



25 November 2022

Dear Parent / Carer,

The risks around the use of mobile phones, but particularly social media, on young people are well documented. Every day the news carries reports around incidents and concerns that have arisen through various social media platforms, or the latest research that highlights the impact of phones on sleep, communication, concentration or mental health. At Guiseley School, we see this impact first hand on an almost daily basis. Despite 40% of our student cohort being too young to access apps such as TikTok and Snapchat, around 70% of the pastoral and safeguarding work we undertake is connected to social media in some way. Even though we know about the damage that mobile phones and social media can do, and the risks they carry, both parent and children can still feel safer with them.

Many young people are dependent on their mobile phones. They rely on phones for communication, travel, banking, payment, social connection, recreation, gaming and even schoolwork! However, the convenience of having all this in one place can come at a cost. We heard at the Parent Forum last night about the impact mobile phone use can have on concentration span, emotional intelligence, empathy and concentration levels. We also considered that this dependence has meant young people do not have the problem-solving skills that they will require more and more as they become independent adults.

Mobile phone use is embedded in every aspect of society. We heard last night that we pick up and unlock our phones 150 times a day on average and tap, swipe and click on our phones over 2600 times a day. I am sure you will agree these are startling statistics and therefore we are giving an opportunity for a 'digital detox' for any student, or adult, that wants to take part.

The 'Digital Detox' is entirely voluntary and will run throughout December. Students will be given the opportunity to hand their phone in to school and to live without their phone for up to 16 days. Phones will be stored away securely within school. We are notifying parents a week beforehand as we understand that there may be some logistical problems to solve before taking part, for example bus or train tickets.

Following feedback from parents at our Forum, we will offer three tiers of Digital Detox:

- **Platinum:** The full 'digital detox' experience. Phones will be submitted before school on December 1st and returned to students on December 16th.
- **Gold:** A partial digital detox. Phones can be submitted to school at the start but can be returned on weekends.
- **Silver:** A commitment to act. Phones are not submitted to school, but students delete their social media apps such as TikTok, Instagram and WhatsApp and stay off them between December 1st and December 16th. Silver students will be able to submit their screen time before and after to see how much more time they save over the two weeks.

Fieldhead Road, Guiseley, Leeds, LS20 8DT 01943 872315 guiseleyschool.org.uk info@guiseleyschool.org.uk
Headteacher: Mr Paul Clayton



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Every student that takes part in Platinum or Gold will be given the opportunity to do a wellbeing survey at the beginning of the process and at the end of the process to help them reflect upon the impact that the detox has had on their general wellbeing. We will also be offering some ideas and recommendations for students as to how they can use their gained time. This will be similar to the 'calendar of kindness' programme we have run in the past and will again be entirely voluntary.

We completely understand this experience could be uncomfortable and will not be for everybody. The 'digital detox' is designed to be thought provoking and a reflective experience. It is our hope that the 'discomfort' of life without a mobile phone helps to promote other skills such as communication, storytelling and personal connection and that the sacrifice will help our young people to reflect upon their mobile phone use and approaches to communication in the future. **If any parents want to take part in the process at any level, we would also welcome this.** If you wish to take part in the 'platinum' or 'gold' levels, then please send your phone in with your child on December 1st.

Finally, thank you to all parents that attended the forum last night, and for the kind feedback we have received since. We are aware that some families were unable to make it, and so have published the presentation on the school website at: <https://www.guiseleyschool.org.uk/wellbeing-for-students-blog/parent-forum-wellbeing>

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch via info@guiseley.f.a.o. Ms Mitchell or Mr Carney.

Kind Regards

L. Mitchell

Liddy Mitchell

Therapeutic Support Lead

P. Carney

Paul Carney

Deputy Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead