

## **DATES FOR THE DIARY**

### **November**

**Thur 16<sup>th</sup>** – Flu vaccinations (nasal spray) Rec to Y6

**Fri 17<sup>th</sup>** – Own clothes for Children in Need,

£1 suggested donation please

### **December**

**Wed 6<sup>th</sup>** – PTA Christmas Discos! 3:15 – 4:15 (Rec & KS1) & 4:30 – 5:30 (KS2)

**Tue 12<sup>th</sup>** – 9:15am Butterfly & Reception Xmas Performance

10:15am KS1 (Y1 & Y2) Xmas Performance

**Wed 13<sup>th</sup>** – 1:15pm Butterfly & Reception Xmas Performance

2:15pm KS1 (Y1 & Y2) Christmas Performance

**Thur 14<sup>th</sup>** – Christmas Jumper & Christmas Dinner

Day. £1 suggested donation to charity

**Fri 15<sup>th</sup>** – 9am & 2:30pm KS2 Carol Concert

3:15pm ALL FINISH FOR CHRISTMAS

### **January**

**Tue 2<sup>nd</sup>** – INSET DAY – School closed to pupils

**Wed 3<sup>rd</sup>** – ALL pupils back for spring term

Residentials: please put these dates in your diary:

Year 4 Residential to London: 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024

Year 2 Residential to Tattenhall: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Year 6 Residential to Min-y-Don: 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## **POKEMON & FOOTBALL CARDS**

We have seen an increase in pupils bringing football and Pokémon cards into school. With this, we have also seen an increase in fallings out and arguments over unfair swaps and cards going missing. Please do not allow your child to bring cards into school and save these for social time at home in the evenings and at weekends. There is plenty to keep the children active and occupied during play times in school. Thanks.

## **WELCOME TO NEW STAFF**

This week we were thrilled to welcome Mrs Stride to the Admin office Team, Miss Jones to the Nursery Team and Mrs Galbraith to the Midday Assistant Team. The staff and your children have been making them feel very 'Acorns Welcome'!

## **FLU VACCINATIONS**

As always, the NHS will be in school this year carrying out the flu spray vaccinations for all pupils from Reception to Year 6. You will have received a letter about this via email, also containing the Parent Leaflet, both of which are also available on the website.

Please complete the online application form by Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November as this is when it will close. Pupils who have not had permission online by this point, will not be able to have the vaccination and parents will then need to book in at a weekend clinic as soon as possible. The information on your email contains the code for our school, which you will need when you provide consent.

## **COMPETITIVE FOOTBALL MATCHES**

Team Acorns have entered a local Y5&6 football league to play against other primary schools in our area. Our first match is against William Stockton on Monday. The Ellesmere Port Church of England College have kindly allowed us to use their facilities for this match. Pupils will be chosen to play based on their positive behaviour inside and outside of school rather than their football skill alone.

**#TeamAcorns**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH**

Most days parents speak to us with concerns over their child's online habits and their mental health, wanting advice and support. The two are indeed closely linked. On Page 2 is a great poster that supports parents to make positive and proactive parenting choices in order to allow children to mature and develop, but at an age-appropriate pace and whilst protecting their mental health and well-being. Please do read and put in place as many safeguards as you can.



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthralls young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

## 1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

## 2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

## 3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

## 4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

## 5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces. Involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

## Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-53204855>  
<https://ipoutsource.com/blog/social-media-algorithms/>

## 6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

## 7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

## 8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

## 9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

## 10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.



[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)



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