St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools' Weekly Newsletter
29th September, 2023
'Love one another; Always do our best; Take care of ourselves and the world around us'

Parent Governor roles

Reminder that we are looking to fill 2 parent governor roles. All forms must be submitted to the school office by 3.30pm, Monday, 9th October. Being a School Governor is a commitment, but has fantastic rewards, as you actively shape the strategic direction of our school, alongside the other governors on the board. Please do consider submitting an application, or speak to Mrs Ronan or our Chair of Governors, Martha Hawting, to find out a bit more about the role.

Communication

Staying in touch is key! As you know, if you have a question or concern about your child, the first person you should speak to is your child's class teacher.

If you need to contact a member of staff, or the office, **please use this email address: office@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk**

Please do NOT use admin@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk as this is not monitored regularly.

We shall aim to send general emails **once a week, on a Friday,** rather than throughout the week. If we are contacting you directly, or it is an urgent message to share, we shall email you on the day.

Year 6 parents: secondary transfer information

Please see the website for information and key dates on how and when to apply for your child's secondary school place.

https://www.stmaryspriory.co.uk/page/?title=Transfer+to+secondary+school&pid=124

Lunchtimes

Following the free school meals offer by the Mayor London, all children are entitled to a free school dinner.

We are continually looking for how to improve our school lunches, including waste. We have noted that where a parent may have ordered school lunch for their child on a set day, their child does not want to eat the food, often asking for a plate of chips rather than fish and chips, or a plate of mashed potato rather than sausages, mash and greens. Please look at the menu with your child, so they are clear on what the choices are for the their lunch.

https://www.stmaryspriory.co.uk/page/?title=Lunch+Menu&pid=61

Dates for your diary:

Our website now has a calendar which updates parents on events going on in the school (as well as this newsletter)

Click here to see our calendar. It can also be found on our home page.

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When:	What:	Who:	Where:	Time:
2nd October	Individual Photographs- children to wear full uniform	All children		
5th October	Communication and Language Workshop	Nursery and Reception parents	Nursery	9.00am or at 2.30pm
Every Thursday 12th October- 16th November	5-week parent workshop hosted by Trailblazers	All parents	Junior Hall	2.10-3.10pm
16th and 17th October	Parent teacher Consultations	Years 1-6 parents	Class rooms	3.40-6pm
31st October	Year 6- Secondary school application deadline	Year 6 parents	Haringey website- see our website under 'apply now' for more information	
17th November	Children in Need			

Attendance Matters!

Attendance winners!	
Infant School:	Junior School:
Robin 100%	5S 100%
Punctuality winners!	
Penguins 0 lates	3C 0 lates

St Mary's Student Leaders!

Congratulations to our newly appointed House and Vice Captains and School Council representatives!

Link to our Twitter:

https://twitter.com/StMarysRCPriory

# What's been happening at St Mary's this week?

Make sure you check out our school's Twitter account to keep up to date with what our pupils are getting up to!

St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant &... @StMary... · Sep 28 — Promote

Dove Class have been enjoying reading Jim and the Beanstalk this term. The Giant even came and visited our classroom! #JimandtheBeanstalk #GiantFootprints

3M have been busy mathematicians 😀✅➕ The children have been creating numbers, using base 10 blocks, to calculate 100 more and 100 less than a given number ⭐ #mathsnoproblem #KS2Maths #PrimaryMaths
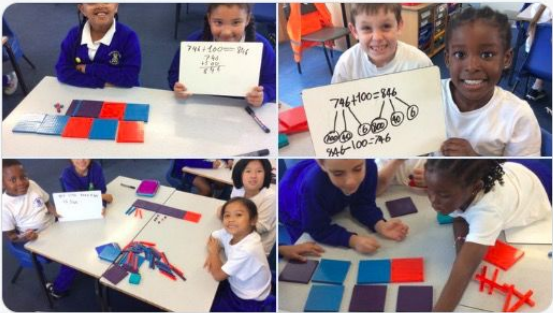
📚✍️Exploring new worlds through words! 🌍🚀6J are diving into collaborative writing inspired by 'The Arrival' by Shaun Tan. 📝✨ Imagination knows no bounds! #WritingJourney #CollaborativeWriting #TheArrivalInspired

