

Whitchurch Weekly



23rd May
2025
Issue 32

Message from the Headteacher

Dear Whitchurch Families,

As we reach the halfway point of the Summer term, I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the highlights from the past few weeks and to look ahead to what promises to be a vibrant and memorable end to the academic year.

We've had a wonderful start to the term with a number of enriching trips and activities across the school. Year 5 had a fantastic time on their residential visit to Woodrow High House which was an excellent opportunity to build independence, confidence and friendships. Year 5 girls also enjoyed a Discovery Day at Northwood College, which was both inspiring and empowering.

Our younger pupils have also been out and about, making the most of learning beyond the classroom. Year 1 enjoyed the natural surroundings of Canons Park and Year 2 had a fascinating visit to London Central Mosque. Year 3 explored the beauty and traditions of the Neasden Hindu Temple, while Year 4 had a great day at London Zoo. Year 5 also enjoyed a day of discovery at Kew Gardens, learning about the natural world in the heart of the city. Year 6 have enjoyed a visit to the Paradox Museum and rounded off their learning this half term by performing Macbeth as part of their 'Play in a Day' workshop.

Music continues to be a key part of our enrichment here at Whitchurch. Year 4 pupils have been learning to play trumpets and clarinets and put on a wonderful performance to their families; some children also took part in a special Choral Day at North London Collegiate this week with other schools in the borough.

A special well done to our Year 6 pupils, who have shown great resilience and determination as they completed their SATs. We are so proud of their hard work





and positive attitude and greatly appreciate all the support that Whitchurch staff have put into ensuring the week ran with as little stress as possible.

Thank you to Friends of Whitchurch for organising a brilliant disco! The children had a fantastic time dancing and celebrating with their friends - we are hoping to make this an annual event.

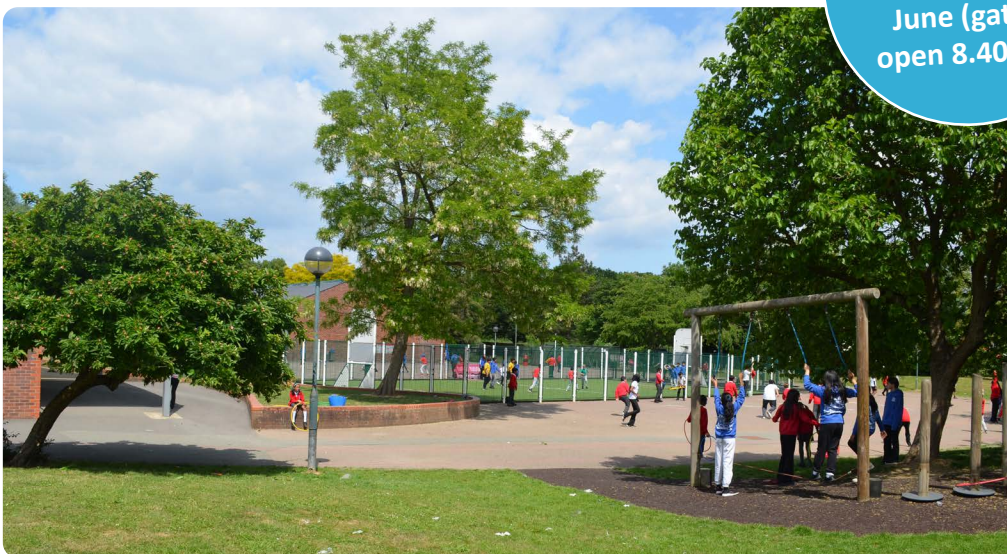
It was also lovely to see children looking so smart and proud for their class photographs this week. We look forward to seeing these in print and will keep you updated on when these are available to purchase.

Looking ahead, we are excited about many upcoming events including our Summer Music Concert, Sports Day, Year 6 production and Summer Fair. These are always highlights of the school year and we look forward to seeing many of you there. We also hope to host a coffee morning soon - more details to follow!

