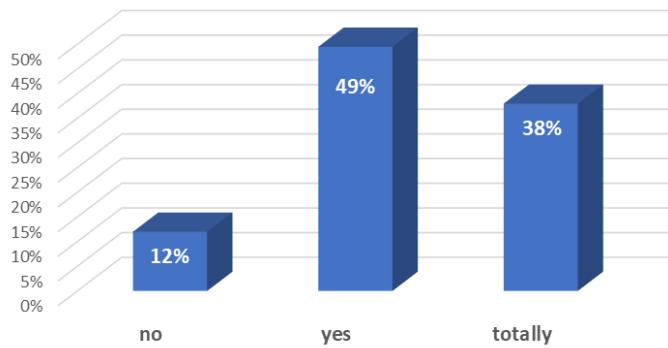


A deeper analysis of the results by educational level reveals that, for 33% of Primary school, 42% of Gymnasium and 64% of Lyceum students, parents do not set limits and rules for internet use.



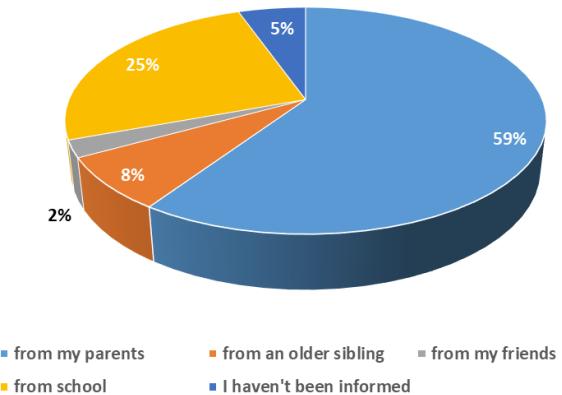
Despite the fact that children declare to be self-educated, they believe they know how to use the internet safely and only 12% say that they are not at all educated.

Do you believe you know how to use the internet safely?



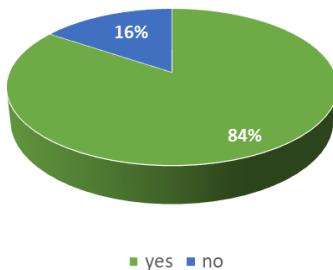
On the question “From whom/where have you been informed about being cautious while surfing online?” students mainly answer from their parents (59%) and at a smaller percentage from their school (25%). A 5% of the children say that they have not been at all informed, an 8% declare to be informed by their elder sibling and a 2% by their friends.

From whom/where have you been informed about being cautious while surfing online?



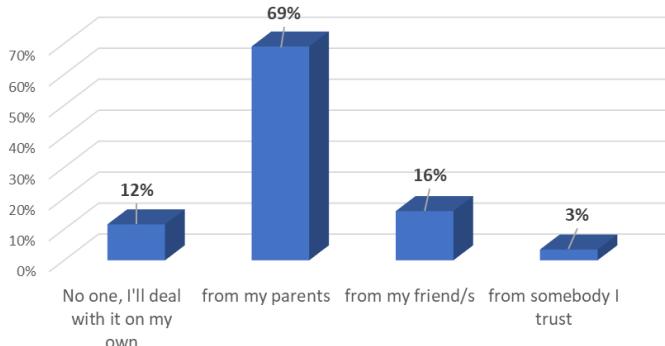
16% of children do not know how/where to report something that upset or disturbed them while online.

Do you know how to report someone/something that upset you online?



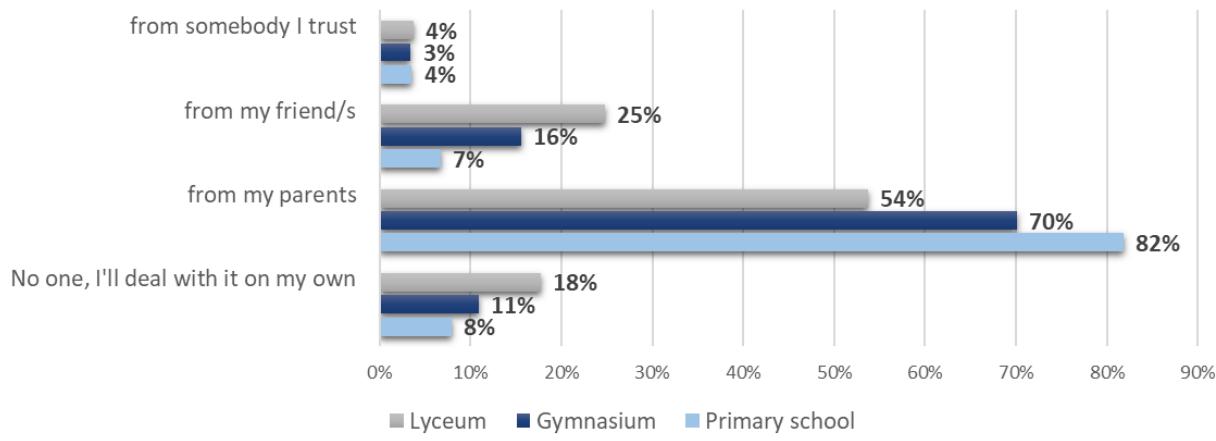
In the question “If something serious happens to you online, to whom would you turn for help?” 69% responded to my parents, 16% to a friend, only 3% to a teacher, and there is a 12% stating: “No one, I'll deal with it on my own.”

If something serious happens to you online, to whom would you turn for help?



The majority of Primary school students (82%) and Gymnasium students (70%) say they will turn to their parents for help. This is not the case for older children, as 54% of Lyceum students state they will ask for help from their parents, 25% from a friend and 18% will try to deal with it alone. The results of the survey highlight that, on average, only 3% of students at all three educational levels will turn to a teacher for help.

If something serious happens to you online, to whom would you turn for help?

