

MALVERN NEEDS



With the end of the semester and winter break upon us, many students and teacher may be eager for a long winter's nap. These stories may help you to think about sleep as you hit the pillow.

Technology keeps teens awake at night

Students at Malvern and at many other schools in America have one thing in common: they are tired. What is the role of technology in this similarity?

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

II am always tired," senior Patrick Keenan said with a yawn. "I can't remember the last time I felt fully awake when I was at school."

Patrick Keenan is a captain of the crew team, a M.E.C.O. leader, and an honors student. One might think that he is always tired because of this heavy workload, but he is not alone. A number of students at Malvern are coming into school more and more tired to start the school day.

One of the possible causes for this constant drowsiness among students is the usage of cell phones before falling asleep.

In a survey of Malvern Prep students, 82 percent said that they use their phones while in bed before falling asleep. Over 76 percent of those students said that they use their phones for 30 minutes or more during this time.

Not only is this causing students to fall asleep later, it could have an effect on the way that they sleep throughout the night.

A recent national study found that the number of U.S. teens who reported sleeping less than seven hours a night jumped 22 percent between 2012 and 2015. Sleep experts agree that teenagers should have at least nine hours of sleep a night, but 43 percent of teens get less than seven.

The biggest change in teen habits between 2012 and 2015? More students own and use smartphones.

More recent studies have linked late-night smartphone use by teens to a decline in mental health, including depressed moods, lack of self esteem, and inability to cope.

Keenan said that his phone is always charging next to his bed in easy reaching distance if he ever wanted it during the night.

"I use my phone every night before falling asleep," Keenan said. "I think it helps me detach from everything else that is going on after a long day."

Keenan said that he gets around six hours of sleep each night, falling asleep around midnight and waking up around 6 a.m. for crew workouts.

Peter Borger is a senior at Malvern on the Cross Country team. He has signed his letter of intent to continue his running career at the University of Richmond next fall. Borger does not use any technology before falling asleep.

"I try to stay away from having my phone near where I sleep as much as possible," Borger said. "I value sleep so much for my school work, and I think it is key for my success in running. If I show up to a meet and I'm tired, there is no way I am going to be able to run as fast as I can."

Borger thinks he gets a lot more sleep than many other students at Malvern.

"I probably get around nine hours of sleep per night. I try to fall asleep by 10 o'clock each night. During the cross country season, I am usually very tired after practices so it is fairly easy for me to fall asleep rather early," he said.

It is much more difficult to learn when you are tired. If you are zoned out and not engaged in class, you are most likely not going to be able to remember anything you were taught that period.

Teachers have begun to notice this tiredness in a number of students. Theology teacher Mrs. Jessica Kenworthy said that her students have been tired for a long time. "They are teenage boys. They're going to be tired whenever they have to wake up at 7 a.m. for school," she said.

Kenworthy said she could see how technology usage is keeping students up at night and making them sleep less.

"When I was in high school and even when I started teaching, being on your phone at night wasn't a problem for students," she said. "Now it is so easy to reach over, pick up your phone, and stay up for multiple hours."

She said that she tries to stay off technology, and also tries to have her children stay away from it at night.

"Nothing productive is really being done when you are on your phone late at night," she said. "The time that students now spend on their phones could be spent sleeping, and that would make them much more productive during the school day." ♦

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Insomnia symptoms affect productivity, moods

What happens when sleep is impossible?

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It is 3 a.m., and senior Des Papariello is wide awake again.

It is likely he is composing music. "Usually I wake up and can't fall back asleep," he said. "So I choose to work on music. My most productive hours are three in the morning to five in the morning."

For Papariello, insomnia is a lifestyle. He averages three to five hours of sleep each night. "It ranges from night to night. Let's say I fall asleep around 8, I'll probably be up at midnight or one," he said.

For Papariello, his habit of not being able to sleep started when he was very young. His dad would wake him up very early in the morning and they would both go about their day.

Even today, it's like father, like son. Papariello said that he and his dad will often see each other at 3 or 4 a.m., getting food in the kitchen.

The National Sleep Foundation defines insomnia as a disorder characterized by chronic complaints of unsatisfactory sleep, despite having enough opportunity to sleep.

Surveys have reported that as many as one third of the general U.S. population suffers from insomnia symptoms. Nearly ten to fifteen percent percent of all U.S. adults report severe, chronic insomnia that affects their daytime functioning.

