

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO: 0001 MONDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2018

1,500 primary school children take the Digital Sunset Challenge for Safer Internet Day

**FILM & PHOTO OP WITH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNITIES – 0900 MONDAY 5TH FEB
(DETAILS BELOW)**



TECH IS GREAT BUT WE ALL NEED A BREAK!

To mark Safer Internet Day on Tuesday 6th February 2018, over 1,500 children will pledge to take the Digital Sunset Challenge by switching off all phones, tablets, gaming consoles and devices each night at an agreed time for an entire week.

Year 6 pupils across the Sevenoaks district in Kent will lead the challenge by agreeing to turn off all tech and keep bedrooms screen free for a whole week in a bid to get a better night's sleep and practise good digital habits.

Parents and siblings will be encouraged to join in the Challenge and have fun as a family before bedtime by doing other activities like reading, watching TV together, arts and crafts, cooking, playing card or board games, or writing a daily journal.

Research shows that by switching off tech and keeping bedrooms screen-free, three immediate benefits can be gained:

- **Better quality sleep.** The blue light emitted from screens prevents the release of the sleep hormone melatonin. This is especially so in young, developing brains.
- **Improved mental health.** Recent studies have shown a strong link between excessive use of social media platforms and gaming, and anxiety and depression in youngsters. The pressure to be "on" all the time is overwhelming, with many children staying up late to game, to 'like' posts or reply to comments. The online conversation never stops!
- **Less chance of cyber-bullying and sexual exploitation.** Making sure that a child is not online and alone in their bedroom at night, cuts down dramatically the opportunity for unwanted contact. Latest figures from the National Crime Agency show a 700% upsurge in reported online child abuse since 2013 and in the last two years, Childline has seen a 168% rise in calls relating to online bullying and sexual abuse.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

MONDAY 5TH FEBRUARY | 0900 – 1000 | SEVENOAKS PRIMARY SCHOOL, BRADBOURNE PARK ROAD, SEVENOAKS, KENT. TN13 3LB

Film, photo & interview opportunity as ninety Year 6 pupils kick off the Digital Sunset Challenge with **Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities** and the **founders of the Digital Sunset Challenge, Anna Firth and Linden Kemkaran**. Other people available for interview: **Alan Duffy - Headteacher of Sevenoaks Primary School, Jill Roberts - Chief Executive of mental health charity West Kent Mind, James Okulaja, anti-bullying ambassador for the Diana Award, Michael Fallon MP, Roddy Hogarth, Economic & Community Development for Sevenoaks District Council**.

For more information please call: Anna Firth 07807 857230 or Linden Kemkaran 07740 818526 or to book an interview please call Georgia Hewson on 07980 831009.