Wishing you all a restful and (hopefully) sunny half term break.

Ms Rachel Inniss
Headteacher

Children
back to school
Tuesday 3rd
June (gates
open 8.40am)



Whitchurch Woodland

Project
update



Summer Woodland Update

Greetings from a very green woodland!

We start with a big thank you to Amos and family for their very generous contributions to the woodland.

As you can see from the photos, the woodland has sprung into life!

Trees are growing, plants are flowering, vegetables and fruits are multiplying and our willow structures have rooted. We also have a healthy amount of compost on the go!

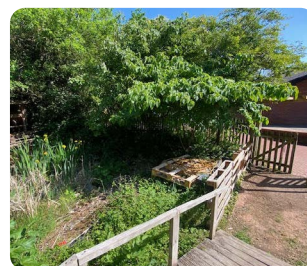
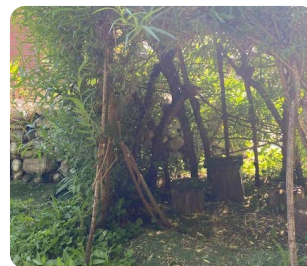
This is the list of things we have to accomplish by the end of the Summer term:

- Complete the decking works
- Clear and refill the pond with a newly secure safety covering
- Keep on top of the weeding
- Germinate more seeds
- Continue to plant seedlings for our autumn harvest
- Plan and write the woodland lessons and curriculum
- Paint the shed (Nicky and friends)

The Amazon wish list has been updated, so if you would like to contribute, please click on the link and choose from the list. The staff and children appreciate all contributions.

Mrs Portou

View our
Whitchurch
Woodland
Amazon wish
list here



Enrichment Highlights



Year 4 - Choral Day at NLCS

This week, some of our Year 4 Junior Choir members took part in an exciting Choral Day at North London Collegiate School, joining pupils from two other Harrow schools. The workshop was led by NLCS's choral leader, Miss James, with piano accompaniment provided by the school's accompanist, Mrs Osedo.

The day began with engaging vocal warm-ups and lively call and response songs such as *A Keelie* and *Essequibo River* focusing on diction and posture. The children then learned songs and rounds from around the world, singing in harmony and with actions. They also practised the song *Fire!* paying extra attention to their vocal tone, meaning and character of the song.

In the afternoon, they rehearsed the two-part song *The Moon* focusing on dynamics and expression and concluded the day with a fantastic performance to parents. Well done to all our talented Year 4 singers for representing the school so beautifully!

Mrs Leutfeld, Director of Music



Enrichment Highlights



Year 4 visit to London Zoo

This week, Year 4 went on an exhilarating trip to London Zoo with a big question in mind relating to their persuasive writing piece in English: Should animals be kept in captivity? As well as the thrill of seeing so many different animals and their behaviours in their environments, they were also carefully studying the animals' enclosures and the work that London Zoo do on conservation and educating people about animal welfare.

Mrs Solanki



Enrichment Highlights



Year 5 visit to Kew Gardens

This week, Year 5 had an exciting trip to Kew Gardens, linking their learning in Geography, Science and Art. One of the highlights was visiting the Palm House. The warm, humid air hit them as soon as they stepped inside; it felt just like walking into a real rainforest! The huge glasshouse was filled with towering trees, giant leaves and creeping vines. The children explored exotic plants from across the Americas, learning their names, where they grow, and how they reproduce. It was a great chance to see the things they've been learning about brought to life.

Later on, the children took part in an art workshop, using the beautiful gardens as inspiration. They explored the grounds, drawing the different plants and flowers they came across. Using pencils, graphite, oil pastels, and even sticks to scratch in detail, they experimented with different materials to create some fantastic artwork. Throughout the day, they learned the importance of protecting our natural world and how small actions - like not picking living plants or staying on paths - help preserve places like Kew Gardens for future generations. It was a brilliant day full of discovery, creativity and fresh air!