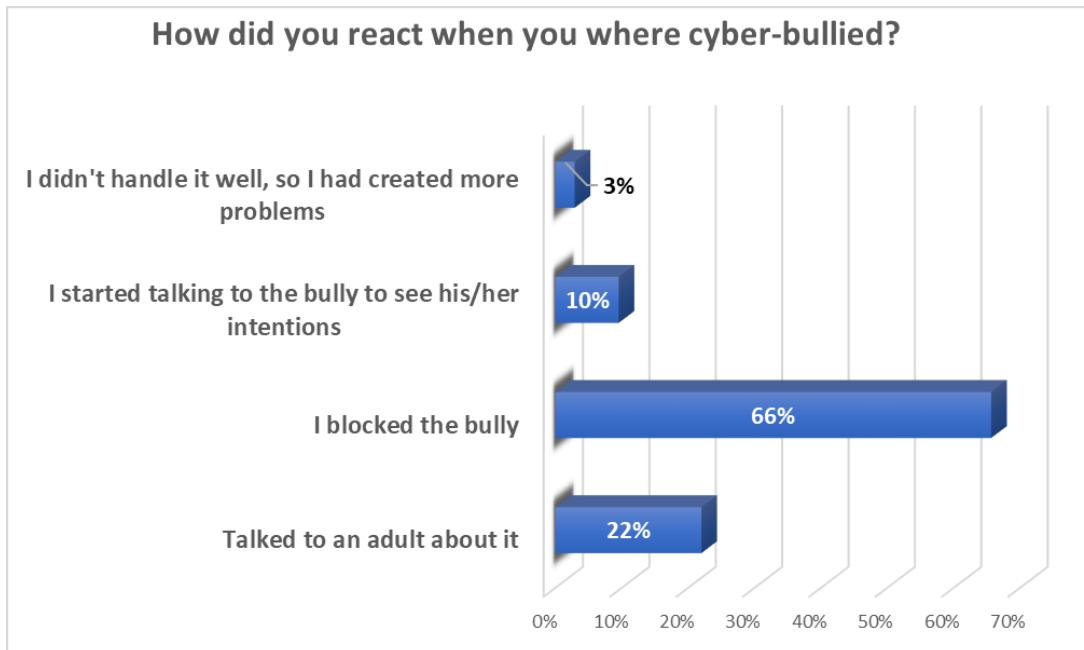
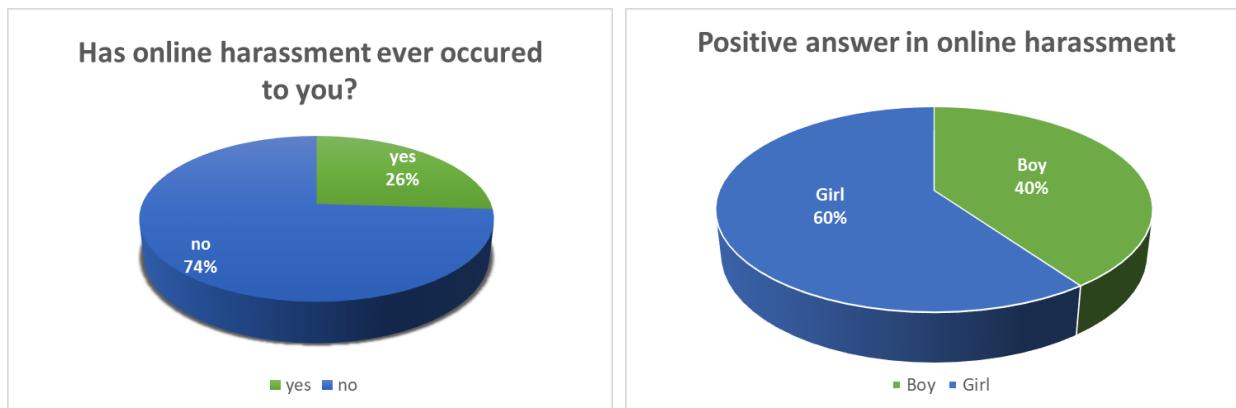


Online Risks

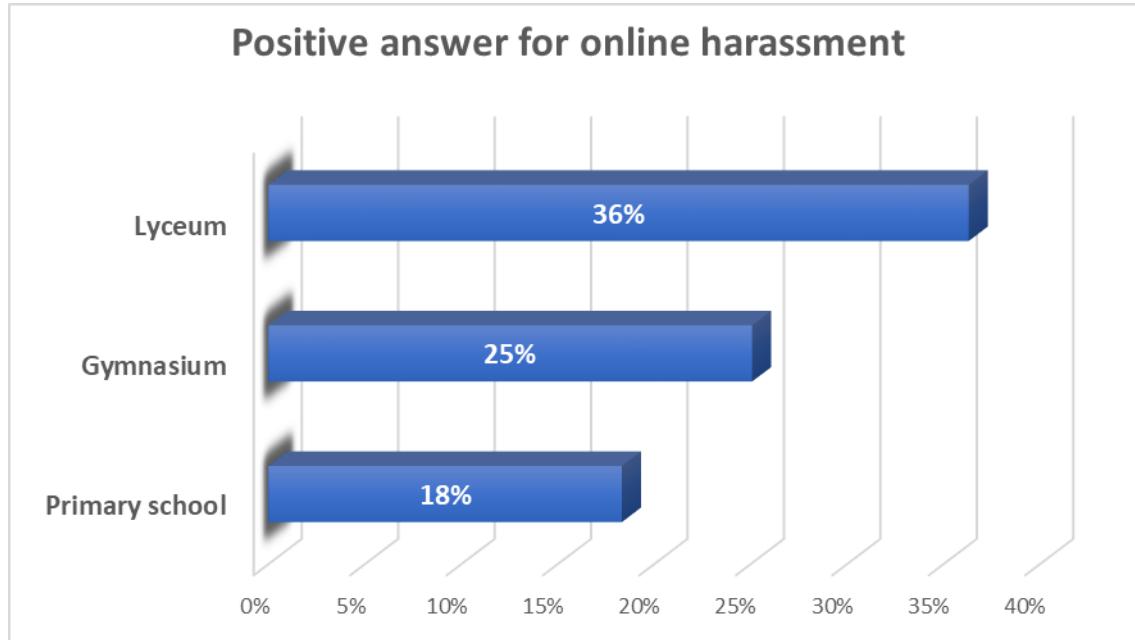
A large part of the survey is devoted to online risks and the extent to which children can identify them properly and protect themselves. Cyberbullying, grooming, exchange of personal photos, disclosure of personal data, online reputation, disinformation are the main risks explored. Through the answers of the students, important conclusions are drawn from the survey that can help us inform and raise awareness on children, parents and educators.

SURVEY RESULTS

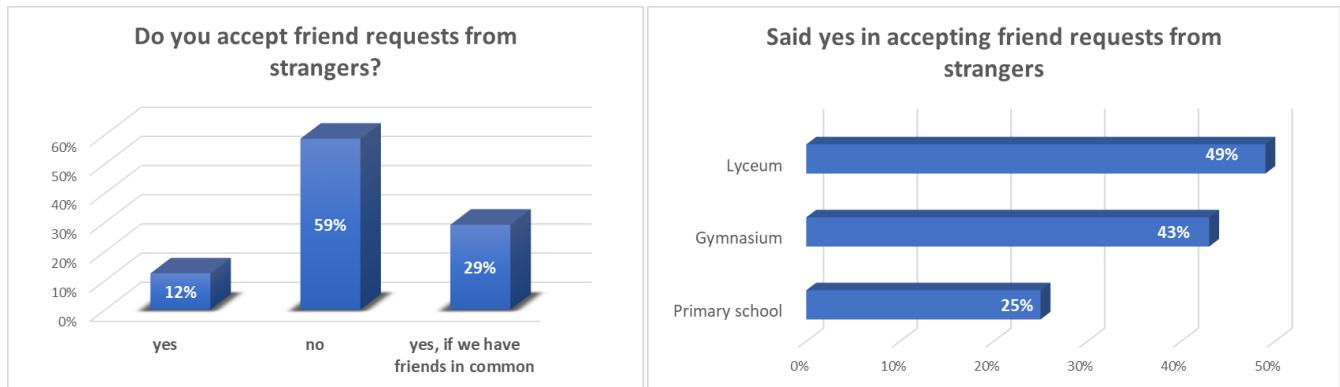
Cyberbullying occurred to 26% of children. From the children that gave a positive answer, 60% are girls and 40% are boys. The majority of them (66%) reacted by blocking the bully and only 22% talked to someone they trust.