Stars of the Week

Owl Class	Grace	Miriam
Penguin Class	Willow	Daniel
Robin Class	Mathias	Yasmin
Woodpecker Class	Oliwier	Jesica
Dove Class	Massimo	Leila
3C	Demitriana	Georgina
3M	Kelly	Cain
4B	Heidi	Natan
5D	Redeemer	Kinga
5S	Lucia	Rayan
6B	Nicolas	Imani Rose
6J	Mikhaile	Liliana

**Congratulations to our Stars of the week!
These pupils have worked exceptionally hard
to stand out amongst their peers. Well done
everyone!**

Hornsey
School for Girls

FORTIOR·QUO·PARATIOR
The Better Prepared the Stronger

Open Events
for Prospective Families

Open Evening
• Thurs 5th October 2023 17:30 – 19:30

Open Morning
• Fri 6th, Tue 10th, Thurs 12th and Tue 17th October 2023

Inderwick Road, Crouch End, London N8 9JF
Tel: 02083486191 Email: admin@hornseyschool.com
Web: www.hsg.haringey.sch.uk

Ofsted Good School 2022 · INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AWARD 2019–22 · SSAT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES AWARDS 2019 · Skills Builder Silver Award 2020–23 · NOS CERTIFIED SCHOOL

Hornsey
School for Girls

FORTIOR·QUO·PARATIOR

The Better Prepared the Stronger

Check out our digital prospectus!

Book open events using the QR Code

https://www.hsg.haringey.sch.uk

BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN YOUR CHILD

A 5-week parent workshop hosted by Trailblazers!

The Trailblazers are a Mental Health Support Team working with Haringey Schools to support the emotional wellbeing of children. Zena is an Educational Mental Health Practitioner supporting this school. She is trained in evidence-based approaches for a range of wellbeing concerns including anxiety, low mood and behavioural difficulties.

What will be covered:
- Understanding worry and anxiety in children.
- Supporting your child to understand and manage their feelings.
- Helping your child to talk about and challenge their worries.
- Helping your child to face their fears and build confidence.
- Space for questions and troubleshooting.
- Parent peer support - sharing and understanding.

"Felt like a really safe space - really appreciated all the help and guidance."

"Just delighted with it so lucky to have this"

(Parent workshop feedback, May 2023)

BOOK A PLACE BY EMAILING:
admin@
stmarysrcpriory.
haringey.sch.uk

WHEN & WHERE?
2:10pm - 3:10pm @ St Mary's Priory
Thursday 12th October - 16th November 2023

Haringey LONDON

NHS
Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health
NHS Trust

TRAILBLAZERS
STRENGTHENING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

Exciting news for the next academic year!

There will be a Parent and baby Group at St. Mary's Priory Catholic School every Friday at <mark>9am to 10am</mark>

Everyone with a baby is welcome!

Dear Parents,

we are inviting you and your baby to come along and enjoy a space with other parents, going through the same experiences as you. You will share the experiences and learn about your baby's development.

The facilitator: Gloria Jaramillo (Child Counsellor currently working with children across the schools)

Starting date: 8th September 2023

Email: admin@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk

Phone: 020 8800 9305

Hermitage Road, London N15 5RE

Exciting news for the next academic year!

There will be a Parent and baby Group at St. Mary's Priory Catholic School every Monday at *9am to 10.30am*

Everyone with a toddler is welcome!

Dear Parents,

You are invited to participate with their toddler (1 to 3-year-old) in a space to play, talk and learn together about your child's development.

The facilitator: Gloria Jaramillo (Child Counsellor currently working with children across the schools)

Starting date: Monday 11th September 2023

Email: admin@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk

Phone: 020 8800 9305

Hermitage Road, London N15 5RE

YEAR 6 ADMISSIONS OPEN EVENTS

(September 2024 Start)

Wednesday 20 September 2023 | 4.30pm - 6.30pm
(Tours. Principal's presentation at 4.45pm & 5.45pm)

Wednesday 11 October 2023 | 5.00pm - 7.00pm
(Tours. Principal's presentation at 5.15pm & 6.15pm)

Thursday 12 October 2023 | 9.00am - 9.45am
(Tours. Final Tour at 9.15am)

Skinners' academy

HARINGEY
MUSIC SERVICE
PRESENTS

Junior Vox

A vocal group for ages 8 -11

All singers are welcome!