Miss Chauhan D'Souza



Enrichment Highlights



Year 6 visit to the Paradox Museum

Year 6 visited the Paradox Museum in London to immerse themselves in optical illusions - linking with our work in Science and Art but mainly as a reward for working so hard for SATs!

The children enjoyed exploring different types of illusions including kaleidoscope rooms, perspective trickery and zero gravity. The mirror maze especially was a big hit with the children! Everyone had a fantastic time at the museum, with plenty of opportunities for engagement and interaction.

Miss Thomas



Year 6 Play in a Day - Macbeth

Year 6 had the incredible opportunity to learn and perform Shakespeare's Macbeth - all in just one day! The children explored how to act, deliver their lines with confidence and bring the story to life through expressive performance. It was a fantastic experience that highlighted their creativity, teamwork and enthusiasm for drama.

This fast-paced, interactive workshop was the perfect warm-up for our upcoming Year 6 production, sparking their excitement and building confidence!

Miss Hogberg



Enrichment Highlights



Year 5/6 Cricket Tournament

Some of the Year 5 and 6 cricket team took part in the 'Chance To Shine' Cricket Competition, hosted by Middlesex In The Community, where they played against other schools in the borough and won all their matches. A massive well done to the team for showing great teamwork and aspiration throughout the day.

Miss Wong



SEND Sports Event at West Lodge Primary

On Wednesday, we took a group of children from Early Years and Key Stage 1 to a sports event at West Lodge Primary School. The children had a fantastic time and returned to school proudly wearing medals for their outstanding participation!

Miss Byrne

Enrichment Highlights



Sustainability

Congratulations to **Aavish, Aman, Sheba and Siddiq** who were chosen from many entries for the Green4life Harrow Poster Competition. They made it to the semi-final, and had a special mention from the panel for their creativity and artistic skills.

Even though we didn't win, it was clear that the children put their hearts into the work they submitted. Well done to all for making through to the semi-final panel.

British Sign Language

Congratulations to the following pupils who passed their British Sign Language exams and gained a certificate in Beginners Conversational Skills and Vocabulary:

Aiman Z, Jayden C, Rebecca, Aariz, Ashley, Dhanushka, Amos, Keren, Dinara, Alessio, Ayyub, Nora, Spency, Laurance, Paulo, Anisha, Adam K and Gabriel

The children worked so hard during the course. They learnt over 150 words and could recall colours, greetings, animals and food signs. They could hold a conversation with the teacher and for bonus points, some asked questions in return. Well done to all.

Mrs Portou

Rights Respecting School Visit

Three of our School Council class representatives visited Newton Farm Primary School - a leading Gold Award Rights Respecting School - as we begin our journey to become a Rights Respecting School. During the visit, the children had the opportunity to speak to Newton Farm's RRS Ambassadors and took a tour of the school. We came back to school feeling very inspired!

Miss Liu



General Notices and Highlights



Summer 2 Topic Maps

Please refer to the year group pages of the website for an overview of your child's topics after the half term break.

View
Summer 2
topic maps
here

FoW Kids' Disco

Many thanks to Friends of Whitchurch who have raised **£112** from the school disco. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by children and staff alike and was therefore a great success!

HLTA (Inclusion) Vacancy

We have a vacancy for a Higher Level Teaching Assistant to join our learning support team. For more information and an application pack please see the Vacancies page of our website.

Apply
here

FoW Summer Fair - Volunteers

Sunday 29th June, 12pm-4pm

Friends of Whitchurch are looking for volunteers to help with the smooth running of the Summer Fair. If you are able to volunteer some time on one of the stalls during the day, please sign up for a slot via the link!



