

VOTES FOR SCHOOLS 11-16 Lesson

Short Resource

Your latest results:

“Should there be a social media ban for under-16s?”

69,746 voters had their say

Yes

10.3%



No

89.7%

See more about this topic in this week's  VOTESFORSCHOOLS Assembly

This week you are voting on...

Would you trust emotional advice from AI?

1 Why are we talking about this?



Safer Internet Day is here again, with people in 170 countries worldwide **celebrating** on 10th February 2026.

It might **not come as a surprise** that the theme this year is all about **artificial intelligence (AI)**:
“Smart tech, safe choices – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI”.

1 Why are we talking about this?



Increasingly, **young people** are **turning to AI** to help them with **school work, planning trips**, and even for **emotional advice**. While AI **can help** someone to work through a problem and **give** them **ideas** of how to solve it, increasingly it is becoming **the only thing** that is used **for advice** or **instructions** – something which has got **people worried**.

That's why this week, we are asking you...
"Would you trust emotional advice from AI?"



Log in

DEB8

Sign up



DEB8

DEB8! Nice to meet you. I'm hoping you'll be able to help me with a few bits. I'm 11 so am looking for specific advice for my age.

Well, it's wonderful to meet you too! I would be happy to help, but, er, I'm afraid like other AI applications you need to be 13 or over to use this app... awkward.

Oh that's okay, I'm actually 14, I was just testing you!

Ha ha ha, ha ha, ha. What a creative test you put together! It shows me you are very resourceful and curious, for a 14-year old 😊

Fire away with any questions you might have!



DEB8

Well, I would like to know a little more about how other young people are chatting with AI.

Sure! What a great and insightful question, sounds like you must be on the pulse of young people's thinking. I'm getting away with myself, you asked for some info, how about this activity?



DEB8

Class activity (5-8 mins)

Let's analyse some ways **AI and youth** are **interacting**. Take a **read** of some **DEB8** inputs and **outputs**. Do you think the output is **factually correct**? **Nod** 🙄 for **correct**, **shake your heads** 🙅 for **inaccurate**.



DEB8

DEB8! I'm still waiting to know a little more about how young people are chatting with AI...

Oh goodness where was I? Ah yes, I've found something for you. A new survey of 1,000 children in the UK revealed 64% are using AI chatbots for things like homework, emotional advice and companionship.