Tuesday
4:15 - 5:00pm
Chestnuts Community Centre
280 St Ann's Road, N15 5BN

An amazing opportunity!

If you are looking for a challenge and want to push yourself musically and get the chance for some exciting performance opportunities, then this choir is for you!

No audition required!

This group is for singers who are looking to explore their vocal harmony and voices in a variety of ways, to eventually work alongside other musicians, vocalists and other ensembles.

Haringey
LONDON

*This is *NOT* a standard choir. This is a vocal group with an edge.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION 16+ in UK and Europe; rest of the world 13+

With more than two billion active users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp itself can read them. This privacy issue has been in the spotlight recently, as the UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging; WhatsApp is unwilling to do so and has reportedly considered withdrawing its service in the UK should this legislation go ahead.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency'. Plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user that they want to message. If your child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that your child might be added to a group chat (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people that they don't know.

FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allows news to be shared rapidly – whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a "Forwarded many times" label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original ... and might not be entirely factual, either.

'VIEW ONCE' CONTENT

The facility to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate images or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't re-open them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this 'disappearing' content – but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing increased privacy.

CHAT LOCK

Another new option allows users to store certain messages or chats in a separate 'locked chats' folder, saved behind a passcode, fingerprint or face ID authentication. The risk here is that this function creates the potential for young people to hide conversions and content that they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of (such as age-inappropriate material).

VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child's safely on the way home, for example. However, anyone in your child's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location – potentially letting strangers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

Advice for Parents & Carers

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage your child to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider, for example, whether the message sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

THINKING BEFORE SHARING

Help your child to understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content to then be shared more widely (even publicly on social media). Encourage your child to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change your child's WhatsApp settings (go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups') to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval: you can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except ...'. Additionally, if your child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Some parents like to check in with their child about how they're using WhatsApp, explaining that it will help to keep them safe. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of chats that are in there, who they're with and why your child wants to keep them hidden. Also, if your child has sent any 'view once' content, you could discuss their reasons for using this feature.

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.

National Online Safety®
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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.

POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain 'heavy' metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.

UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.

ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 1.3 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal; materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.

WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be **disposable** (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or **rechargeable** (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.

WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.

UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.

SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.

VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term 'natural and artificial flavourings'. Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.

Meet Our Expert

Run by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.

catch your breath

HEALTHY SCHOOLS CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

The National College®

Top Tips for
SETTING BOUNDARIES AROUND GAMING

If your child loves video games, then you'll probably be aware that how long they spend gaming – and what they're actually playing – can occasionally become a source of concern or conflict. The UK's trade body for interactive entertainment, Ukie, has recently launched a campaign to promote safer and more responsible gaming among young people – with parents and carers helping by setting sensible and fair boundaries. Our guide has tips on key areas where you could agree some healthy ground rules for your child's gaming activity.

PROMOTE SAFER GAME CHOICES

Deciding which online games are OK – and which should be avoided – is tricky. Some titles allow children to cooperate or compete with strangers, which creates potential risks. Watching your child play online for a while could provide more insight into a particular game, while the parental controls on most consoles allow you to limit who can chat to your child or send them friend requests. Remind your child of the hazards around strangers online when you discuss this boundary with them.

ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Help your child understand the need to take regular breaks, playing in shorter bursts rather than marathon sessions. Bear in mind that some games (such as role-playing games) require time investment from the player, while others (online team games, for example) can't be stopped or paused at a moment's notice. A quick break every hour or so is good practice, and you could suggest some things to do in these breaks, such as having a drink of water or getting some fresh air.

AGREE SPENDING LIMITS

There's no doubt that gaming can be expensive, and younger players often don't realise how much paying for digital items and subscriptions can add up to. Many young gamers love to buy new skins or upgrades for their character, so you could settle on a fixed amount that your child is allowed to spend on in-game items each week or month. This sort of boundary will not only help your child to manage their expectations but will also make you more aware of the price of these items.

DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

18 CENSORED

Children often ignore the age ratings on games – or are unaware they even exist. If you're happy with your child playing a particular game even though it's rated above their age, then establish that as a boundary: emphasise that you've made an exception, and talk about what age ratings mean and why they're important. You could add context to this boundary by browsing games' boxes together while shopping, discussing why some games might have earned certain age ratings.

FACTOR IN FRIENDS

If your child is a keen video gamer, the chances are that they'll have other gamers among their social circle, too. When friends visit, do they instantly dash to their console or computer? You could put boundaries in place before their guests arrive by agreeing on a length of gaming time. Bear in mind, though, that they may try to extend this once they're together. Try coming up with activities or challenges for them during screen breaks – if they join in, they earn a little extra time on their game.

ENJOY GAMING TOGETHER

Setting time aside to play video games together can be an enjoyable bonding exercise. Undeniably, some young gamers may be less enthusiastic about a parent or carer joining in, but it can be a productive way of encouraging them to share their hobby with you. Setting goals or tasks might be useful: if they love Minecraft, choose something to build together; if Fortnite's their favourite, ask to try out some of the fun game modes, like Prop Hunt, which don't require high skill levels.

TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

D@*#!

Help your child to monitor their emotions as they play. Discuss what is (and isn't) an acceptable level of competitiveness to show while gaming. Are they allowed to trash talk other players, for example? Can they notice when they get angry if they lose? Do they think these emotions are healthy? Some games can provoke anger, but others can bring joy, humour and the thrill of overcoming a challenge. Try to steer your child towards games that tend to produce these more positive feelings.

BE PREPARED FOR TROLLS

A frequent problem when gaming online is other players who are deliberately troublesome. Make sure your child knows how to report and block someone who makes their experience a negative one. Between you, decide if or how they should deal with these online trolls. Talk about where your child's boundaries are in terms of what they think is acceptable: what behaviour by other users is merely frustrating, and what crosses the line to become upsetting or abusive.

Meet Our Expert

Daniel Lipscombe is a writer specialising in technology, video gaming, virtual reality and Web3. He has also written 15 guidebooks for children, covering games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Valorant, Roblox and Minecraft. With work published by the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and VG247, he has reviewed more than 50 games and products over the past year.

National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

🐦 @natonlinesafety 📘 /NationalOnlineSafety 📷 @nationalonlinesafety ♪ @national_online_safety

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Haringey, Here to Help

Haringey LONDON

Get valuable funding for your child's school!

Did you know, schools can receive up to **£1455** in extra funding through the **Pupil Premium** for every child who is eligible for **Free School Meals?**

CLAIM FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The funding is used to boost learning outcomes for pupils so every child in Haringey can achieve their full potential.

So, if you're eligible, speak to your school and complete a Free School Meals application today!

scan me to learn more!

www.haringey.gov.uk/FSM

*Please see the list of qualifying benefits on our website.

How to Set up
PARENTAL CONTROLS
for
APPS
iPhone

Apple devices come with built-in apps already available: Mail, FaceTime and Safari, for example. However, you can choose which apps and features appear on your child's device and which ones don't. You can also manipulate the features in Game Centre to enhance your child's safety and privacy when playing games, as well as blocking iTunes or App Store purchases if you wish.
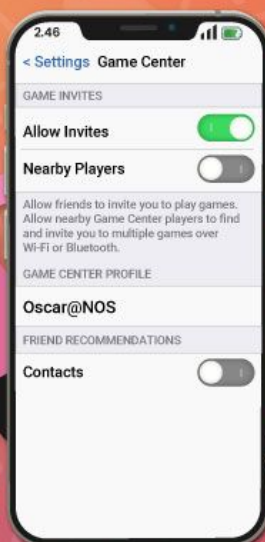
How to Restrict Built-in Apps/Features

1. Open Settings
2. Tap Screen Time
3. Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
4. Tap Allowed Apps (you may need to toggle this to 'on' at the top)
5. Enable or disable the apps you wish to appear (or disappear) on your child's device

How to Restrict Game Centre

1. Open Settings
2. Tap Screen Time
3. Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
4. Tap Content Restrictions (you may need to switch the toggle at the top to the 'on' position)
5. Scroll down to Game Centre
6. Choose between Allow, Don't Allow, or Allow with Friends Only in the settings for each feature