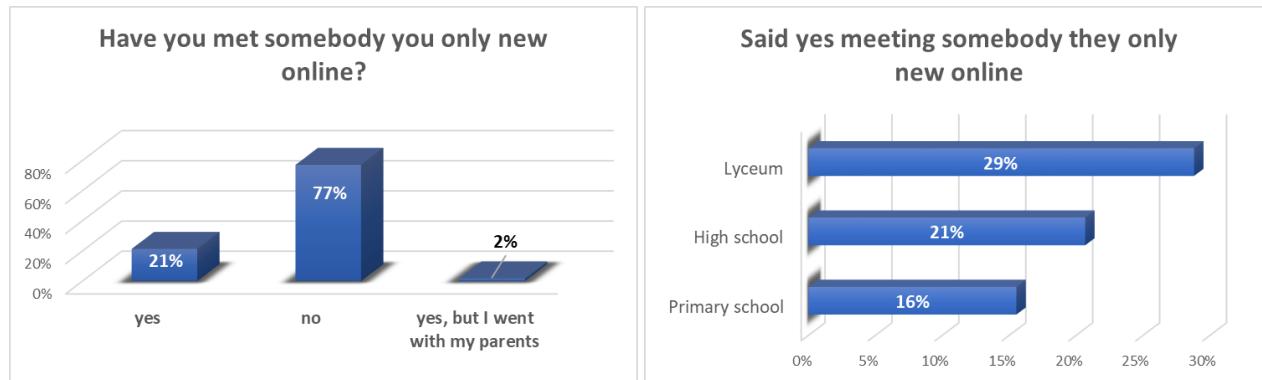
From the answers, it appears that 18% of Primary school, 25% of Gymnasium and 36% of Lyceum students have been at some point in their life the target of cyberbullying.



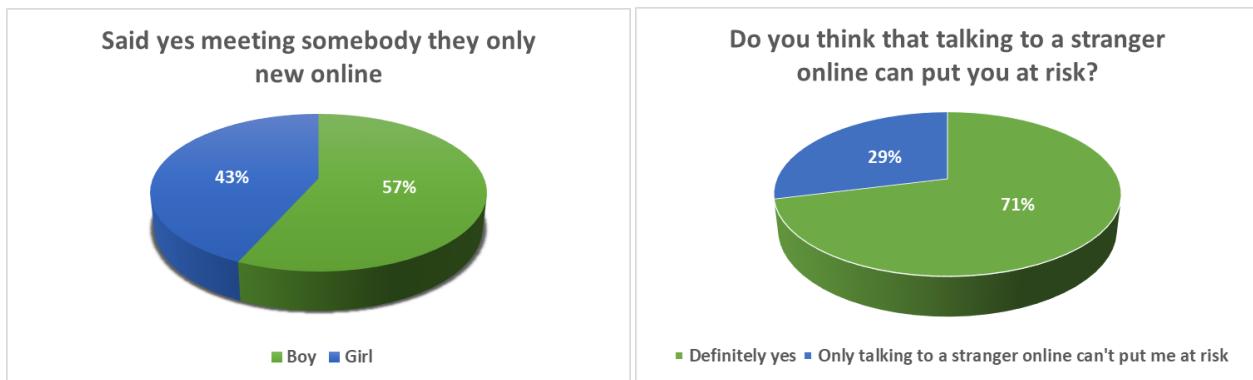
The alarming percentage of 41% of children (answers: 'yes' and 'yes, if we have friend in common') accept friend requests from strangers. 51% of them girls and 49% of boys. 29% of them set as a condition to have common friends with the person who sent them the friend request. Of those that accept friend requests from strangers, 25% is from Primary school, 43% from Gymnasium, and 49% from Lyceum.



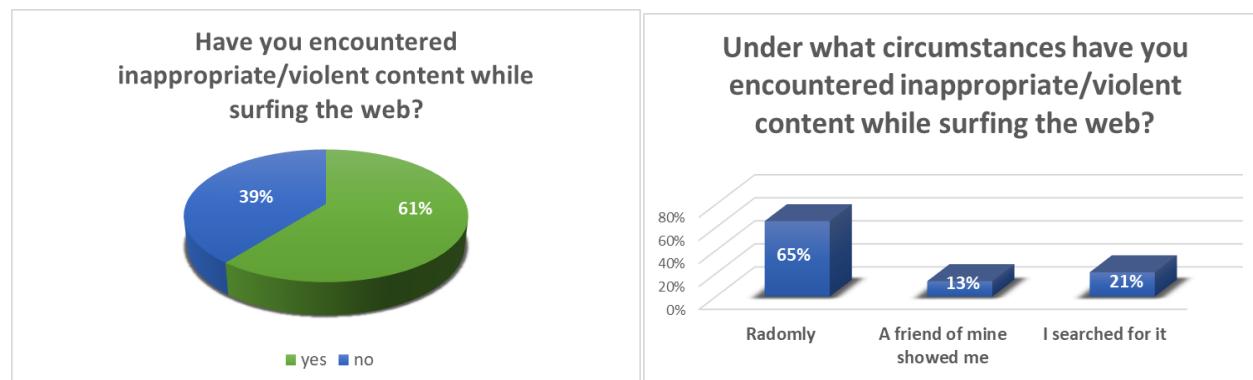
21% of children (57% boys - 43% girls) say they have met someone they got to know online. In fact, 16% of Primary school children responded positively, 21% of Gymnasium and 29% of Lyceum students gave a positive response.



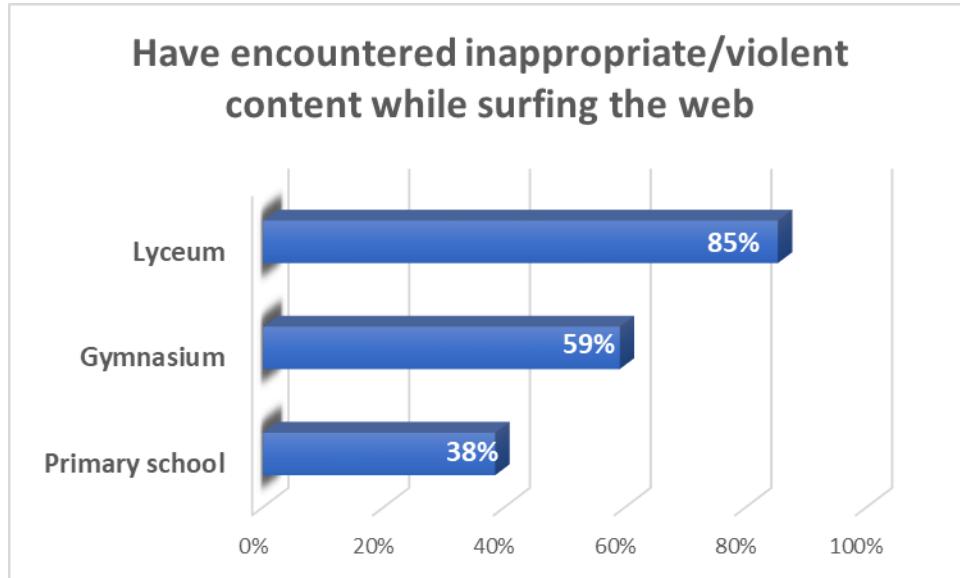
29% of students do not consider that talking to a stranger online can put themselves at risk.



