

Whitchurch Weekly

6th Dec
2024
Issue 13



Winter Music Concert

A huge well done to our pupils for their spectacular performances with their instrumental and vocal ensembles at this week's Winter Music Concert! They showcased their musical skills and progress - after weeks of rehearsals, their hard work clearly paid off! It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Congratulations to all of our fabulous young performers! - Mrs Leutfeld



Spotlight on Sport

Football
and
Gymnastics



Year 5 and 6 Football

Year 5 and 6 boys took part in a football festival this week and did extremely well scoring in all matches played. Great teamwork boys!

Miss Byrne and Miss Wong



Year 5 and 6 Gymnastics

Year 5 and 6 children took part in a gymnastics competition at Harrow School of Gymnastics with 9 other Harrow schools. Children performed floor and vault routines featuring 10 skills to the best of their ability. Congratulations to our Year 5 team for coming 2nd place in the group category and to one of our Year 6 girls for coming 3rd place in the individual category. Well done everyone!

Miss Thomas



General Notices and Highlights



Parent Governor Vacancy

A reminder that the closing date for parent Governor nominations is **Monday 9th December**. Please refer to the School Spider message for details.



Christmas Lunch and Christmas Jumper Day

A reminder that Christmas Lunch and Christmas Jumper Day will be on **Wednesday 11th December**. Please ensure that you book your child's Christmas lunch by Sunday evening.

View
Christmas
lunch menu
here

FoW Winter Fair - next week! Thursday 12th December (5pm-7pm)

£1
entry per
person



We look forward to seeing you all at the Winter Fair next week. Here are a few reminders...

Volunteers

FoW are looking for volunteers to help the event run smoothly - if you are willing to give some of your time please fill out the form via the sign-up link here.

Volunteer
at the
Winter Fair -
sign up
here

Tombola Gifts

Good quality tombola gifts should be handed into the main reception before Thursday.

Winter Fair Festive Bakes (for Festive Bake Off Competition)

Winter Fair Festive Bakes should be handed into the class teacher at drop off on Thursday morning. Bakes should be in disposable packaging, clearly labelled with child's name/class and ingredients used (strictly NO NUTS).

Santa's Reindeer Meet (3.40pm-4.40pm)

If you cannot make the Winter Fair but would like to meet Santa's Reindeer, you can do so before the fair via the staff car park gate. Tickets will be sold at the door for **£3** each.

General Notices and Highlights



LAMDA Bookings for Spring Term

LAMDA bookings are open for the Spring term. To apply for a place for your child, please go to School Spider and complete the survey/form.



End of Term for Nursery

The last day of term for Nursery will be **Thursday 19th December**.

Nursery Christmas Concert and Craft Session

On **Thursday 12th December**, Nursery parents/carers are invited to come along to Nursery for a mini Christmas concert (singing) and craft session. This session will last approximately an hour, starting at 10.15am (AM Nursery) and 2.15pm (PM Nursery).

Parent and Child Coffee Morning

Tom from Schools Counselling Partnership will be holding a coffee morning on **Wednesday morning from 8.30am-9.30am**. Please see page 10 for more information.



Penalty Notice Fines for Unauthorised Absences

Please refer to the 2024 penalty notice fines for unauthorised absences attached to this newsletter.



Last day
of term
Friday 20th
December
(2pm finish)

Follow us on
Instagram:
WhitchurchPS



Spotlight on Year 1

Year 1
are learning
about cooking
and nutrition
in DT



Making Smoothies

This half term in Design Technology we are developing our food preparation skills with an increased focus on taste testing and ingredient choices. We are learning all about fruit and vegetables - discussing where they come from, where we may have seen them growing and doing observation drawings of fruits. We have also had a go at cutting oranges and juicing them manually, which was hard work but worth the effort!

Next week we shall be preparing our fruit and vegetables to create a delicious smoothie using an electric blender. As with all design and technology projects we shall evaluate our smoothies to think about how we could make these taste even better.

