



Great Marlow School

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Dear Parents and Carers

There is a growing concern that young people's wellbeing, behaviour and learning is being influenced by social media and online activity; this is a national problem that is affecting GMS too.

Recently, there has been an increase in social media related issues among our students: online disagreements, group chats and social media posts, sent outside school hours, are increasingly leading to conflict, distraction and distress during the school day. For some students, their learning, concentration and relationships with peers has been affected.

No student is immune, especially if they spend time on their phones, or other devices, late into the evening and night. The light, the ping of a new message and the irresistible urge to investigate who has been in contact, leads to a lack of sleep that significantly impacts the natural sleep-wake cycle. Consequently, during school hours their energy, focus and ability to learn is compromised.

There are 'tried and tested' practical steps, that promote healthier online habits at home, which we are asking you to consider:

screen-time parameters - encourage regular breaks from devices, particularly before bedtime
overnight device-free bedrooms - collect phones, tablets and other devices before bedtime, perhaps storing them in a shared area, such as the kitchen
social media conversations - discuss what your child sees and shares online, remind them about kindness, privacy and the importance of switching off
responsible device usage – teenagers take notice of how an adult behaves; by modelling good usage a significant difference could be made to the way your child uses their mobile device.

Mobile technology has had a positive impact, now it is important to find a degree of 'device-balance'. By working together, there is a chance our young people will begin to use social media responsibly, for better health and wellbeing.

GMS's website has a dedicated page: please click on this [link](#) to learn more.

Thank you, as always, for your continued commitment and support.

Yours faithfully

Neil Maguire
Deputy Headteacher (DSL)
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