



Bishop Wordsworth's School

Exeter Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2ED

Telephone: 01722 333851

Fax: 01722 325899

E-mail: admin@bws.wilts.sch.uk

Website: www.bws-school.org.uk

Head Master: Dr S D Smallwood BSc (Hons) PhD NPQH

12 January 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians

I trust that you have all enjoyed the festive period and both yourselves, and the boys have found great value in time spent together during the holidays. I always enjoy the first couple of days post-break when all the boys have different stories to tell and news to catch up on, there is always huge breadth and variety to the adventures – be it home or abroad - and I value the opportunity to hear how our Year 9 boys have spent their time.

As ever there are commonalities based on the season, activities are often weather dependant and tradition dictates feeding time. Alongside these, the ever increasing element of Screen-Time seems to be more and more a theme which ties the boys down – be it individually or connected. Aside from the inevitable Films and Documentaries on the annual loop with shorter days and poor weather, the boys spend more time 'Gaming' or 'Whatsapping' than ever before in order to entertain themselves. I feel that now is as good a time as ever to address this point and seek to educate and encourage the boys to understand the importance of finding a balance in this area of their lives.

I talked to some of you on the Parent – Tutor social evening about finding ways to make a difference and set ourselves apart as a year group to directly benefit the boys. Maintaining a reading log has so far proved very interesting and given much encouragement as the Headmaster regularly publicises the lost art of page turning rather than screen swiping. Year 9 have also secured their own gardening plot, running alongside a scheme provided by the Royal Horticultural Society and focussing on the value of long term over instant gratification (or '1 click next day delivery') as a culture which seems to dominate our day to day operations.

Earlier in the Year I challenged 9O to find time during the week where they could hand their phone to their parents, for a given period of time, and record what they did in that time to entertain themselves. I now set this challenge to all of Year 9 and ask for your support in providing the opportunity for the boys to operate with less screen time in 2018. Even if this is simply a period of time to complete homework or prep – without the distraction of a phone I suspect this process might prove to some of our boys that they can in fact manage without being an arms-length from social media!

Whilst I appreciate that every one of our students operates entirely individually and there is no 'one size fits all' to spare time = x hours on phone, I can confidently say that each boy would find benefit should they buy in and have a crack at this idea. Even if it means picking up a landline and dialling if they simply have to be in contact with someone – I would sooner encourage the art of conversation above an often incomprehensible shortened text.

I have provided a simple tracking sheet, which the boys can stick in their diaries or adapt to suit their own solutions, that you and each tutor can keep track of and sign accordingly

upon receipt and return of whichever mobile device is relevant. In closing, let me stress that this is a **voluntary** undertaking and I am confident that the idea already runs within numerous households. This is simply an opportunity to ensure that ideas are being repeated and shared at both ends of the system and also something else to make a point of difference for Year 9 as a whole.

I look forward to keeping track of progress within 9O and will ensure that this thread is tied in with our assemblies and visiting speakers as the year goes on.

Best wishes

James Oldham
Assistant Head of Middle School

Less Screen in 2018

Week Beginning:			
Day	Hand in Time Scale	Achieved instead	Signature
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			