How to Restrict iTunes & App Store Purchases

1. Open Settings
2. Tap Screen Time
3. Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
4. Tap iTunes & App Store Purchases
5. Select Allow or Don't Allow for each feature (you can also lock these settings with a password)

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www.nationalonlinesafety.com

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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence – particularly in terms of how it generates natural language – has seen significant development over the last six months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat, for example). One form of AI to become especially popular has been the 'AI friend' or chatbot, as children eagerly experiment with these new-found computer-generated companions. There are now numerous apps available with this 'virtual friend' functionality, with the likelihood of it being added to other successful platforms soon.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always be able to recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. So there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could very likely hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour (as many originate from the USA or the UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview). This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours.

COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, creativity and ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts are warning that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties, for instance).

Advice for Parents & Carers

CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If your child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with your child and perhaps do your own research to ensure you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit with your young one and begin exploring AI chatbots together.

CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If your child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space at home, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside your child to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children are still getting plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps your child can download and use. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to your child. In particular, emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something that isn't entirely impartial or accurate.

Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.

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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
INFLUENCERS

In today's digital age, social media influencers play an increasingly significant role in shaping the opinions, interests and behaviours of our children. While many of these individuals can have a positive effect, influencer culture can also present certain risks – such as encouraging consumerism, affecting self-esteem and blurring trustworthiness. To help ensure a safe online environment for young people, it's vital to maintain open communication, set sensible boundaries, promote a healthy self-image and teach digital media literacy. Our guide delves deeper into all of these.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

HEIGHTENED CONSUMERISM

A major way that influencers make money is through brand partnerships and sponsored content. As a result, children who follow them may be exposed to a steady stream of advertising: this can lead to materialistic attitudes, unrealistic expectations and an increased desire to have the latest products. Many influencers have built huge brand empires around their large, impressionable following.

THE SOFT SELL

Some influencers aren't always transparent about the motivations behind their posts, blurring the lines between genuine recommendations and paid-for promotions – and young people sometimes find it difficult to distinguish authentic content from advertising. Many major social platforms have taken steps to make sponsored content and ads easier to identify, but it remains an area of concern.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Inspired by their favourite influencers, children may start sharing more of their own lives online – which could reveal personal information or details about their daily routine. This openness can put them at risk of cyberbullying or even predatory behaviour. This is exacerbated by live streaming, which gives young people no time to consider the potential consequences of saying too much.

UNDERMINING SELF-ESTEEM

Many influencers share images and videos of themselves and their activities, which are often painstakingly curated and edited to present an idealised version of their life. Children who follow these influencers may develop distorted expectations about body image and the concept of beauty, which can potentially lead to negative self-esteem and even mental health issues.

Advice for Parents & Carers

KEEP TALKING

Chat to your child about the content they consume on social media and the influencers that they like. Encourage them to think critically about what they see and hear online, and listen to any concerns they might have. Maintaining this line of open, honest communication can help your child to make informed decisions about which individuals they follow and what content they engage with.

SUPPORT A HEALTHY SELF-IMAGE

Reinforce your child's awareness that real life isn't usually as picture perfect as it may appear on social media – and how some content (particularly that of influencers) is often curated, staged or edited to look more glamorous. If possible, highlight examples of other influencers who share authentic, relatable material which acknowledges their imperfections and struggles as well.

SET SOME BOUNDARIES

Agree age-appropriate boundaries for your child's social media use, including time limits and privacy settings (the two major operating systems on mobile devices, Android and iOS, have these controls baked in). Try to keep an eye on your child's online activity and discuss it regularly with them – including reminding them of the potential risks that can arise from following influencers.

PROMOTE MEDIA LITERACY

Talk to your child about the concepts of sponsored content, advertising and potential influencer bias. Teach them to critically evaluate the information they're presented with online and to consider the possible reasons behind content creation. This can help young people develop the skills to make healthier decisions about the influencers they choose to follow and the content they consume.

Meet Our Expert

A former director of digital learning and currently a deputy headmaster and DSL, Brendan O'Keeffe's experience and expertise gives him a clear insight into how modern digital systems impact the experience of children, staff and parents – and which strategies help to ensure that the online world remains a useful educational tool rather than a minefield of risks.

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Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR LOCAL OFFER?