Sign up to
volunteer
here



The next
FoW Bag2School
Collection is on
Thurs 5th June
(8.40am)



Dates for your Diary

Summer 1



Thursday 5th June	FoW Bag 2 School Collection (8.40am)
Wednesday 11th June	FoW 'Celebrate Your Male Hero' (3.20pm)
Monday 16th June	3NL and 3SM visit to Verulamium Museum
Wednesday 18th June	Summer Music Concert (5pm)
Friday 20th June	2SA and 2KK London Eye River Cruise and Picnic
Monday 23rd June	EYFS Sports Day (9.30am-11am)
Tuesday 24th June	Year 1-3 Sports Day (9.30am-11.30am)
Wednesday 25th June	3SH and 3LA visit to Verulamium Museum AM/PM Nursery visit to Woodside Animal Farm Year 4-6 Sports Day (9.30am-12pm)
Friday 27th June	2DN and 2ST London Eye River Cruise and Picnic
Sunday 29th June	FoW Summer Fair (12pm-4pm)
Monday 14th July	Reception visit to Hertfordshire Zoo 1RA and 1PD visit to London Aquarium (SeaLife) Year 6 Production (5.30pm-7pm)
Tuesday 15th July	Year 4 day visit to Woodrow High House Year 6 Production (5.30pm-7pm)
Friday 18th July	1SM and 1IN visit to London Aquarium (SeaLife)
Monday 21st July	Year 6 Leavers' Assembly (2pm-3pm) Year 6 Leavers' Party (6pm-8pm)

Class Assemblies

Tuesdays
9.05am-
9.45am

Tues 10th June	RLS
Tues 24th June	RTP
Tues 1st July	RWD

Spotlight on Humanities

Year 6
are learning
about Asia in
Geography



Asia

This term we have been learning all about Asia. We started by identifying all the 48 countries in Asia. We have studied the physical features including mountains, steppes, deserts and plains. We were amazed by the range of landscapes across this enormous continent.

Next we shall be looking at famous landmarks and tourist attractions so that we can create a travel brochure about one of the countries. When we have completed our research we will compare our chosen country with the UK. During this topic we have revised varied geographical vocabulary such as: physical, human, location, population, climate, environment, latitude, longitude, equator, continent and biome.

Mrs Selby



Year 6 views

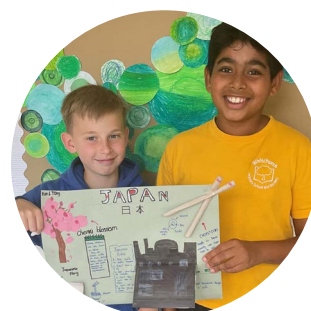
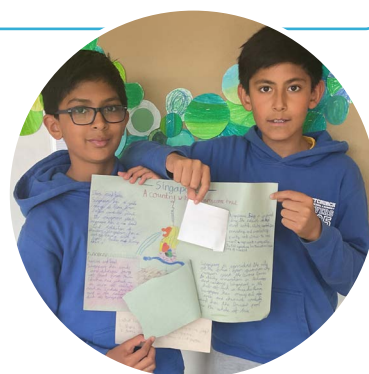
"I enjoyed learning about Asia because it's something new. The people and lifestyles in Asia are quite different." Kahini

"I like to learn about Asia because you get to experience different cultures and learn more about them." Maanya

"My favourite part was learning about Asia and how different it is from our country." Zayd

"It was fun learning about different countries in Asia." Ianis

"Fun fact, Asia is one of the biggest continents in the world." Aisha



Inclusion Highlights



This half term the children have welcomed the sunshine and warmer weather and have embraced exciting new indoor and outdoor learning activities.

Life Skills - 'Feelings'

We have been focusing on understanding, identifying and discussing different feelings. This has been a great opportunity for the children to work on their conversational skills and discuss the way different scenarios make both themselves and others feel and how they may be able to support and encourage their friends. They discussed what makes them happy and excited and learnt how to lead open discussion using different communication approaches in order to express and recognise a variety of different emotions.

Social Skills

Our social skills groups have engaged in different activities, discussions and learning challenges including sharing, sound and senses, team work and call and response games. There have been many opportunities for children to enhance their social interactions with peers and familiar adults through joint effort, social cues, self care and active listening.

