# Introduction

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**Purpose:** This document translates the literature evidence synthesis on checkins into a ‘Frequently Asked Question’ aligned with the iyarn matrix model. This FAQ is designed to:

1. Provide a ‘snapshot’ of the research evidence, useful in conversation and materials with stakeholders;
2. Mirror the extended literature review, so the detail is *always* available to those who want it, and you can provide assurance that the claims made are warranted by the evidence;
3. Align with the iyarn matrix model, which shows how the features of the tool target particular outcomes;

[Introduction 1](#_Toc104474718)

[**Topic:** How do check-in apps build wellbeing, and what are young people’s key concerns when using them in schools? 2](#_Toc104474719)

[Background assumptions and context 2](#_Toc104474720)

[How accurate is the information from check-ins? 3](#_Toc104474721)

[Do check-in apps support awareness and reflection? 3](#_Toc104474722)

[Do check-in apps build health routines? 3](#_Toc104474723)

[Do check-in apps contribute to wellbeing outcomes? 3](#_Toc104474724)

[And, what is the evidence around how apps support teachers to support their students? 3](#_Toc104474725)

## **Topic:** How do check-in apps build wellbeing, and what are young people’s key concerns when using them in schools?

***Key questions:*** *What is the evidence for check-in apps with young people (1) providing accurate information (2) supporting awareness and reflection, (3) building routine, and (4) contributing to positive outcomes?*

### Background assumptions and context

There are some key provisos in this review:

* The majority of evidence-based studies (particularly Random Controlled Trial – RCT’s) focus on intervening in or improving mental health for students rather than focusing on building general resilience and wellbeing.
* Many of the findings referenced below are from research done with mobile rather than web-based apps

Many studies are primarily run with individual students rather than class-based or cohort-based studies (unless noted otherwise). Relatedly, many studies focus on interventions with targeted students (tier 2 and 3 interventions), rather than activities all students do (universal, or tier 1, interventions).[[1]](#footnote-2)

### How accurate is the information from check-ins?

Checkins can provide useful information, especially when done routinely, and in real-time (i.e., reflecting on now, not historically).

### Do check-in apps support awareness and reflection?

Checkin tools can be effective tools for building self-awareness and reflection and is well grounded in evidence-based psychological approaches to supporting wellbeing and emotional self-awareness.

### Do check-in apps build health routines?

Checkin tools can help to build routine and habit formation, which can (1) support early intervention; (2) promote mental health; and (3) reduce symptoms for those with existing diagnoses over time.

### Do check-in apps contribute to wellbeing outcomes?

There is tentative support for mental health apps – including checkin apps – in supporting wellbeing and decreasing incidence of depression. However, there is limited research evidence across the range of approaches.

#### And, what is the evidence around how apps support teachers to support their students?

Apps seem well received by students and teachers, and may support awareness, and help seeking behaviours which may lead to earlier intervention.

1. Broadly Tier 1 interventions: All students undertake; Tier 2: those with risk factors; tier 3: those with clear symptoms or diagnoses. These are cumulative, not exclusive. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)