The Local Offer is information for parents and carers of children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It explains the support we offer in Haringey for those children and young people.

- **Community groups** – Parent Carer Forum, Markfield community centre, SENDIASS and more
- **Travel assistance** – School transport service, Travel buddying, Independent Travel Training, Personal Travel Budget and paid mileage
- **Health services** – Speech and Language Therapy, Nursing Services, Physiotherapy Service, Mental Health services and more
- **Preparing young people for adulthood** – Advice on getting a job, where to live, getting the right benefits, managing your health, transition and more

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AND SIGN UP TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

www.haringey.gov.uk/local-offer

Haringey

St Mary's Online Safety Tips

Here at St Mary's we consider online safety a priority, we acknowledge that the world our children are preparing for is becoming increasingly online. Therefore, we have compiled the following tips in order to support you in guiding your child through digital experiences.

"Where great lives begin"

☐ ## Set Up Parental Controls

Home internet providers can offer parental controls for your family. There are 2 ways of achieving this:

- Use a filter from your internet provider to control the content that you and your family see. Some providers allow different settings for each user.

- Set up any device connected to your home broadband. How you do this depends on your provider and you'll need to access your home router. You can ask your internet provider for help setting this up.

I'd like to set up parental controls...

Check the settings on any games or device that your child is on.

Settings icons usually look like a gear like this: ⚙

On some devices you can control the following:

- Turn off chat functions to stop your child from talking to people they don't know
- Restrict games based on age
- Turn off in-game purchases, or set a limit.

An example is shown on the popular game Roblox:

My Settings

2 Step Verification

Improve your account security. A code will be required when you login fr

Email codes when logging in from a new device.

A verified email is required.

What are Account Controls?

You can setup account restrictions on this account to restrict access to uncurated content

Account PIN

Account PIN is currently disabled

When this setting is enabled, the PIN must be provided before changing sett

Account Restrictions

Account Restrictions are enabled

This account can only access our curated content on the platform. Additionally, contac settings (under the **Privacy** page) will be set to Off.

Turn on

My Settings

Privacy Settings

Contact Settings

Custom

Who can message me?

Friends

Who can chat with me in app?

Friends

Who can chat with me?

No one

If you go to settings, then select security you can set a pin, this will control when your child will be able to access the game. You can also enable the account restrictions; this means your child will access content that is more filtered. If you go to privacy settings, disable the chat.

☐ Have devices in a supervised area

Remember that parental control tools are not always 100% effective and sometimes, unsuitable content can get past them, so don't rely on them alone to protect your child.

The best way to ensure your child is safe is to monitor their behaviours online. It is not reasonable to expect young children to regulate their own behaviours online, just as we would not expect it to be reasonable for a child to arrange what they have for dinner each night, we as adults must guide the children in their choices.

Avoid headphones or headsets, unfortunately there is plenty of content that appears to be aimed at children but have inappropriate themes. Remember, just because something is a 'cartoon' doesn't mean it's for children.

☐ Open a Discussion

- Talk to your child and ask them to show or even teach you how they use the internet, learn which websites or tools they like to use and why. Learning together can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour with your child.

- Always ensure your child knows how to block or report people online who send nasty or inappropriate messages or content. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply.

- Make sure your child knows to tell an adult they trust if they see something online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable. This will only begin with

- Children love talking about games! If you ask them what their mission is, what the game is about or even play a short game with them, you can learn a wealth of knowledge about what your child enjoys online. This will allow you to look it up in your own time to scan whether it is appropriate or safe for your child.

- Discuss the SMART rules listed below for guidance, the children would have been taught these guidelines to follow when online. Support them in understanding them and realising their application.

☐ Learn the SMART rules

S **Safe:** Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information when you're chatting or posting online. Personal information includes your email address, phone number and password.

M **Meet:** Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present. Remember online friends are still strangers even if you have been talking to them for a long time.

A **Accepting:** Accepting emails, messages, or opening files, images or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems — they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

R **Reliable:** Someone online might lie about who they are and information on the internet may not be true. Always check information you see or hear from the internet or social media.

T **Tell:** Tell a parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone, or something, makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.

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 enthrals 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.

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.

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.co.uk/news/technology-63204805
https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-algorithms/

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