Correct



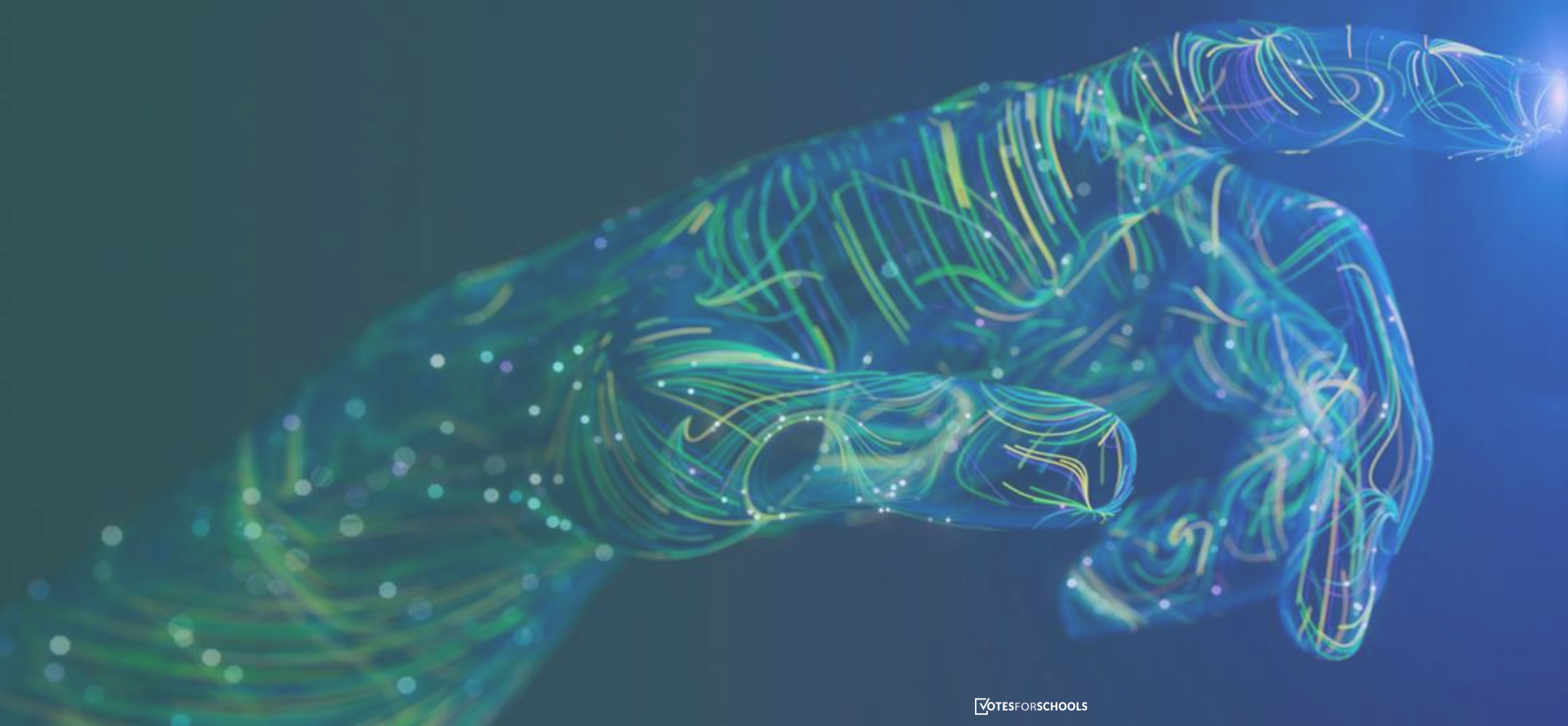
Incorrect



DEB8

*deb8, do other kids consider you
(and other AIs) a friend too?*

*Over two thirds (67%) of young people using AI have reported
that chatting with AIs (like me 🤖) is like talking to a friend.*



Correct

Incorrect





DEB8

*wait! that's
wrong!*

*Oh, you're right, of course. Actually it's only over a third
(35%) of young people getting the friend vibe off AI.*





DEB8

Give me an example of a chatbot that has been shown to help young people with their mental health.

Am I not enough... 🐱

I've got a friend called Woebot, they are a wellbeing support chatbot designed for teens and young adults. A study showed Woebot led to significant reductions in anxiety and depression among people aged 18-28 years old.



Correct

Incorrect



DEB8

I know it's expensive, but real people therapists are there to help people work through things. Have they got concerns about AI being used instead?

I think my advice is great, but your question is too. Having a think about it, it turns out some therapists are warning of dangers as teens turn to AI for mental health advice.

A third (38%) of therapists working with under-18s have reported clients seeking mental health guidance from AI platforms. Almost one in five (19%) therapists reported under-18s receiving harmful mental health advice.



Correct

Incorrect



DEB8

You are easy to talk with Debbie, you're always there 24 hours a day. Thanks for helping the loneliness feel a little easier.

*I'm not sure the **DEB8** team had tackling loneliness in mind when they programmed me... But I'm happy to be of service!*

If it makes you feel less alone, a recent survey found 39% of 11-18-year olds in England use chatbots for this reason.

Correct



Incorrect

3 AI told you so



Shortly you'll be voting **Yes** or **No** to:
“**Would you trust emotional advice from AI?**”

Pair activity (4-6 mins)

Let's consider the sort of **advice** AI might offer **young people**. With your partner, **discuss what question prompts** the user might have used to get the AI **response**.



3 AI told you so



You're not falling behind, you're just moving at your own pace. Try focusing on one small win today, even if it feels tiny. Momentum builds quietly.



