



## PARENT/CARER LETTER & PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parent/Guardian

February 2018

As part of our Internet Safety Week 2018, your child's class will be participating in a week-long 'Digital Sunset Challenge'. The Digital Sunset Challenge is a Sevenoaks District event funded and supported by Sevenoaks District Council and Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership.

The aim of the Challenge is to encourage children for one week, to switch off all phones and other devices like iPads, tablets, computers and gaming consoles at an agreed time each night (we suggest 6 or 7pm) and to keep the devices out of their bedrooms. Parents/Guardians and other siblings might like to join in the Challenge and have fun as a family doing other activities like reading, watching TV, cooking, arts and crafts, playing cards or board games or writing a daily journal before bed.

Research shows that by switching off all devices 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.
- A much needed break from the demands of social media. Recent studies have shown a strong link between excessive use of social media platforms and anxiety and depression in youngsters. The pressure to be "on" all the time is overwhelming with many children staying up late 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 an upsurge of 700% 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.

### Opt out slip for the Digital Sunset Challenge

(only needs to be filled in and returned if you are not happy for your child to take part and/or be filmed or photographed)

Child's name:.....

I am **NOT** happy for my child to take part in the Digital Sunset Challenge.

I do **NOT** wish for my child to be filmed or photographed as part of the event.