School Psychologist Dr. Dorothy Sayers said that insomnia can sometimes be related to mental health issues. "If someone is depressed, they may have a hard time sleeping. Or they could sleep too much, but it is attached to the mental health issues," she said.

Sayers said that insomnia can also be related to poor sleep patterns.

"If somebody generally goes to bed really late, and they are continuously doing things through the night and not giving themselves time to lie down and relax to let their body go into that sleep pattern, that can cause insomnia as well," she said.

Sayers suggested some changes in habit that could help people facing insomnia symptoms.

"Create a certain time to go to bed. If someone has a really hard time going to sleep and

they don't go to sleep until early morning, or it takes them a while to fall asleep, try to push that back by 15 minutes early each night to get yourself into a better sleep pattern where you can go to sleep earlier and be able to fall asleep earlier," she said.

"And then also reduce caffeine. Don't drink that after certain hours, because sometimes it keeps you awake," she said.

Sayers also suggested that turning off the television, phones and laptops can help someone to get to sleep, as technology within reach can keep your body awake. She suggested that some behavioral exercises, like listening to relaxing music or doing reading exercises, can also help

people get the important sleep that they need.

"If it's after midnight, it's way too late," she said. "Try to push it back as much as you can."

Teens are at an important stage of growth and development. Because of this, they need more

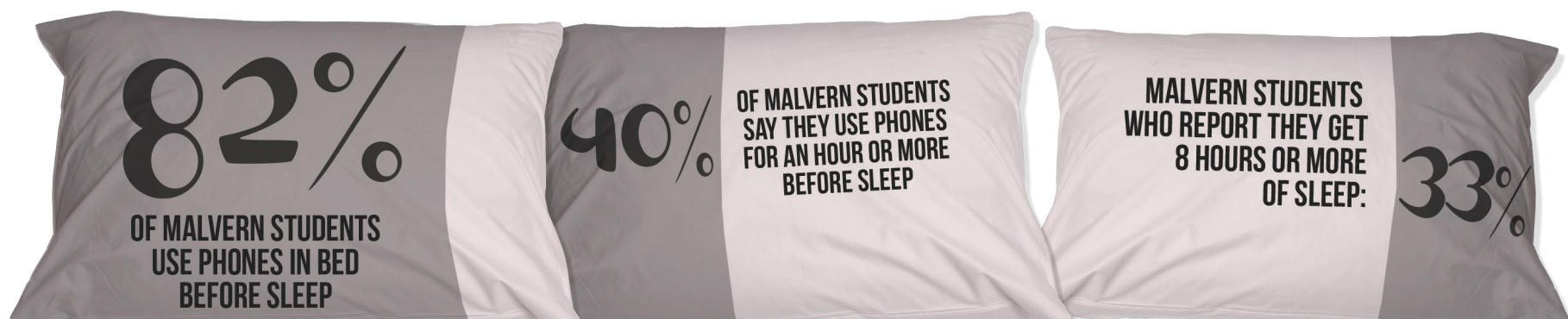
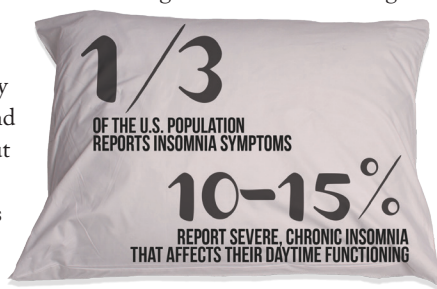
sleep than adults. According to the National Sleep Foundation, the average teen needs about nine hours of sleep each night to feel alert and well rested. Insomnia symptoms can make this challenging.

Studies show that insomnia can negatively affect work performance, impair decision-making and damage relationships. People with insomnia can feel dissatisfied with their sleep schedules and can usually experience symptoms such as mood disturbance. They can also experience fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and decreased performance in work or at school.

Papariello thinks that insomnia relates to his musical creativity. "If I wake up at three and have an idea, than I have to work on it because you never know where an idea could lead," he said.

But while he might be productive at night, Papariello finds that he gets very tired during the school day. "It's tough to be up at 2 in the morning, and then you have to come to school and be attentive for six hours," he said. "It may affect my mood because I am a super moody person."

Although Papariello acknowledges that insomnia can be challenging, he has accepted it as part of his life. "I've never really gotten checked out about it. It's kind of just how I live." ♦



72% OF U.S. CHILDREN & 89% OF TEENS HAVE AT LEAST ONE DEVICE IN THEIR SLEEP ENVIRONMENT