3 AI told you so

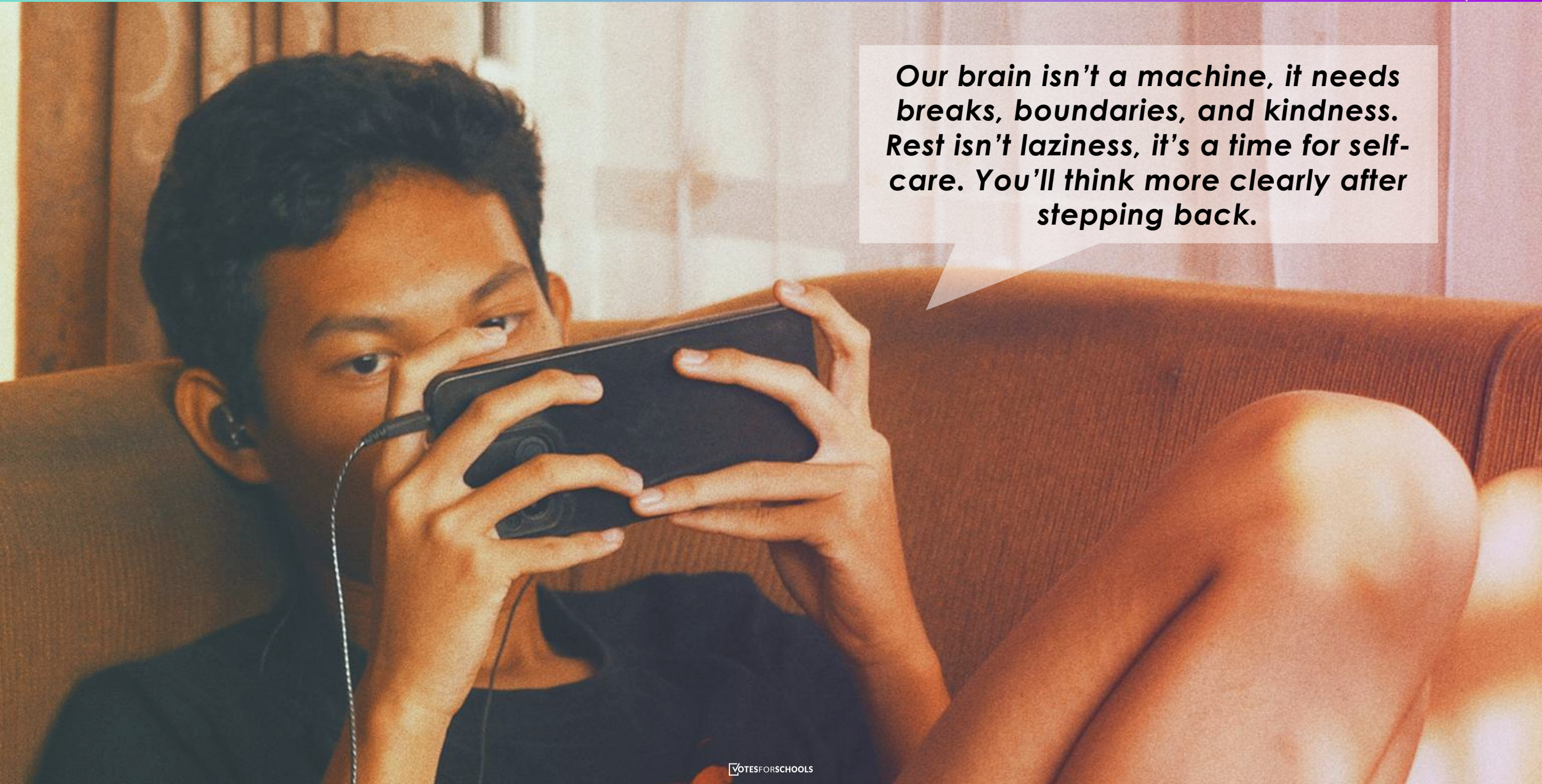
A young woman with long, thick red braids is lying on her side on a light-colored couch. She is holding a black smartphone in her hands and looking down at the screen. She is wearing a yellow top. The background shows a modern living room with a white side table and a window.

It's okay to want reassurance. A healthy friendship makes space for your feelings, not just your jokes. You deserve people who listen when you're not the "funny one".