Therapy Provision

In the therapy room the children have focused on phonics, mark making, letter formation, hand writing and have achieved some beautiful independent writing. They have also developed number recognition and have enjoyed using numicons for addition. As well as sharing a new story each week, we have had some wonderful speech and language, fine motor and sensory activities going on and have all enjoyed experimenting with sand, water, and even enjoyed some bubbles and gardening in the sunshine!

We look forward to more exciting activities after half term!

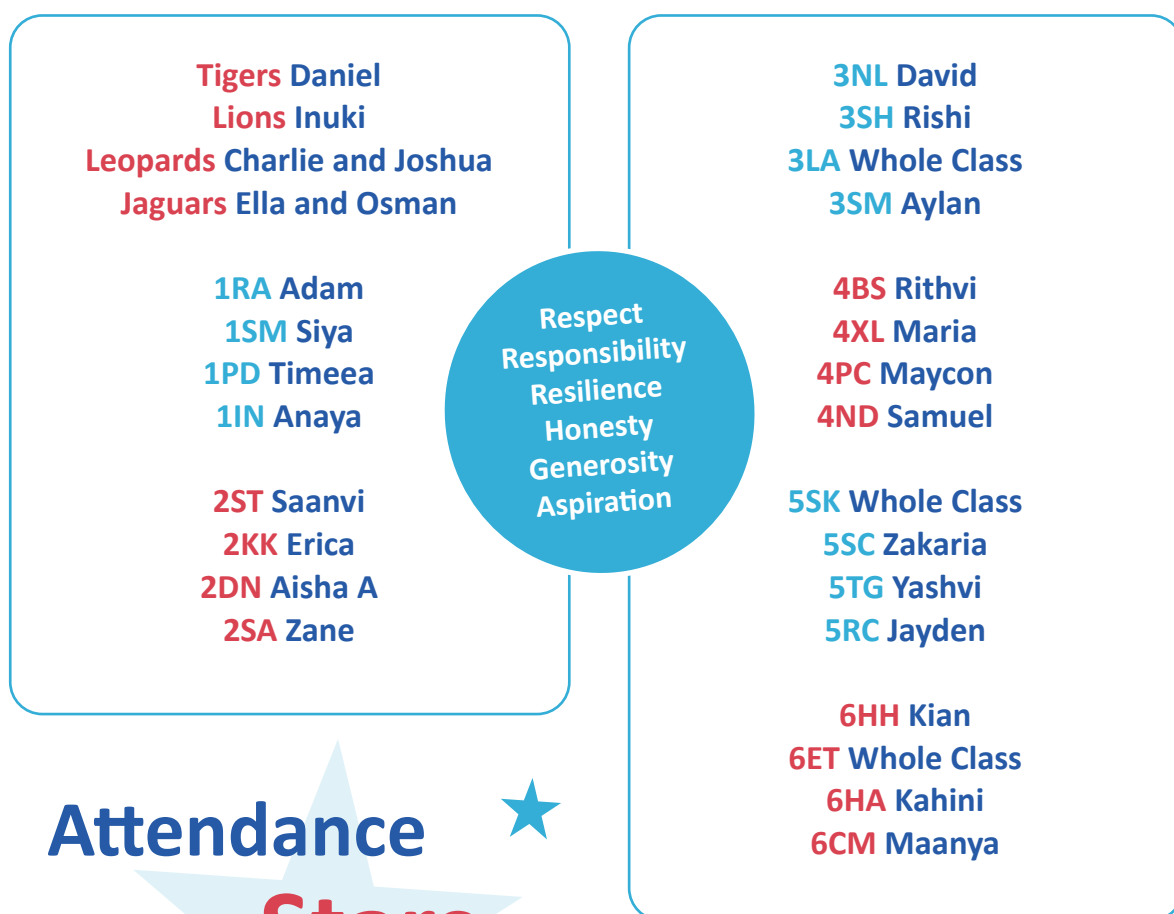
Miss Tunstall



Whitchurch Star Pupils



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



Attendance Stars

This week's attendance stars are 4ND, 5SC, 5RC and 6HH (99.3%)

Whole School
95.9%

Did you know?

