

PRESS RELEASE – for immediate use

KENT MUMS TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM THE HARM OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Hundreds of primary school children take the Digital Sunset Challenge for Safer Internet Day

NOW IN ITS SECOND SUCCESSFUL YEAR, THE DIGITAL SUNSET CHALLENGE INVITES YOU TO THE 2019 LAUNCH FILM & PHOTO OP WITH MATTHEW SCOTT, KENT POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER – 1330 MONDAY 4TH FEB IN SWANLEY, KENT (DETAILS BELOW)



TIME TO SWITCH OFF AND RECHARGE!

Two mums from Kent, Anna Firth & Linden Kemkaran, have devised a simple, free and easy way to teach children how to control screentime, take a break from social media and get a better night's sleep. It's the second consecutive year that schools in Kent have welcomed the e-safety initiative and asked pupils and parents if they are up for the

Digital Sunset 7 – 7 – 7 Challenge?

Switch off at 7pm, switch on again at 7am, for 7 days – can you do it?

Parents and siblings will be encouraged to join in the Challenge and 'disconnect to reconnect' by switching off all phones, tablets and gaming consoles and having fun as a family before bedtime. Suggested alternative activities are reading, watching TV together, arts and crafts, cooking, playing card or board games, or writing a daily journal.

The Digital Sunset Challenge is supported by

- Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Home Secretary: *"the pressure to be connected '24/7' is now so strong that it is vital we teach younger children the importance of taking a break from social media and the internet, particularly overnight. The Digital Sunset Challenge is a great way of supporting children, schools and parents to do just that"*
- Sir Michael Fallon MP
- Matthew Scott, Kent Police & Crime Commissioner
- Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner
- Mental health charity West Kent Mind

- The most recent report into screentime from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health which issued the recommendation that “*screens are avoided for an hour before the planned bedtime.*” (Jan 2019)

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. In September, the Home Secretary revealed a 700% increase in child abuse images being referred to the National Crime Agency and confirmed that there were up to 80,000 people in the UK presenting some kind of sexual threat to children online. Childline has seen a 168% rise in calls relating to online bullying and sexual abuse.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

MONDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2019 | 1300 – 1430 | ST PAUL’S PRIMARY SCHOOL, SCHOOL LANE, SWANLEY, KENT. BR8 7PJ (Please phone 01322 664324 to confirm attendance)

Film, photo & interview opportunity as pupils kick off the Digital Sunset Challenge 2019 with **MATTHEW SCOTT, KENT POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER** and the **founders of the Digital Sunset Challenge, Anna Firth and Linden Kemkaran.**

Our film is available to watch/download here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fj1-zBHJZQc>

Our website can be found at: www.digitalsunsetchallenge.com

Find us on Facebook: facebook.com/digitalsunsetchallenge and Twitter: @DigitalSunset7

You can email us at: digitalsunsetchallenge@gmail.com

For more information please call: Anna Firth 07807 857230 or Linden Kemkaran 07740 818526.
