

FLUBBMIND WHITE PAPER

Sleep, Development, and Wellbeing in Adolescence

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Prepared by FlubbMind

This white paper provides an evidence-informed overview of sleep, adolescent development, and wellbeing. It is intended for educational purposes to support schools, families, and wellbeing initiatives.

Executive Summary

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterised by biological, cognitive, and emotional change. Sleep plays a central role in supporting healthy development, emotional regulation, and daily functioning. However, many adolescents experience chronic sleep restriction due to biological shifts in circadian rhythm and early school schedules. This paper summarises current research on adolescent sleep and highlights implications for wellbeing and learning.

1. Adolescent Sleep Development

During adolescence, natural changes in circadian rhythm lead to later sleep onset. Despite this shift, external demands such as early school start times often limit total sleep duration, resulting in accumulated sleep debt.

2. Sleep and Emotional Wellbeing

Research indicates that insufficient sleep is associated with reduced emotional regulation, increased irritability, and heightened stress sensitivity in adolescents. Adequate sleep supports emotional balance and resilience.

3. Sleep, Learning, and Daily Functioning

Sleep plays a key role in attention, memory consolidation, and learning. Chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to reduced concentration, daytime fatigue, and academic challenges.

4. Implications for Schools and Families

Supportive environments that promote healthy sleep routines, balanced expectations, and consistent schedules can positively influence adolescent wellbeing.

References

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