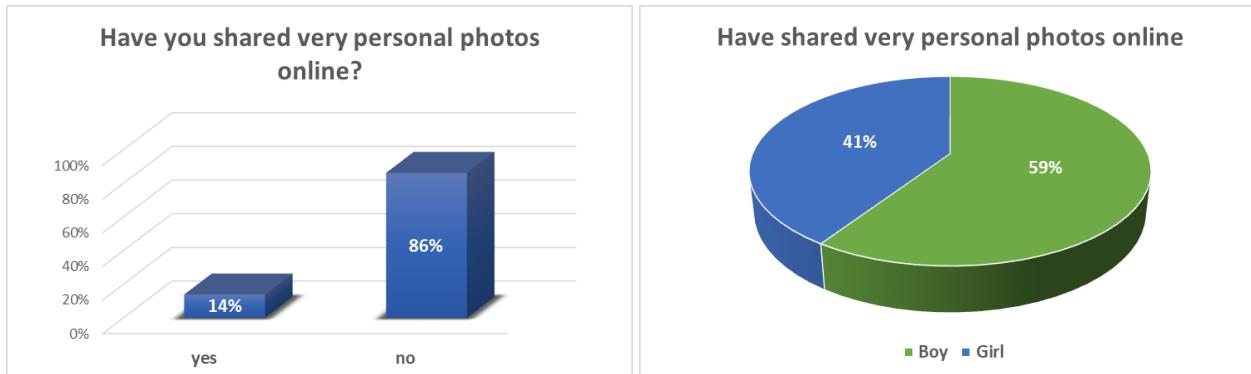
61% of students (55% boys - 45% girls) have encountered inappropriate/violent content while surfing the internet. Of this percentage, 65% encountered it randomly, 21% searched for it and 13% answered that it was sent from a friend.



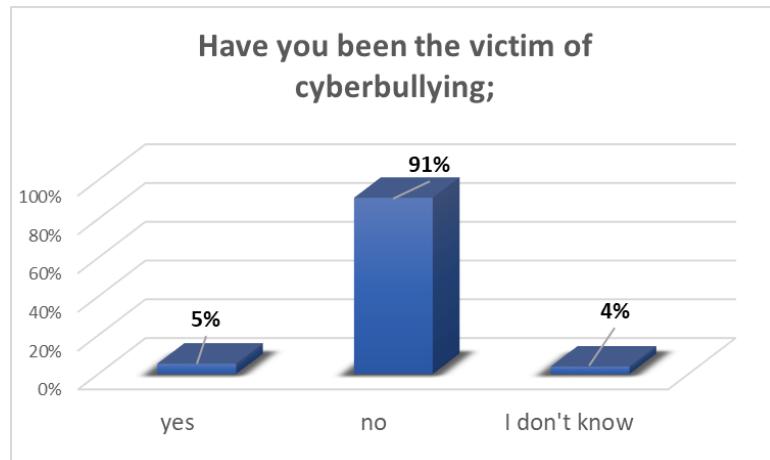
38% of Primary school, 59% of Gymnasium, and 85% of Lyceum students declare to have encountered inappropriate/violent content while online.



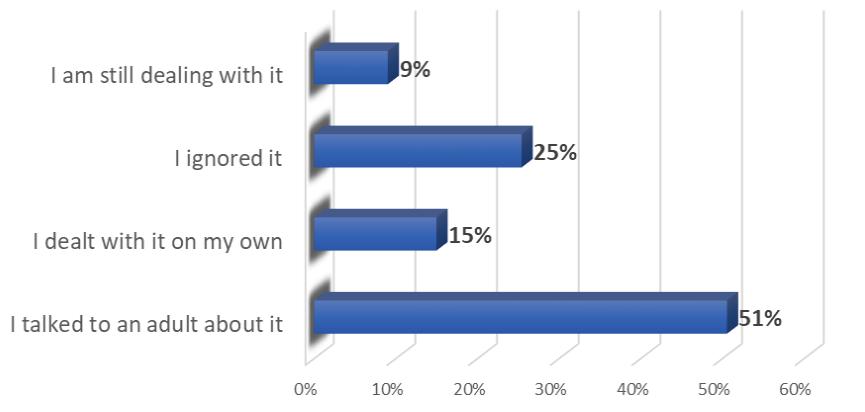
14% of children (59% boys - 41% girls) admit that they have shared very personal photos online. A positive answer came from 13% of Primary school children, 12% of Gymnasium and 24% of Lyceum students.



Only 5% admit to have been victim of cyberbullying, while 17% state they have witnessed cyberbullying. Of the children who admit to have been victims of cyberbullying, 51% reported it to a trusted adult, 25% tried to ignore it, 15% dealt with it on their own, while 9% did nothing and report to continue being targeted.

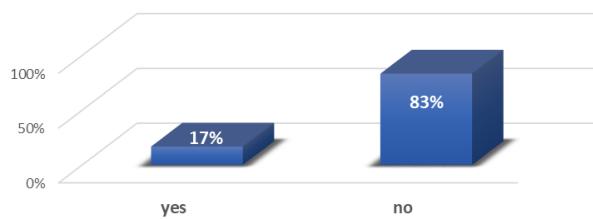


If yes how did you deal with cyberbullying?

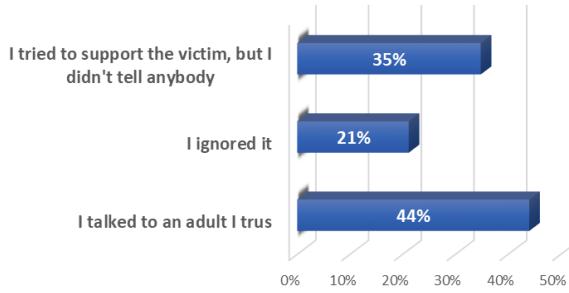


Of the children who admit to have witnessed cyberbullying, 21% were indifferent to the incident, 35% tried to support the victim without reporting it to an adult, while 44% responded by revealing the incident to a trusted individual.

Have you witnessed cyberbullying?

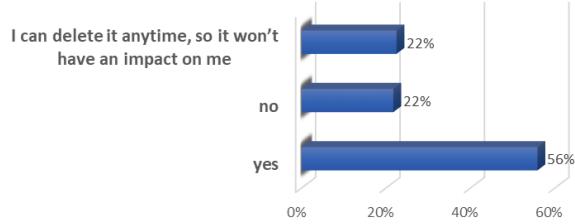


If yes, how did you deal with it?