Mrs Ahmed (Year 1 Leader)

Year 1 Views

"The oranges are juicy!" Malik

"They are tangy and taste good!" Adam

"It's hard work squeezing the oranges!" Dina

"I wonder how many oranges you need to make a carton of juice?" Alaina



Year 3
spotlight
next week



Dates for your Diary

Autumn
2nd



Wednesday 11th December	Christmas Lunch and Christmas Jumper Day
Thursday 12th December	Nursery Christmas Concert and Craft Session (10.15am for AM Nursery; 2.15pm for PM Nursery) FoW Winter Fair (5pm-7pm)
Monday 16th December	Reception Carol Concert (9.15am)
Tuesday 17th December	Carol Concert (1PD, 1IN, 2SA, 2DN, 3NL & 3LA at 9.15am; 4BS, 4ND, 5RC, 5SC, 6ET & 6CM at 2.30pm) Reception visit to the Post Box
Wednesday 18th December	Carol Concert (1SM, 1RA, 2ST, 2KK, 3SM & 3SH at 9.15am; 4XL, 4PC, 5TG, 5SK, 6HA & 6HH at 2.30pm)



Spring Class Assemblies

Tuesdays
Reception
to Year 3
(9.05am to
9.45am)

Tues 14th Jan	3SM
Tues 28th Jan	2SA
Tues 11th Feb	1PD
Tues 25th Feb	3SH
Tues 11th Mar	2KK
Tues 25th Mar	1IN

Thurs 16th Jan	6ET
Thurs 30th Jan	4PC
Thurs 13th Feb	6HA
Thurs 6th Mar	5TG
Thurs 20th Mar	4XL

Thursdays
Years 4 to 6
(9.05am to
9.45am)

Whitchurch



Star Pupils



Well done to our stars of the week, who have been selected for excellent work and demonstrating our school values



1RA Tanishka
1SM Teeyan
1PD Eliza
1IN Rhea

2ST Saanvi
2KK June
2DN Trisha B
2SA Daria

3NL Thea
3SH Sofia
3LA Dhiyani
3SM Mark

Respect
Responsibility
Resilience
Honesty
Generosity
Aspiration

4BS Rayan
4XL Maryam
4PC Shaista
4ND Viya

5SK Alisa
5SC Shaurya
5TG Anahi Lily
5RC Juliet

6HH Martha
6ET Guilia
6HA Jiyansh
6CM Whole Class

Attendance Stars



This week's
attendance
stars are
5SC (97.1%)

Whole
School
94.7%

Top tip

Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours where possible.

Staff

Snapshot

Name: Geeta Tulsianey
Role: HLTA



All about me

My journey began in India, where I first explored the world of advertising, working with a dynamic agency that sparked my creative passion. In 2007, I embarked on a new chapter of my life, moving to the United Kingdom and settling in Borehamwood. For the past 17 years, I have been privileged to work in education. Each day brings new opportunities to inspire and be inspired by the children.

Hobbies and interests

During my free time, I enjoy taking long walks with my family and friends. In particular, I love catching up with friends over coffee and leisurely lunches. Cooking is another passion that brings me immense happiness. In my kitchen, I love preparing meals for my family, especially for my partner and son, with my favourite music. One of the highlights of my year is spending most of the summer in India, reconnecting with my family and enjoying precious moments together.



Best thing about my role

I love the fact that I am part of the children's learning journey. I enjoy teaching all year groups across the school and it is lovely to see the children grow and reach their potential. I joined Whitchurch school a year ago and am really loving being part of this family. Even though I have been here for just a short time, it feels like I've been part of this community for years.



Support for Families



Mental Health and Wellbeing Apps

According to findings from the NHS, 1 in 5 children in England suffer from a probable mental health issue, with 420,000 treated for such problems every month. With such high numbers of young people in need of mental health support, it's perhaps unsurprising that plenty of them have turned to using apps intended to help them through these kinds of challenges

Unfortunately, there are plenty of risks associated with these services - from data collection to a potentially unhelpful, impersonal experience - and so it can be difficult to know how to keep young users safe as they navigate them.