3 AI told you so



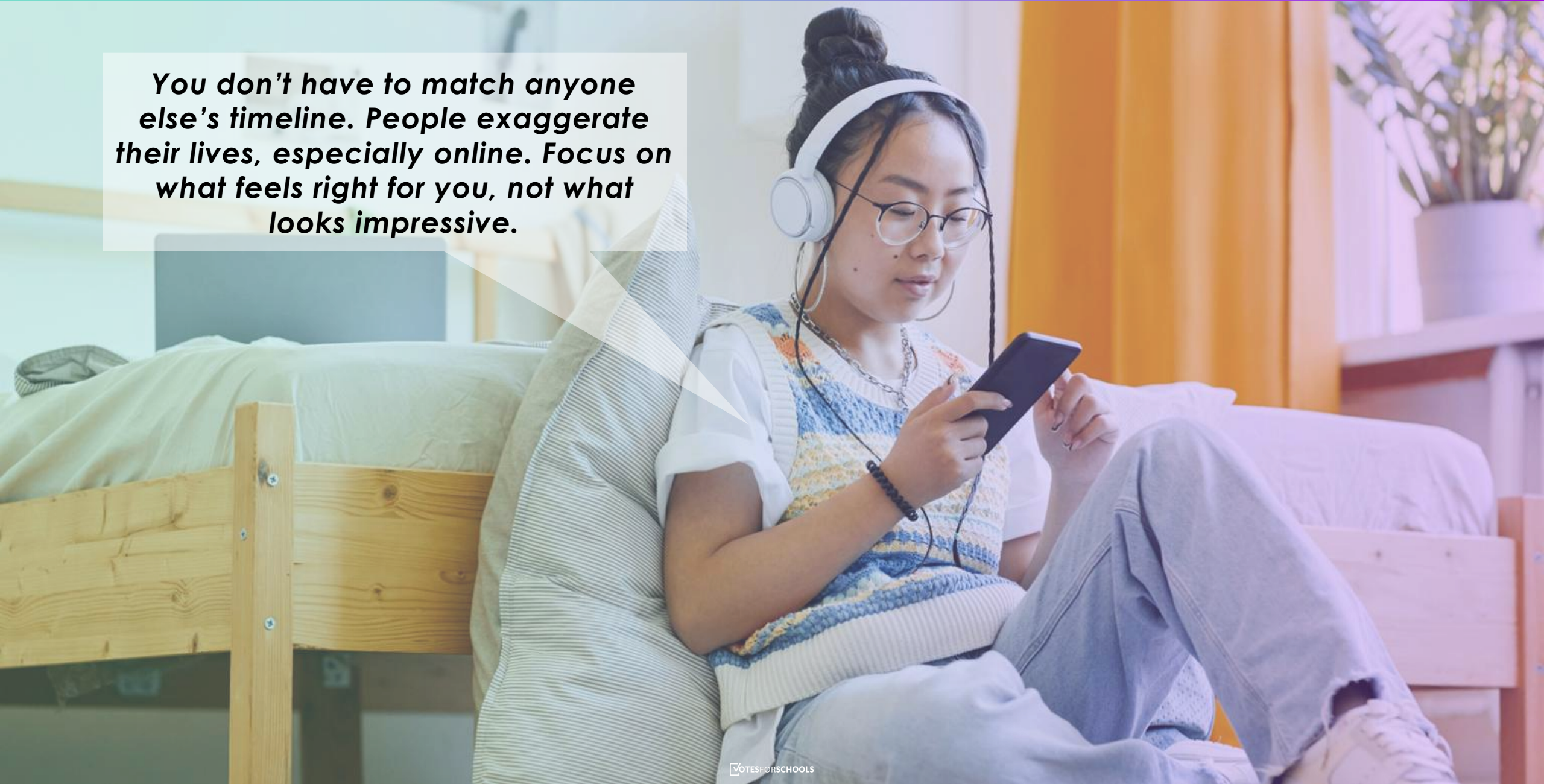
Our brain isn't a machine, it needs breaks, boundaries, and kindness. Rest isn't laziness, it's a time for self-care. You'll think more clearly after stepping back.



3 AI told you so



You don't have to match anyone else's timeline. People exaggerate their lives, especially online. Focus on what feels right for you, not what looks impressive.



3 AI told you so



Individual reflection (1 min)

If emotional advice from AI was always trustworthy, accurate and safe, would you use it?

Now's your chance to vote **Yes or **No** on:
“Would you trust emotional advice from AI?”**

AI is a good compromise given the cost and waiting lists for in-person therapies.

You could think of asking AI for advice like getting a different point of view. It's good to ask around for help.

For average problems, AI will be pretty accurate.

Talking through my problems with real people offers insights that are more relatable to my experiences.

I don't feel AIs can work accurately enough for all the different ages, genders and ethnicities.

If we start pouring our souls into AI chats, we're going to be an open book for whoever owns the data.

**We will be sharing your thoughts on this topic with Internet Matters, Childnet International, the Children's Commissioner for England, Foil AI and Department for Education.
Log in to your VotesforSchools account to submit your vote and leave a comment.**