

# THE DEBATE AROUND USE OF SCREEN TIME

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BY CLARE ERASMUS

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## About me

- Teacher, leader, designated mental health lead & Advisor, Author

## About you

- You're Interested in what schools and teachers can do to support sleep hygiene and balanced use of screentime with our YP

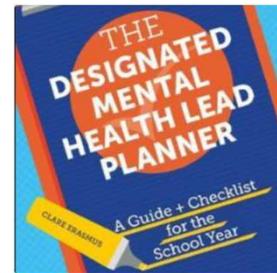
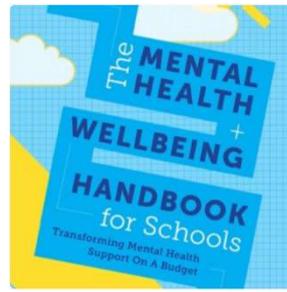
## What to expect today

- Informing vs telling
- Key questions and strategies

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Is screentime  
use solely  
responsible for poor  
sleep hygiene ?

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## According to research in 2018 [Children's screen time has little effect on sleep, says study](#)

The findings indicate that the tech-abstaining teenagers slept only slightly longer than their counterparts who had spent much of their day in front of a screen

But The study, [published in the Journal of Pediatrics](#), said every hour of screen time was linked to between three to eight fewer minutes of sleep a night.

### Conclusion

*Digital screen time, on its own, has little practical effect on pediatric sleep. Contextual factors surrounding screen time exert a more pronounced influence on pediatric sleep compared to screen time itself.*

1. Andrew K. Przybylski

Digital Screen Time and Pediatric Sleep: Evidence from a Preregistered Cohort Study [[Internet](#)].  
2018)

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Screen time and  
excessive use.....

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Who should we be  
talking to?

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What are we role  
modelling ?

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## SCHOOLS MANDATE

Schools have an important role to play in raising students and teachers awareness about the importance of sleep and the impact of screen time on students' wellbeing and their academic achievement

Pupils should know:

about self care;

the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn;

about the benefits of rationing time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices

- (DFE statutory guidance: **Physical health and mental wellbeing (Primary and secondary)**; Updated 13 September 2021)

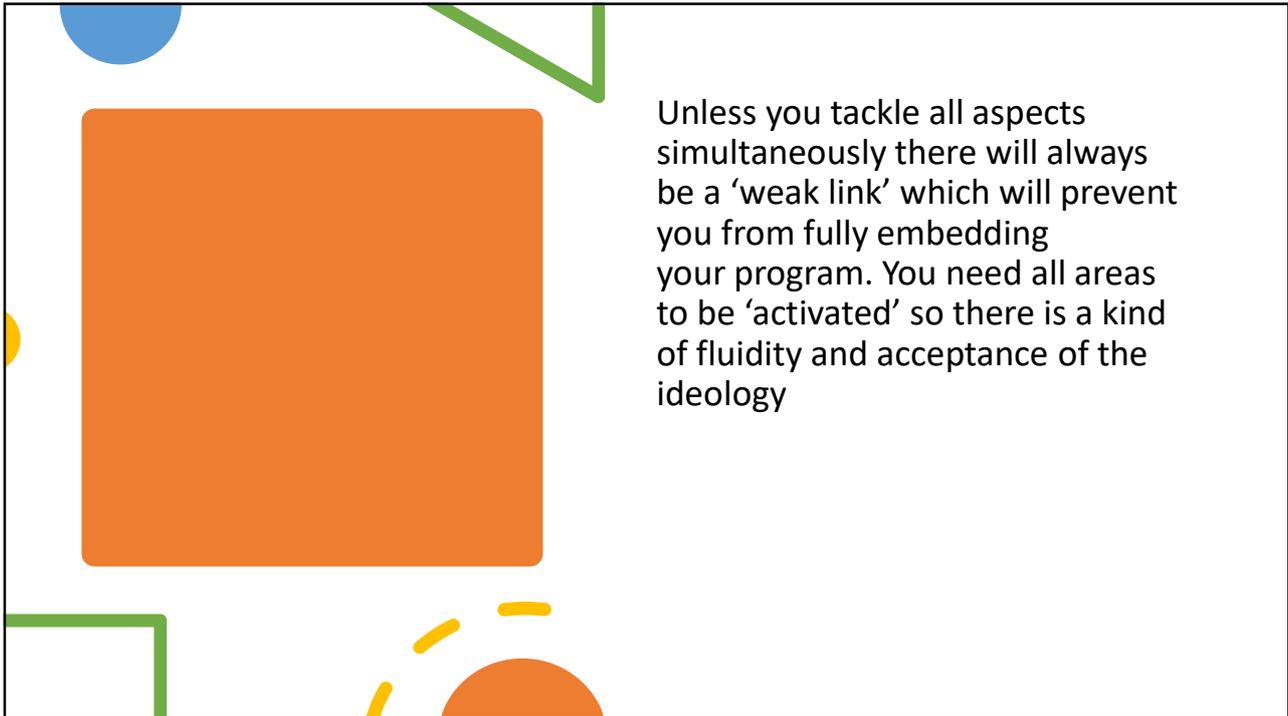
As teachers and school leaders, it can sometimes feel hard to make an impact on these areas, as many decisions around sleep and screen-time routines are taken outside the school and within families.