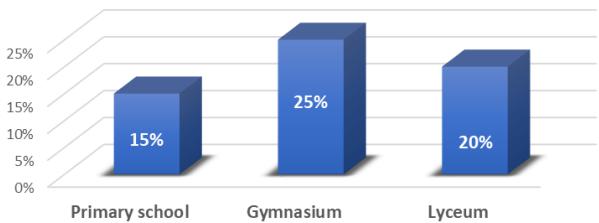


44% of children (54% boys - 46% girls) do not think about the impact a photo or video they share online could have on their online reputation. About half of them (22%) believe they can permanently delete material published online at any time. Out of Primary school children, 15% have the misconception they can delete material published online, 25% of Gymnasium students and 20% of Lyceum students.

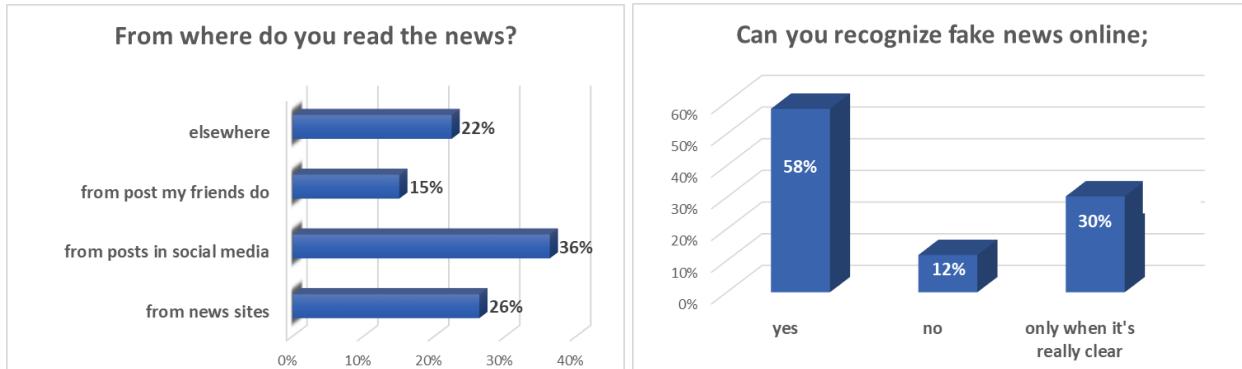
Do you think about the impact a photo or a video could have on your online reputation when you post it?



Answered that they are able to delete something online at any time they want



Children and young people are getting mainly informed from publications on social media (36%) and from friends' posts (15%). More than half (58%) believe that they can distinguish real from fake news.

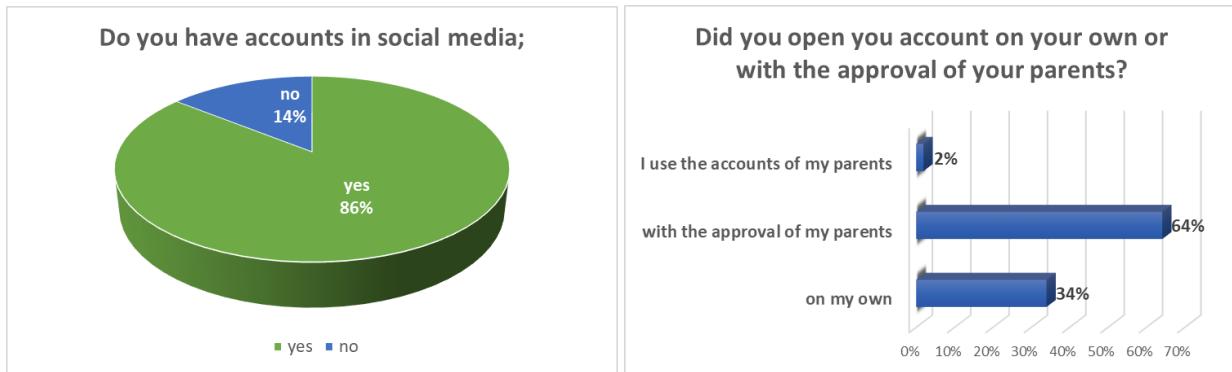


Social Media Use

The relationship of children with social media and the adopted use policies are analyzed in this section of the survey. The age of onset for social media and the conditions under which this engagement begins are the two basic parameters taken under consideration.

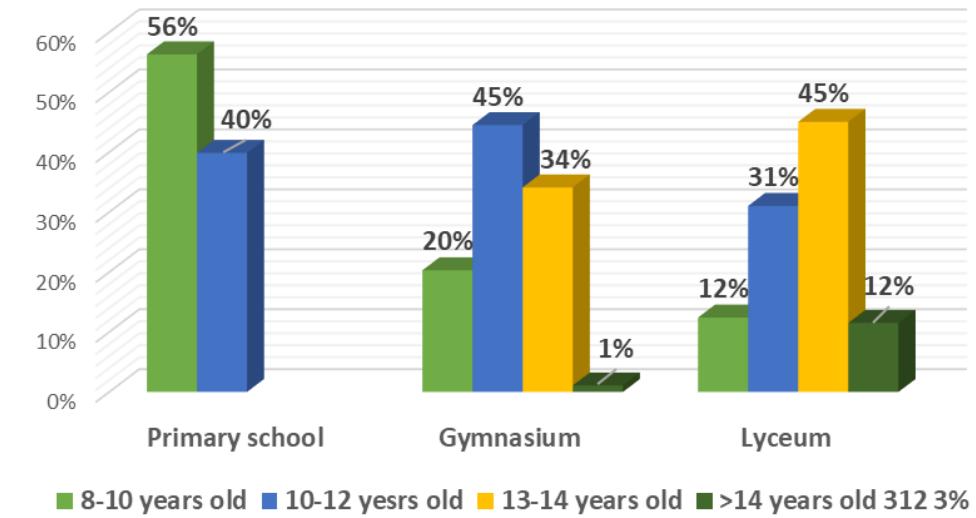
SURVEY RESULTS

The vast majority of children (86%) has a profile on a social network, of which 70% created a profile before the age of 13 years of age. 34% of children with social media profiles created them on their own without the consent of their parents.

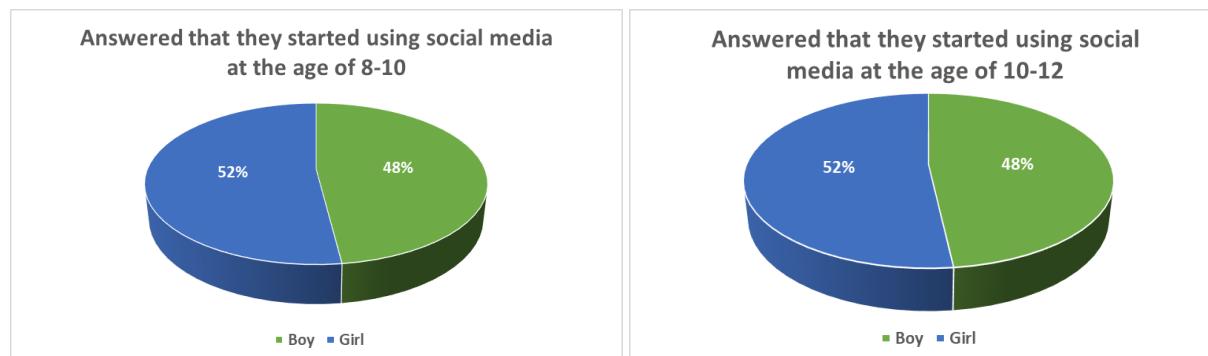


It is clear from the results that children start to use social networks at an ever decreasing and non-permissible age. More specifically, 96% of the children in Primary school, 65% of Gymnasium and 43% of Lyceum students declare to have entered the social networks at a non-permissible age.

