



June 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians

Electronic Devices Policy

In a world in which technology plays an increasing role in young people's lives, we are conscious of the need to regularly review our policies on the use of electronic devices both within and outside of lessons. We recognise the potential that technology has to aid effective learning, but also that unfettered access to electronic devices can have a detrimental impact on pupils' concentration, social interaction and the ability to get a good night's sleep.

There is now a significant amount of research that establishes a link between late night screen use and mental health issues, as well as a decrease in academic performance, and you may find the following articles of interest, the key points of which are summarised below:

https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/30/teenagers-sleep-quality-and-mental-health-at-risk-over-late-night-mobile-phone-use?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-31089014>

Poor quality sleep associated with late night texting and calling is linked to a decline in mental health, such as depressed moods and a decline in self-esteem and coping abilities.

Late night screen use has a detrimental effect on academic performance.

Staring at an illuminated screen at bedtime could send the wrong signals to our brain, disrupting our natural body clock making us more alert, they suggest.

"We know that sufficient sleep is essential for good physical and mental health. Logging off may be one important step toward securing a good night's sleep."

Prof Russell Foster, an expert in sleep and neuroscience at the University of Oxford, said: "This is an important study as it provides empirical evidence that the use of electronic devices before bed does indeed reduce sleep duration".



Following a review of our policies and from September 2017, the way in which electronic devices are being managed at Stowe is as follows:

- Third Form pupils may not have access to their phones during lesson time, and may collect them from Housemasters/Housemistresses after lessons have finished. They may have laptops in lessons as required.
- Fourth and Fifth Form pupils may have their phones in lessons for educational purposes, but will be required to hand them in at the start of each lesson if they are not being used for that lesson. They may have laptops in lessons as required.
- All Third, Fourth and Fifth Form pupils are required to hand in their mobile phones before second prep. They may have access to their phones after prep.
- All Third and Fourth Form pupils are required to hand in their phones, laptops and other electronic devices 15 minutes before their lights out in dormitories or rooms.
- All Fifth Form pupils are required to hand in their phones before bed, but may retain their laptops on the understanding that they will be confiscated for a period of time if they are found to be using them late at night. We have allowed Fifth Form to retain their laptops to give them some degree of responsibility in self-regulation.
- Fourth and Fifth Form pupils may collect their phones after morning stance.

I am confident that you will fully support us in ensuring good quality sleep and mental health for your children, and that we create the best learning environment possible for them. We also recognise that education is an equally important part of this process, and Housemasters and Housemistresses will be spending some time at the beginning of next year in explaining the rationale behind this policy, and why we believe it to be in the best interests of the pupils.

The only practical impact of this for you as parents is that your son/daughter will need a good old-fashioned alarm clock to wake them up in the morning.

Yours sincerely



James Peppiatt