Good attendance and punctuality leads to the best chances of success for your child.

Support for Families

Online Safety



Violent Content Online

Around 70% of teenagers say they've seen real-life violence on social media in the past year. Violent content online isn't just something young people are occasionally stumbling across - in many cases, it's becoming a routine part of their digital world.

From fights and stabbings to toxic ideologies, disturbing videos are often just a click away on social media or group chats.

Please refer the poster attached to this newsletter, which highlights the unseen risks that this poses to children's mental health, sense of safety and social behaviours. With insights from a leading expert, it offers practical ways for parents and educators to respond with empathy and support - not punishment or panic.



Imogen - Education Mental Health Practitioner

"Hi! My name is Imogen, and I am an Education Mental Health Practitioner working for the Harrow Mental Health Support Team (MHST). My role consists of supporting schools across Harrow by helping students manage emotional wellbeing, offering early intervention support, and working collaboratively with school staff and families to promote positive mental health. I look forward to start working and providing support for Whitchurch every Friday!"



View more info here



Support for Families



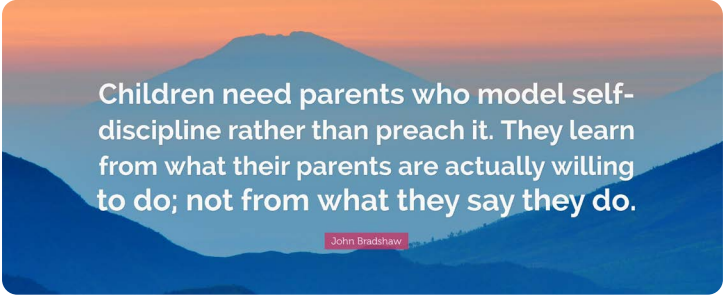
Schools
Counselling
Partnership



Developing self-discipline

Children's brains are still developing the ability to switch gears from what they want to what you want. Every time you ask them to do something that requires your child to give up what they want in order to do what you want; they have to make a choice. AND every time they do it, they strengthen their brain's ability to make that choice. That's how children develop self-discipline. But this only works if your child chooses willingly. If you drag them kicking and screaming, they are resisting rather than choosing... and won't be building those self-discipline skills. That's why there's a 'self' in "self-discipline. It's chosen from inside.

Set limits with empathy so your child WANTS to co-operate and gets plenty of practice. To avoid power struggles, offer two choices. For example: "You can choose, you can either brush your teeth now with your brother, or in 5 minutes once he is done". Make sure they are two choices you are OK with!



Children need parents who model self-discipline rather than preach it. They learn from what their parents are actually willing to do; not from what they say they do.

John Bradshaw

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@schoolsounsellingpartnership.co.uk**

Reading Corner

reading for parents
and carers

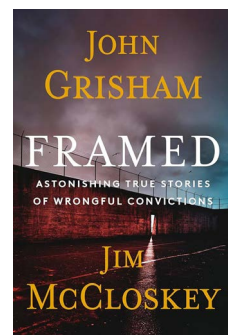
Our resident
bookworm
Mrs Tucker
shares her love
of reading



My love of reading started when I was very young. Every Saturday I would either go to the very small library near my house or to the lovely wood-panelled bookshop in Temple Fortune with my pocket money. The very first books I remember reading were 'Wind In The Willows', 'Babar The Elephant' and 'The Moomin Family' series. A few years later I graduated to books like 'The Secret Garden' and 'A Little Princess'. I loved these books, both quite similar in themes in a way young children having to cope with loss and hardship that ultimately (spoiler alert!) turn to joy and redemption at the end.

As a teenager I discovered Agatha Christie. Thank goodness for the library as there is no way I was given enough pocket money to cover buying every single book Agatha Christie wrote! Now, probably thanks to Agatha Christie, my favourite genre is crime. Thrillers, forensic mysteries, miscarriages of justice - all keep me completely hooked!