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## The success of any school mental health and wellbeing program is dependent on many key factors:

- The school in providing curriculum time and space to talk about mental health and to develop a culture in promoting positive mental health.
- The individual students' level of engagement and seeing relevance to take part
- The role of the staff and their own mental health
- The role of the parents in engaging in mental health conversations and promoting lifestyle choices which encourage positive mental health
- The extent to which the local community gets involved and engaging the services of local external agencies

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A slide with a white background and a black border. It features several decorative elements: a blue semi-circle in the top left, a green L-shaped line, a large orange square, a yellow semi-circle on the left edge, a green L-shaped line in the bottom left, and a dashed yellow semi-circle above an orange semi-circle in the bottom right. The text is positioned to the right of the orange square.

Unless you tackle all aspects simultaneously there will always be a 'weak link' which will prevent you from fully embedding your program. You need all areas to be 'activated' so there is a kind of fluidity and acceptance of the ideology

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A slide with a solid orange background. On the left, there is a large white circle containing a black circle with the white number '5' inside. To the right of this graphic, the text 'Practical approaches schools can take' is written in white. A dashed yellow semi-circle is positioned above the text.

Practical approaches schools can take

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Provide Curriculum time and space to talk

- ✓ Talk about establishing a **good routine** and habits around bedtime and sleeping.
- ✓ **Stimulus Control** and making sure that a young person's bedroom is associated with sleeping, not with being awake and active. This might mean changing some arrangements in the home.
- ✓ **Relaxing** before bedtime can be helpful for those struggling

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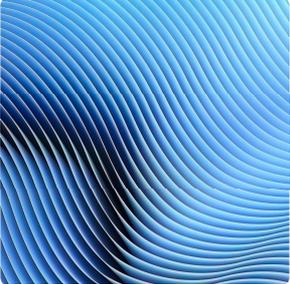


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Start at the top: Ask staff to reflect on their own sleep hygiene and screen time

- ✓ Promote a staff wellbeing culture of 'Unplug and have a digital detox'
- ✓ Get staff to openly talk about what they did and the positive impact or not

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## Engage the student in seeing relevance to take part

- Engage**
  - Engage the students in a project to unplug
- Survey**
  - Survey the cohort to see what they are anxious about; where they feel they need support at school, time spent on social media and what time they get off their screens ; what time they actually fall sleep
- Links**
  - Students will see the links between their performance, levels of anxiety and sleep
- See**
  - Teachers & parents will see the links between screen time, sleep and performance

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## Parents and schools

If both parties work together **then there is consistency for the child** and the life skills we are teaching, are more likely to be legitimised.

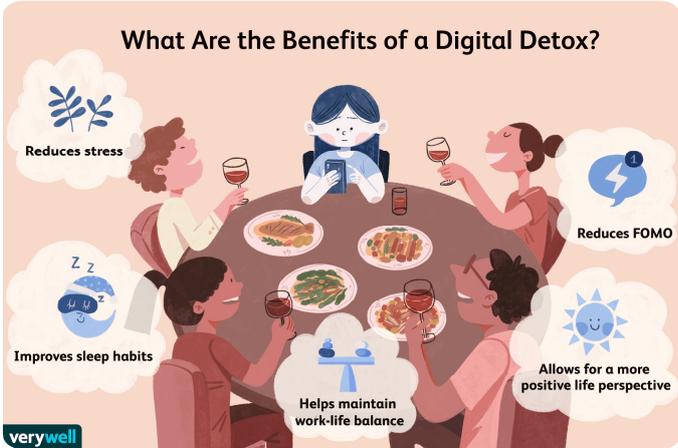
- It is vital that schools focus on a range of different approaches to work productively with parents ensuring clear communication and a positive dialogue around sleep hygiene , screen time and links to mental wellbeing and academic performance.
- ✓ In first year cohort hold important meeting about the parent/school partnership
- ✓ Under 13 year olds there are Apps which parents can use to control screen time - Screen Time; unglue; Norton Family; netnanny

[7 Best Parental Control Apps to Monitor and Limit Screen Time \(parents.com\)](#)

- ✓ Ask Parents to reflect on their relationship with screen time and role modelling
- ✓ To follow through with Bedtime routine, coming off screens at least an hour before sleep



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**What Are the Benefits of a Digital Detox?**

- Reduces stress
- Reduces FOMO
- Improves sleep habits
- Helps maintain work-life balance
- Allows for a more positive life perspective

verywell

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Get the local community involved and engaging the services of local external agencies

**Push a program of digital detox and unplug**

• Source: [Reasons to Do a Digital Detox \(verywellmind.com\)](https://www.verywellmind.com/reasons-to-do-a-digital-detox-5085887)

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## Screen Time Detox Tips for students in schools

- Let your friends and family know that you are on a digital detox and ask for their help and support
- Agree to all switch off your phones when focusing on other activities
- **REMOVE ACCESS - Delete social media apps from your phone to reduce temptation and easy access**
- Have meals without screens
- Keep screens out of the bedroom and agree a time to unplug before bed
- Challenge yourself to Read or listen to 'white noise' instead of being on screen before bed
- Keep a journal to track your progress and write down your thoughts about the experience

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## Summary

The success of any school mental health and wellbeing program is dependent on many key factors:

curriculum time and space to talk about screen time and to develop a culture in promoting positive mental health.

Staff role model and have the conversations about a digital detox

Engage the students in the data about their own performance, wellbeing and the culture in the school

Engage the parents in conversations about screentime from raising awareness to reflecting on their own use

Engage the local community and the services of local external agencies

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## References

1. DFE statutory guidance: **Physical health and mental wellbeing Primary and secondary**; Updated 13 September 2021
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