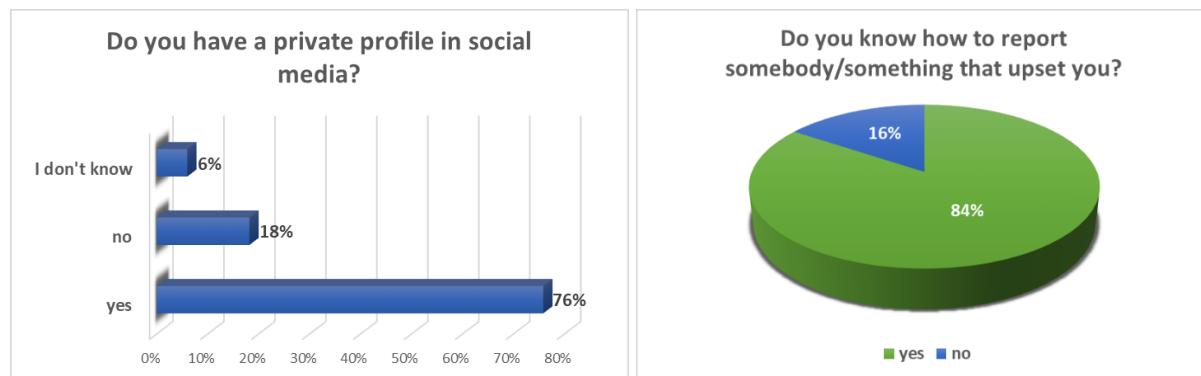
At what age did you start using social media?



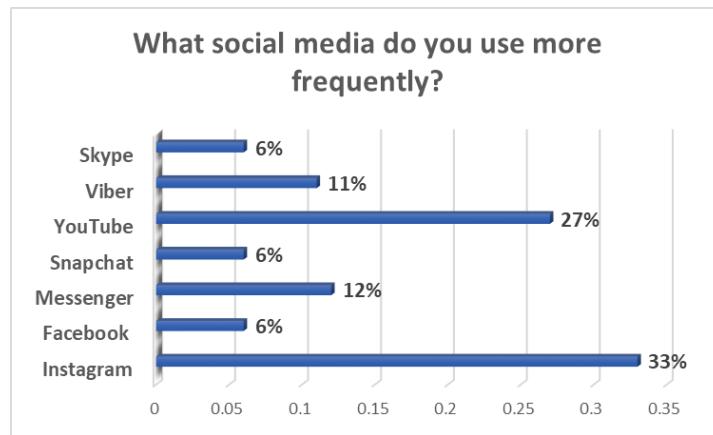
Of the children who responded that they started using social media at the age of 8-10 and 10-13, 48% are boys and 52% girls.



From the children that make use of social media, 18% have not set their profile to private mode and 16% do not know how to report someone or something that upset them online.



Instagram is the main social network used more frequently by 33%, while Facebook is mostly used by only 6% of the respondents. Girls clearly prefer Instagram by 57%, while it is also one of the favorite social media for boys with 43%. Boys mainly prefer YouTube with 55%, while girls with 45%. YouTube has a total of 27% preference by the respondents. Messenger follows with 12%, Viber with 11%, Skype and Snapchat with 6%.

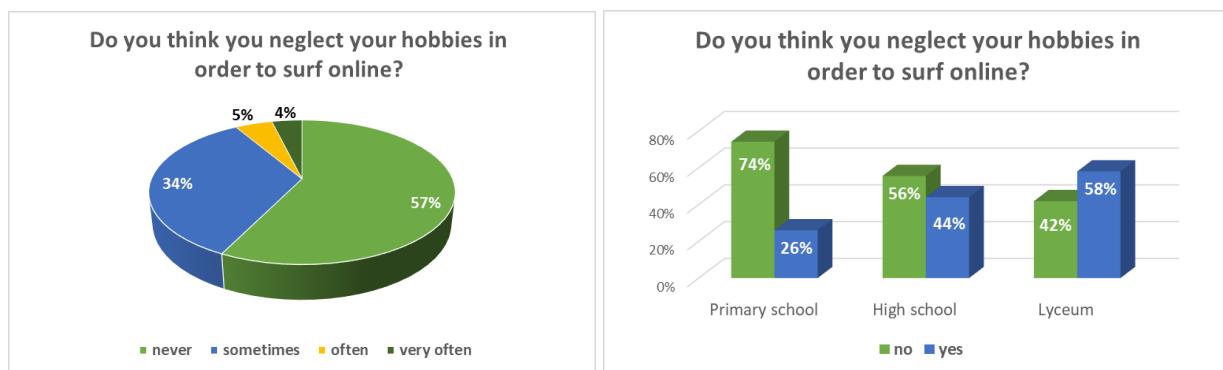


Time Restrictions in the use of internet

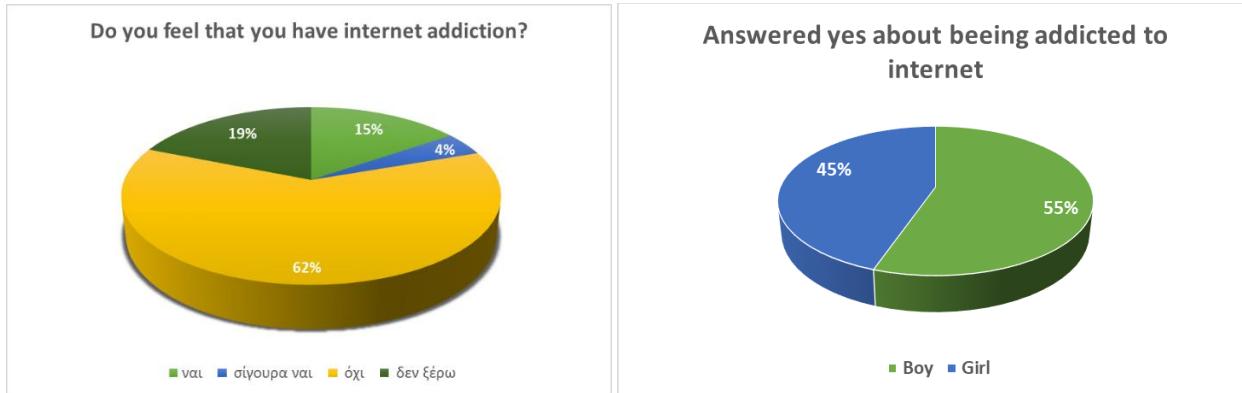
Excessive use of the internet is a significant ongoing risk and the main focus of various studies. The Greek Safer Internet Center has attempted to record how aware children are of the time they spend online and, more specifically, the time they spend on their two favorite most popular online activities, online games and social media.