John Grisham, one of my favourite authors, has written a book called 'Framed'. He has written it with Jim McCloskey who is the founder of the first US organisation dedicated to exonerating innocent people convicted of terrible crimes.



There are ten selected stories of brutal murder cases where the convicted men (and occasional woman) are proved to be innocent after spending years or even decades in prison. The book stirs up emotions of huge injustice, outrage and overwhelming sympathy for the unfortunate defendants, not to mention the crime victims. Most defendants had limited access to private wealth to fight their cases. Their appeals often lasted for decades and fought by lawyers who acted 'pro bono', without payment.

Almost all the stories follow the same pattern so after a while the reader might feel a sense of compassion fatigue. The book is powerfully written. It gets straight to the point. The take-away... don't get into trouble in America, you never know what sort of justice you'll receive!



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.

Each parent/carer - for each child

Fines
will be
issued
to:

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 VIOLENT CONTENT ONLINE

Around 70% of teenagers say they've seen real-life violence on social media in the past year – often from as young as primary school age. Just 6% actively seek it out; most encounter it through group chats or social media algorithms. From fights and pranks to hate speech and graphic media, exposure to violent content online is more widespread – and more harmful – than many adults realise.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MENTAL HEALTH AND TRAUMA

Children and young people report feelings of anxiety, guilt, shame or fear after seeing violent content. For some, these effects may be short term, but for those with existing vulnerabilities or past trauma, the impact can be more severe. Many also feel pressured to 'laugh off' violent content to fit in with friends, even when they find it distressing.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGES

Exposure to online violence can lead to fear and avoidance behaviours – such as skipping school or staying indoors. When children see weapons used in videos, it can heighten their perception that the world is unsafe and, in rare cases, increase the likelihood they'll consider carrying a weapon themselves, such as a knife for protection.

ESCALATION AND PARTICIPATION

Violent videos often go viral quickly. What begins as an online argument can spill into real-world fights – which are sometimes filmed and shared to gain views or status. Some children even admit to sharing or creating violent content themselves to gain attention or boost their reputation.

DESENSITISATION

Older teens may become numb to violent content after years of exposure, admitting they're unlikely to report it. Younger children also tend not to report it – usually because they don't believe anything will be done or because they're afraid of being labelled a 'snitch' by their peers.

HARMFUL IDEOLOGIES

Violent content online may overlap with racist, misogynistic or otherwise extremist ideas. These messages can dehumanise others or glorify violence as a way to gain power, popularity or notoriety. Over time, this can normalise dangerous behaviours and attitudes among impressionable viewers.

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

Not all children are affected equally. Those who are excluded from school, marginalised, disabled or neurodivergent are often more vulnerable to the effects of online violence. It's essential to consider wider context – including home life and access to safe spaces – when thinking about potential harm.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CREATE SUPPORTIVE SPACES

Many children feel adults are too busy or won't understand their experiences online. Take time to build trust through non-judgemental conversations about what they're seeing. If they don't want to speak to you directly, gently signpost towards trusted services they can turn to for support.

KNOW WHAT'S ILLEGAL

Some violent content is simply upsetting, while other examples may be criminal or a safeguarding matter that needs reporting. Help children understand the difference by staying informed about online laws and social media reporting procedures. A useful resource is reportharmfulcontent.com.

AVOID HARSH RESTRICTIONS

Fear of punishment is a major reason young people stay silent about violent content. Try not to overreact or threaten to take away devices. Instead, reassure children that they can speak openly and that asking for help won't get them into trouble.

UNDERSTAND TECH AND TRAUMA

Older children may already know how to block accounts or avoid triggering content. Help younger or more vulnerable children learn these tools and encourage habits that reduce exposure. Just as importantly, teach techniques that help them process distress – building resilience and emotional literacy for both online and offline life.

Meet Our Expert

Dr. Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading UK expert in digital safety, media law, and young people. Her PhD investigates children's understandings of risk online. She works with schools, businesses, and universities to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal, and ethical considerations for the digital age. Visit onlinemedialawuk.com for more.



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