



School Newsletter

Headteacher:
MONDAY 15TH JANUARY 2024 Mr N Lamorte

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MESSAGE FROM MR LAMORTE - HEADTEACHER

Firstly, I'd like to wish you all a very happy new year, one that I hope is safe, enjoyable and successful for you all. Teachers enjoyed a really successful training day on Monday 8th January. We completed a range of professional development including: trips, risk assessments, behaviour management, Rights, guided reading and phonics. We covered a lot and it was a really successful day.

The teachers have been focussing on reimplementing the Wychall Golden Routines and children have settled back really quickly and successfully. We are focussing on Being Resilient as our next Wychall Behaviour Expectation. Year 6 enjoyed their visit to Steelhouse Lane, as part of their learning journey of Crime and Punishment. Steelhouse Lane is a Grade II listed building and the Lock-up opened in 1891, operating until 2016. A tunnel that goes under Colebridge Passage separates the building. It allowed prisoners to be sent to the courts directly from the cells. The children behaved brilliantly on the trip and were a real credit to the school. It inspired lots of conversations on their return. See pictures below.



POLITE REMINDERS

Cold weather: The forecast over the next few weeks is for a really cold snap. Please ensure children come to school dressed appropriately. A warm coat, hat, scarf and gloves is advised, along with appropriate footwear. We will aim to get the children outside for playtimes if the playground is safe, so please ensure children are dressed appropriately.



Attendance: Please ensure that your child attends school regularly. I am working very closely with Mrs. Porter, Miss Stanley and the Trust to raise levels of attendance which still fall short of pre pandemic levels. We would like to work collaboratively with parents to improve attendance, and will be identifying children who can be supported through the FastTrack process. Research shows that high levels of attendance impacts positively on both attainment and progress. Our target for all children is 96%.



WELCOME BACK

We would like to welcome back Mr Ali, Site Manager, after a long absence due to ill health. You may have seen him in school over the last week or so, and we're pleased to have him back in school. I would like to **extend a warm THANK YOU to Mr Martin**, who has covered this role during Mr Ali's absence. We wish him all the very best for the future.

Key Dates and Information

- Tuesday 16th January 2024 - Y6 Parent Meeting - SATS - 15:30 and 17:00
- Monday 22nd January - Living Eggs will be in school
- Friday 2nd February - Year 5 Trip to the Black Country Museum
- Friday 9th February - Break up for half term
- Monday 19th February - Return to school
- Tuesday 27th February - Parents' Evening 16:00 - 18:30 - Uniform SwapShop
- Thursday 29th February - Parents' Evening 15:30 - 17:30 - Uniform SwapShop
- Tuesday 5th March - 6ST Parent Meetings
- Thursday 7th March - 6JF Parent Meetings
- Thursday 7th March - World Book Day - Dress up as a book character
- Thursday 14th March - Year 2 Multiplication Workshops
- Friday 15th March - Red Nose Day - Wear something red and bring a donation.
- Friday 22nd March - Autism Awareness Day - 'Light it up blue' - Wear something blue day.
- Friday 22nd March - Spring Disco

A Message from Ms Porter

Attendance

Happy New Year & Welcome Back

- Just a friendly reminder that if your child is absent then please notify the office or attendance by 8:30am or at your earliest convenience.
- Please make sure you provide a valid reason for absence.



Competition

- Congratulations to Ahmed in 2PW who won last term's attendance raffle prize of an android tablet.
- **This term's attendance raffle prize is a mystery family fay out!**
- To be in a chance of winning then you must have 97% or more attendance by the time the prize is drawn on 21st March 2024. Good Luck!



**LET'S TACKLE
ILLEGAL
PARKING
TOGETHER**

Parking continues to be a concern around school at the drop off and collection time. We have received a number of complaints from local residents about inconsiderate, illegal and dangerous parking, along with further concerns from parents. The public is now being encouraged to contact Birmingham City Council directly at the link below, to report vehicles that are parked illegally. Please see the link below.

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20109/parking/1983/report_an_illegally_parked_vehicle

Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online.

Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

Please see the poster here for further information and advice.

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert: potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the users sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

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Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Many of us look at the start of a new year as a way to refresh and set new habits, but January can also feel very overwhelming with the return to school and the added pressure of potentially long – and unrealistic – lists of New Year's Resolutions. So, we are inviting you to take a step back and make small steps towards our children having a happier, healthier them to kick-start 2024.

We all have moments where we feel overwhelmed by what life throws at us. It is normal to feel stressed, worried, angry. The key is to know you will feel better. Here are some activities to improve your children's wellbeing:

- Focus on the positives
- Try something you would normally avoid
- Recognise what you are good at
- Be kind to yourself

For more useful information and activities please head to the links below:

Building Your Self Esteem www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/young-people/well-being/activities/tips-building-self-esteem

Pause hubs | Forward Thinking Birmingham <https://forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk/pause>

What to do if you are worried about a child

We are very lucky that we have such a supportive community, whereby families often contact us directly if they have seen or know something of concern relating to any of our pupils. We appreciate that families and the community are the eyes and ears for vulnerable children so please see below organisations that you can contact directly if you have genuine concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any child.

West Midlands Police - 999 (if the child is in immediate danger)

NSPCC - 0800 800 5000 - Report child abuse

Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) - 0121 303 1888 or cass@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Online Information from the NSPCC for parents can be found at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Household Support Fund

Household support fund is still taking applications until March 2024. If you have not made an application within the last 12 months please email enquiry@wychall.drbignitemat.org with your contact details and a member of the pastoral team will call you for more information.

Food Aid

If you are in a position whereby you are struggling to provide meals for yourself or children, please come and see us. We are a food bank referral agency.

The B30 foodbank operates from Friends Meeting House in Cotteridge on Tuesdays and Fridays weekly.

If you feel this service would benefit you please come and speak to Miss Stanley or Mrs Jones in confidence.