SURVEY RESULTS

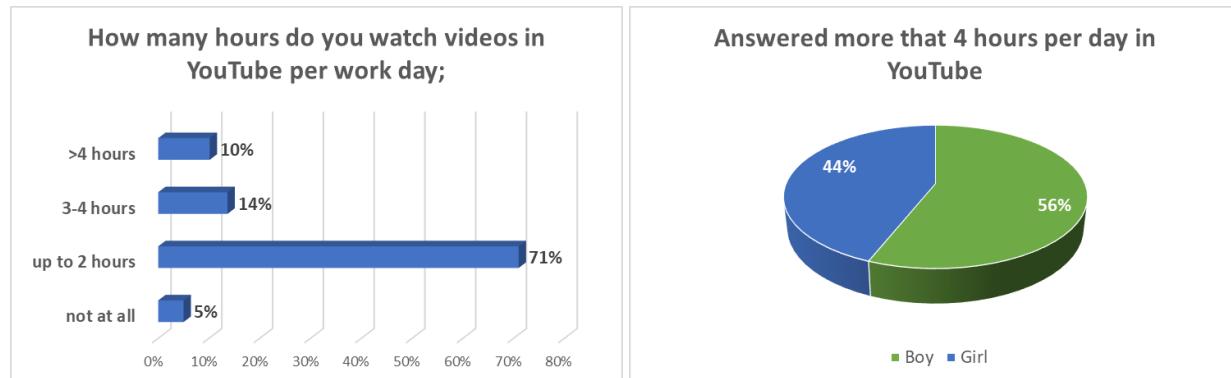
Survey results reveal that 43% of the children feel that they neglect other activities for the sake of the internet (answers: ‘very often’, ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’). In fact, this feeling is expressed even stronger by Lyceum students where the rate reaches 58%. At Primary school, 74% of children respond that they never neglect their activities for the internet.



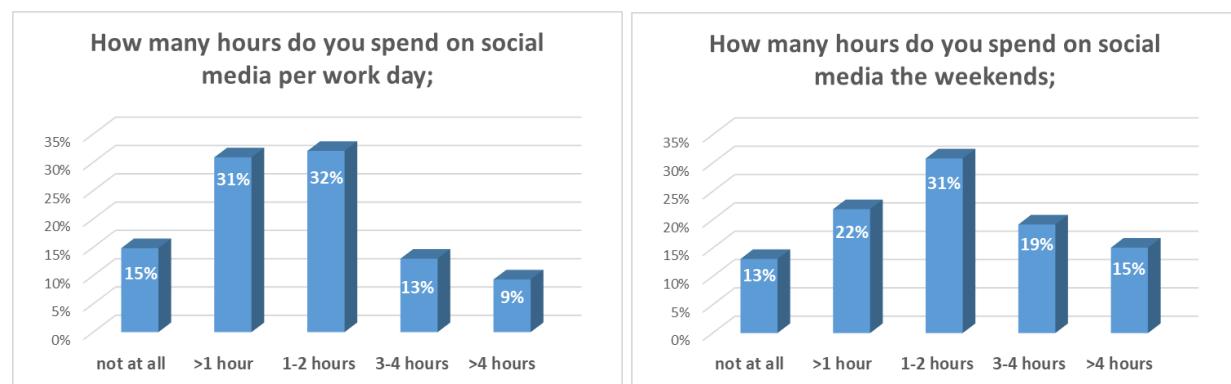
Of the respondents, 20% admit having an online addiction problem (answers: 'yes' and 'definitely yes'), while 20% of the children do not know if they have an internet addiction problem. Rates are very similar for all ages. Of the children who responded 'definitely yes' on the internet addiction question, 55% are boys and 45% are girls.



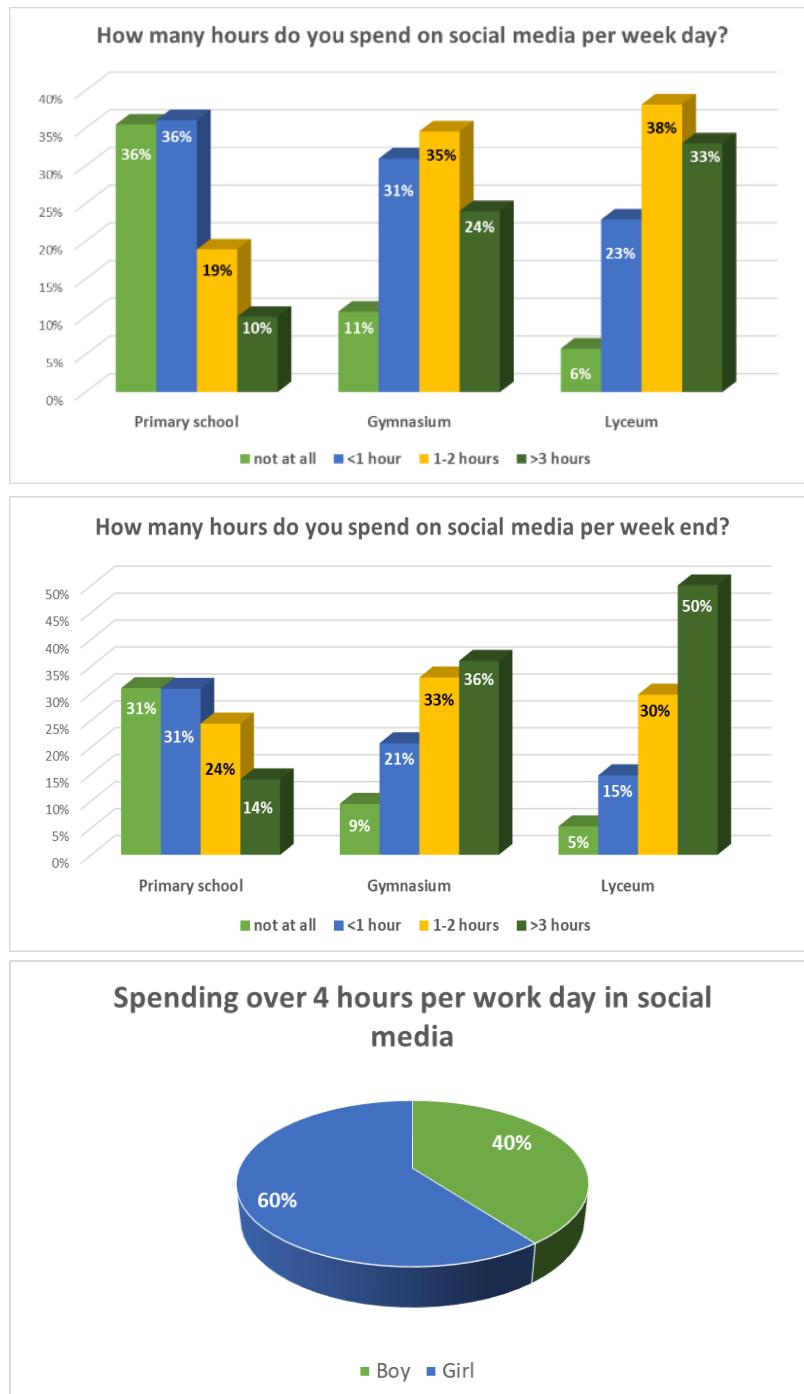
71% of the children watch videos on YouTube for up to 2 hours daily, 14% of children for 3-4 hours a day and 10% of children for more than 4 hours a day. Percentages vary around the same levels for all ages. Of those responding more than 4 hours a day, 56% are boys and 44% are girls.