Please refer to the poster attached to this newsletter, which highlights the online safety risks of mental health and wellbeing apps, along with tips to best help keep children and young people safe if they ever wish to use these services.



Family Learning Hub Parenting Programme
10 week course starting Tuesday 21st January
(online) or Wednesday 22nd January (in person)
9am to 11.30am



This course supports parents and carers with useful strategies for positive discipline, stress management and improving family dynamics.

Please visit www.thefamilylearninghub.com for more information and email asha@thefamilylearninghub.com to book your place now.

Support for Families



The greatest gift of all - playing with you!

All children need to play. It is their way of learning skills and helps them to release their emotions. Regularly playing with your child will help you to feel closer. It will also encourage them to cooperate more and you will feel more energised!

Most of you might feel exhausted at the end of the day, however all you need is 10 minutes of play, which will help both you and your child to let out some of the stress accumulated from your day. This could include playing a game such as cards or blow football, blowing bubbles or using dolls or cuddly toys to act out a situation. A great idea is to follow your child's lead and join them in their favourite game!

Reach Out - Schools Counselling Partnership

Sometimes we could all do with someone to talk to. If you would like to meet Tom for a confidential and non-judgemental chat about you, your child, or any other worries, he is available on **Wednesdays at 9-10am**.

You can call/text Tom on **07799 028 461** or email him at **tom@schoolscounsellingpartnership.co.uk**

Schools Counselling Partnership: Parent and Child Coffee Morning Wednesday 11th December, 8.30am-9.30am (in school)

Join Tom our Therapeutic Lead from Schools Counselling Partnership for coffee, tea and breakfast pastries. Parents, carers and children are welcome to join a relaxed environment to converse openly and take part in some fun and creative exercises.





Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absences

2024
updates:
what you
need to
know

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for unauthorised absences that occur after 19th August 2024.

5 consecutive days of Term Time Leave

Fines
will be
issued
for:

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days *(or for fewer days where this has happened before)*.

10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10 week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered where there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10 week period.

Fines
will be
issued
to:

Each parent/carer - for each child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent/carer, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent/carer receiving 3 separate fines.



First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

**£160 per parent/carer,
per child when paid
within 28 days.**

***(reduced to £80 per
parent/carer, per child
if paid within 21 days)***

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

**£160 per parent/carer,
per child when paid
within 28 days.**

***(no option to pay
at £80 level)***

Third Offence (and any further offences within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. the case will proceed to the Magistrates' court.

***Magistrate's fines can
be up to £2,500 per
parent/carer, per child.***

Please refer to our **Attendance and Punctuality Policy** and speak with the school if you are thinking of taking your child out of school during term time. You will need to make a written request to take your child out of school and any leave of absence will need to be agreed by the Headteacher before it is given.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

QUALITY & RELIABILITY

Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful extension to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but have they been designed by a mental health professional? Furthermore, do they have research to back up their content?

PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN

Some apps add the words 'kids' or 'children' to their title or use cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is good to go. Let them take it from here". It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.

DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.

LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practising mindfulness exercises. As every person is unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor themselves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.

DATA SECURITY

As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (such as targeted advertisements), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required. Is it benefiting the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP

Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developers. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resource? Also check whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Reviews can also be a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.

READ THE PRIVACY POLICY

Look into the app's terms of service – especially its privacy policy. Do so by yourself first, then go over it with the child who is considering using the app, to ensure they know what data will be collected and how exactly it will be used. Use all of this information to make an educated decision on whether or not to download that particular app.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Mental health and wellbeing apps can be useful for writing down feelings, tracking your own health and other such activities. These can help if the problem is short-term and temporary – such as a child getting stressed about approaching exams – or if you're currently waiting for professional support. Nonetheless, it is important that children aren't solely reliant on the app and have a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences in the real world.

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.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/mental-health-apps>



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