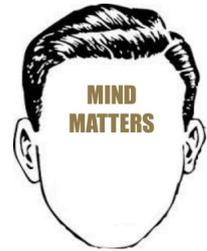**ST PAUL'S SCHOOL**

MIND MATTERS

Mind Matters Campaign 2017 – Technology and Mental Health

2. Technology/Social Media and Sleep

How technology makes sleep worse?

Social media use is now so prevalent that people think they can figure out your sleep patterns based purely on when your posting. If you want to reflect on your own social media usage, why not head to sleepingtime.org?

However, social media and technology usage can also have an impact on when you sleep and in turn your general health and wellbeing. TechTimeout have identified three main ways in which technology effects your sleep:

1. The light from the devices suppresses melatonin, a sleep-inducing hormone.
2. The devices are mentally and physically stimulating.
3. When we use our devices in bed, we create a learned association as the bed being a place of study or work or socializing – NOT a place for sleeping.

Lack of sleep can cause a negative feedback cycle as tiredness impact of self-esteem and adds to our feelings of worry of stress.

How technology can help sleep?

- Sleep tracking apps can help you to regulate your sleeping pattern and track when you go to sleep.
- Blue light inhibits production of melatonin which makes it harder to fall asleep. Blue light filters, for example the night shift function in IOS minimise the impact of this blue light. Other apps are available which give the screen a warmer red glow
- Colour changing light bulbs can be synced to sunrise/set. For example, Philips Hue.
- Sound conditioners can be used to emit regular calming noises like waves breaking.
- Websites such as mindful.org have exercises you can do to relax before trying to sleep.

The Sleep Doctor's tips for a social media/sleep balance:

- Charge your mobile devices out of the bedroom (this way you can't hear it buzz in the middle of the night.
- Stop social media use at least an hour before bedtime (this can be a tough one, try 30 minutes at first, then make it a little longer).
  Replace this time, with light reading (not on an electronic device), simple stretches, meditation or deep breathing.
- Don't check Social Media in the middle of the night when you may wake to use the restroom or just get more comfortable.

  (You can follow the sleep doctor on Twitter: **www.twitter.com/thesleepdoctor**)