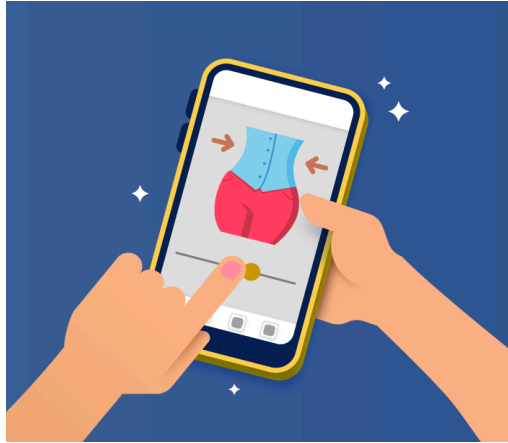# *Social Media and Its Damaging Effects*
by: Julia Miorin, '23

As a girl who grew up riding her bike around her neighborhood and playing games outside with friends, I consider myself lucky that I didn't go through my childhood with the influence of social media. My childhood was not consumed by worries about how my body looked or whether or not the clothes I was wearing were in style. Now, with social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, many find themselves struggling with how to perceive their body when they see other girls their age or older who fit more into the "typical beauty standards". Seeing comments on posts like "body goals" or "dream body" continues to enforce the idea in young girls' heads that their body is not good enough because it looks different from others.

My worry is for the younger generations– kids like my younger sister– who are impressionable and more exposed to social media now than when I was younger. If I, a seventeen-year-old girl, can be influenced by the messages in the media about beauty standards, I can only imagine the damage it will do to the younger generation. These kids are exposed to so much on the internet and are growing up idolizing women they see on social media, and may take drastic measures so they can look like their idols. When in fact they may never be able to achieve their "dream body" simply because of age and genetics. And the damage that is being done to the young generation's perception of beauty and body image can not be easily fixed.

On the bright side of this issue, the body positivity movement has been growing all over social media. Different influencers are spreading ideas that because a body has stretch marks or cellulite does not mean that it is any less beautiful than the stereotypical "perfect body". And now in the media, you are starting to see much more inclusive content with models that don't fit into the outdated "tall and skinny" beauty standard.

I hope that kids like my sister won't let social media determine their value or damage their confidence because they may not look like every model, celebrity, or influencer they see online.