



THE DIANA AWARD

Digital Detox

Information for Parents



Your child has taken part in a **Be Strong Online** session, a new peer-to-peer learning programme from The Diana Award charity in partnership with Vodafone and supported by Parent Zone.

Discuss, don't dictate

By the time children have reached secondary school age, it can be difficult to change established habits. The best thing to do is have open and honest discussions with your child about your concerns, and find positive solutions together

Say no to negativity

The term 'detox' can imply that the thing you are cutting down on is toxic. Your child is unlikely to respond if you approach a conversation about the time they spend online from a position that the internet is 'bad'. Explain that, as with most things in life, striking a balance is key

Be practical

It's not practical for children and young people still at school to take a break from the online world completely – how would they do their homework, for one thing? If they have special educational needs, they may find online easier than offline communication

But there *are* **practical suggestions** you can make to help them cut down, such as:

-  Turn off notifications on social media apps
-  Uninstall and close apps for a set time to see how they feel without them. Do they really miss them?
-  Use the timer function on their phones or tablet to schedule 'internet breaks'

-  Set their device to airplane mode or turn it off for agreed periods, gradually extending them as they get used to being offline

Act as a role model

It's difficult to encourage your children to cut down on the time they spend online if they see you constantly updating your Facebook status or checking how your current eBay auction is doing

If you want to encourage your children to modify their internet use, it helps if you can do the same yourself

Encourage tech-free moments

With younger children, it's easy for parents to suggest family days out or activities together that don't involve technology. As children get older, their lives become more independent from you and it's neither right nor possible to control what they do all the time

But you *can* encourage them to **pursue activities away** from their screens, such as:

-  Playing sport
-  Learning a musical instrument
-  Signing up for a local drama group
-  Going to the skate park with their friends
-  Encouraging them to join a youth group or organisation like the Scouts
Local authorities often have information about free activities for young people on their websites, so encourage them to take a look at what's going on in your area



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Diana Award, 2nd Floor, 120 Moorgate, London EC2M 6UR Tel: 020 7628 7499

Website: www.diana-award.org.uk Twitter: @Dianaaward

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120 Moorgate, London EC2M 6UR

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