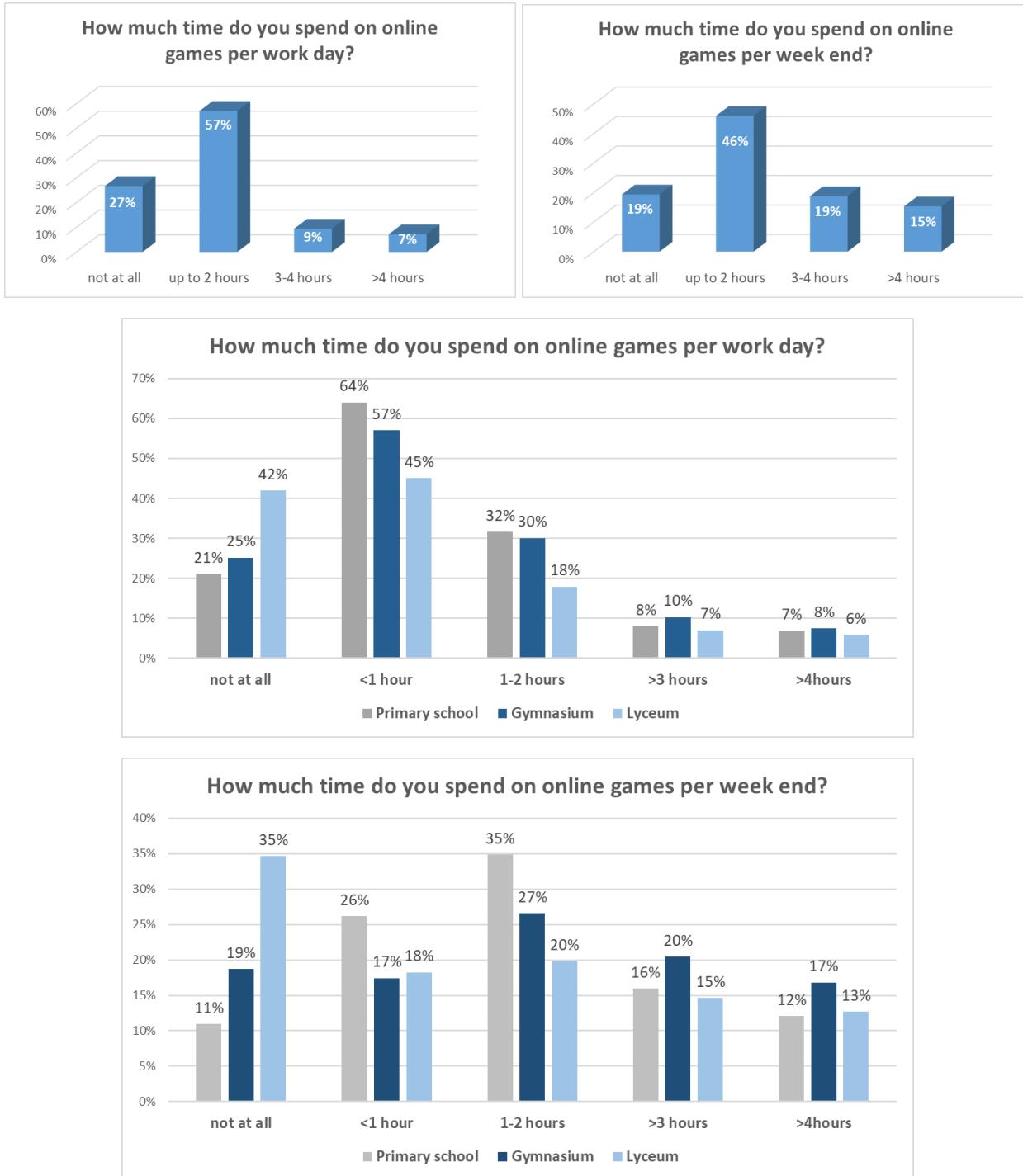
63% of the children spend up to 2 hours daily on social media, 13% of them spend 3-4 hours and 9% more than 4 hours. The percentage of children who spend more than 4 hours on social networks during the weekend reaches 15%.



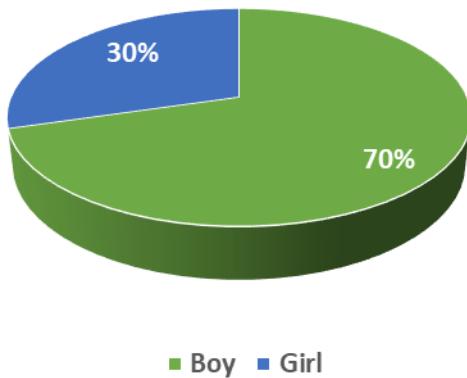
33% of Lyceum students spend more than 3 hours on social networks on weekdays and 50% on weekends. For Gymnasium children the corresponding percentages are 24% for weekdays and 36% for weekends, while for Primary school children they are 10% for weekdays and 14% for weekends, respectively. It is also apparent from the evidence that there is a clear predominance of girls (60%) over boys (40%) in the amount of time spent on social networks.



57% of the respondents play online games for up to 2 hours on a daily basis, 9% spend 3-4 hours daily while 7% spend more than 4 hours a day. The percentage of children who play more than 4 hours on weekends doubles and reaches 15%. Primary and Gymnasium children are mainly engaging to online games on the internet, while it is clear that this type of activity is mainly preferred by boys (70% of boys vs. 30% of girls).



Playing online games is the most frequent activity online



General Instructions by the Greek Safer Internet Center

Based on the official guidelines of the American Pediatrics Association, children's engagement with the internet should not, for any reason, begin before the age of two. From the age of 2-4 years, children's online activities should be very limited, very selective in the type of activity they engage and always under the supervision of a parent. For older children, it is very important to set limits and rules for internet use (time involvement and quality of programs) and always with the supervision of a parent. Equally important to the supervision is the creation of incentives and opportunities, so that children strike a balance between their 'digital life' and other activities (sports, hobbies, social interactions, etc.).

The use of social networks should never begin before the permissible age. It is of outmost importance to always choose the right settings for the profiles of children (i.e. should be always set to private mode) and to guide them to adopt good practices while online (e.g. never talk to strangers, don't reveal personal data, never exchange very personal photos, etc.).

From a very early age we have to dispel the myth of anonymity when online. We should also teach children that respect and rules of good behavior that apply in real life also apply on the internet and we must strengthen their sense of responsibility when online.

Internet is a wonderful world, full of opportunities and challenges. Let us help our children enjoy it with safety!



Awareness action of the Greek Safer Internet Center



The Helpline of the Greek Safer Internet Center



The Hotline of the Greek Safer Internet Center
for illegal Internet content



Συγχρηματοδοτείται από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Διευκόλυνση «Συνδέοντας την Ευρώπη»