

# 70% of children found not seeing friends the hardest part of lockdown

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7 in 10 young people think the most difficult part of lockdown is having less contact with friends, reveals new research by the University of Cologne.

The study, conducted by Professor Clemens Kroneberg and his research team, found that school pupils suffer from limited face-to-face contact with their friends.

The researchers surveyed just under 600 children aged around 14 or 15 from schools in Germany with a 20-minute questionnaire about their everyday school life and leisure activities.

In addition, about half of the students received eight mini-questionnaires on their daily mood and activities sent to their smartphones over a period of four weeks during lockdown.

The student surveyed perceived the restrictions in leisure as significantly worse than independent learning in home schooling or everyday family life during school closures.

“During days on which they left home or had face-to-face contact with friends, young people were more likely to report being happy and excited and less likely to be sad, depressed, lonely, and bored.

“In contrast, online contact only – the most common interaction in the second lockdown – did not improve their mood. According to our results, parents can hope for better tempered children when they attend daily face-to-face classes,” says Professor Kroneberg.

Furthermore, the study revealed that on average, girls found the restrictions more stressful than boys and were more likely to report being sad, depressed, lonely, or worried.

For this reason, the researchers believe that online learning should not replace face-to-face learning as the limited contact with friends will have a detrimental effect on their mental health.

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For more information, a copy of the report, or to speak to Professor Kroneberg, contact Katie Hurley at BlueSky Education on [khurley@bluesky-pr.com](mailto:khurley@bluesky-pr.com) or call 01582 790708.