



23 January 2026

Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a really busy and exciting start back to the new year. The children are fully immersed in their new topics and learning, as you will see throughout the newsletter. I was really impressed by how well the children returned to school after the two week holiday and how quickly they are back into their normal routines.

Right from the first assembly the children were modelling the ready, respectful and safe behaviour expectations we have of them. This has continued throughout the start of the term as we have been taking time to teach and reinforce expectations from our behaviour curriculum. There is a real sense of calmness, purpose and active learning throughout the school which has been commented on by a number of visitors who have been in school.



The children have all also participated in the NSPCC Speak Out Stay Safe Assembly which supports our PSHE curriculum. The purpose is to empower the children to understand that they have the right to be safe and ensure they have trusted adults who they can speak to if they are worried. They were also reminded about Childline and the support the NSPCC can offer through this service. There are lots of resources available for parents on the NSPCC website so please do follow up these conversations at home so we can keep all of our children safe. The children in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6 also had a workshop delivered by the NSPCC yesterday to further explore some of the topics covered in the assembly.



There was more whole-school enrichment of our PSHE curriculum when Nancy (and Harold) brought the SCARF LifeSpace to Summercroft. This offered further opportunities for Nancy to deliver aspects of our PSHE curriculum through a range of different workshops. These included topics such as 'Protecting Myself—Body and Mind', 'Keep Trying' and 'Going for Goals'. The children all benefitted from these opportunities and there is always a sense of excitement as they make their way to the LifeSpace to see Nancy and Harold again. It was lovely that some parents made it to the workshop as well and I know they appreciated getting further details about how the PSHE curriculum is delivered.

Our Year 6s had an amazing time at the O2 on Wednesday when they took part in the Young Voices Concert. They have been learning the songs and practising the moves over the past few months and they excelled themselves on the night. All the effort really paid off! They were singing alongside over 8,000 other children and one of the highlights was when Urban Strides came on stage to perform. It really is an unforgettable experience and one they will treasure for a long time. I was extremely proud of how well they represented Summercroft throughout the day and the enthusiasm they put into their performances.



The orchestra are continuing to grow and we are at a point where Mr Dodgson has requested a couple more keyboards. We were hoping there may be some that aren't being used at home that could be donated. We only have space to store a couple so if you do have one that you could donate, please can you check with the office first and if we still need it then they will let you know to bring it in. Support with this will really benefit our children in the orchestra.

The new PTA have been very busy getting to grips with their new roles and organised for future events and I know there is excitement for the Rainbow Rave on Friday 30th January. We still need some more volunteers on the night to make sure it can run smoothly, so if you have any time available then please click on this [link](#). Your support will be greatly appreciated. There is also lots of hard work going on behind the scenes to organise more events throughout the rest of this year and we look forward to sharing further information soon.

Wishing you an enjoyable weekend.

Kind regards,
Stephen Jess
Headteacher



EYFS

Egg-citing Discovery!

What an exciting start back to school Nursery and Reception have had! Mr Beeson came to see us to tell us about some strange eggs he had discovered out in the school grounds. We went to investigate and saw three mottled blue eggs nestled between the bottom of a tree trunk. Fascinated by the eggs, the children thought about different animals that lay eggs. We then read *Who is in the Egg?* by Alexandra Milton. This beautiful nonfiction book encourages young children to play a guessing game and figure out which creature is growing inside each egg. The children were surprised to learn that some sharks, crocodiles, platypus, seahorses, snails and lots of other creatures hatch from eggs, not just birds!

In maths, Reception have been looking at the number 5. We looked at the composition of 5, as well as one more and one less. We ordered egg numbers from 1 to 10 and also matched numeral and quantity by sticking the correct number of spots onto the eggs.

In Nursery, we used the language of size 'small', 'medium' and 'big' to describe different sized eggs, and sorted eggs into groups of small, medium and big.

To develop our fine motor skills, we used cotton buds to dot designs onto egg shaped templates using earthy tones of paint. We also had great fun making our own mystery eggs using balloons and paper mâché. Once they were dry, we painted them using neutral shades.



At Forest School, we learnt about how birds make their nests. We then created our own nests using sticks, leaves, grass and other natural resources we found to keep our eggs warm and safe. We are currently keeping the eggs warm and safe inside school. We are checking on them frequently in the hope they might hatch and we can see what's inside. Fingers crossed it isn't a crocodile! We will keep you updated on any developments over the next few weeks.





Year 1

Flash, Bang and a Helping Hand!

Year 1 have started the new year by thinking about *superpowers* and what makes a real hero. The children shared thoughtful ideas about the qualities they would like to have, with many deciding that kindness is one of the most important superpowers of all.

In history lessons, we have been uncovering heroes from the past and present. Our first superhero was Ada Lovelace, who was born over 200 years ago. The children were fascinated to learn how different life was for children in Victorian times compared to their own childhoods today. They discovered that Ada is a significant historical figure because she wrote the very first computer code – even though a computer had not yet been invented! Ada wrote about ideas such as looping, predicted that computers could create music and pictures in the future, and even discussed concepts linked to artificial intelligence. The children were amazed by her forward-thinking ideas.

Our second historical hero was the footballer, Marcus Rashford. The children learned about how, during the Covid -19 pandemic when schools and workplaces were closed, Marcus campaigned to support children by ensuring access to Free School Meals. They were very impressed by how he used his voice to help others. The children created fantastic fact files about both Ada Lovelace and Marcus Rashford, clearly showing their understanding of how these individuals have made an impact on history.

In maths, we have been number detectives! To introduce our new focus on numbers to 20, the children have been exploring how numbers from 10 to 20 are made. Using a range of resources such as Numicon, Dienes, beads and tens frames, the children have been building numbers and spotting patterns. They quickly noticed that every number greater than 10 starts with one ten and some more ones. Once their detective work was complete, the children moved on to finding one more and one less than a given number, using number lines to support their learning. They are becoming true number experts!

We also had the pleasure of welcoming back Nancy from SCARF. Nancy and Harold shared their knowledge about feelings and supported the children in understanding how their emotions can change at different times during the day. We learned about the important things our bodies need to give us energy, such as food, water and exercise. The children were shown different strategies to help them when they are feeling angry or upset. Bee Breathing was a firm favourite, as the children enjoyed buzzing out all of their anger or worries.

In PE, we have been using dance to bring our superhero learning to life. The children have been practising clear body movements so that an audience can easily understand the character they are portraying. We have seen some wonderful superhero performances, from moving buses out of the way to rescuing kittens from trees! Adding a sneaky villain into the dances made the experience even more exciting and fun.





Year 2

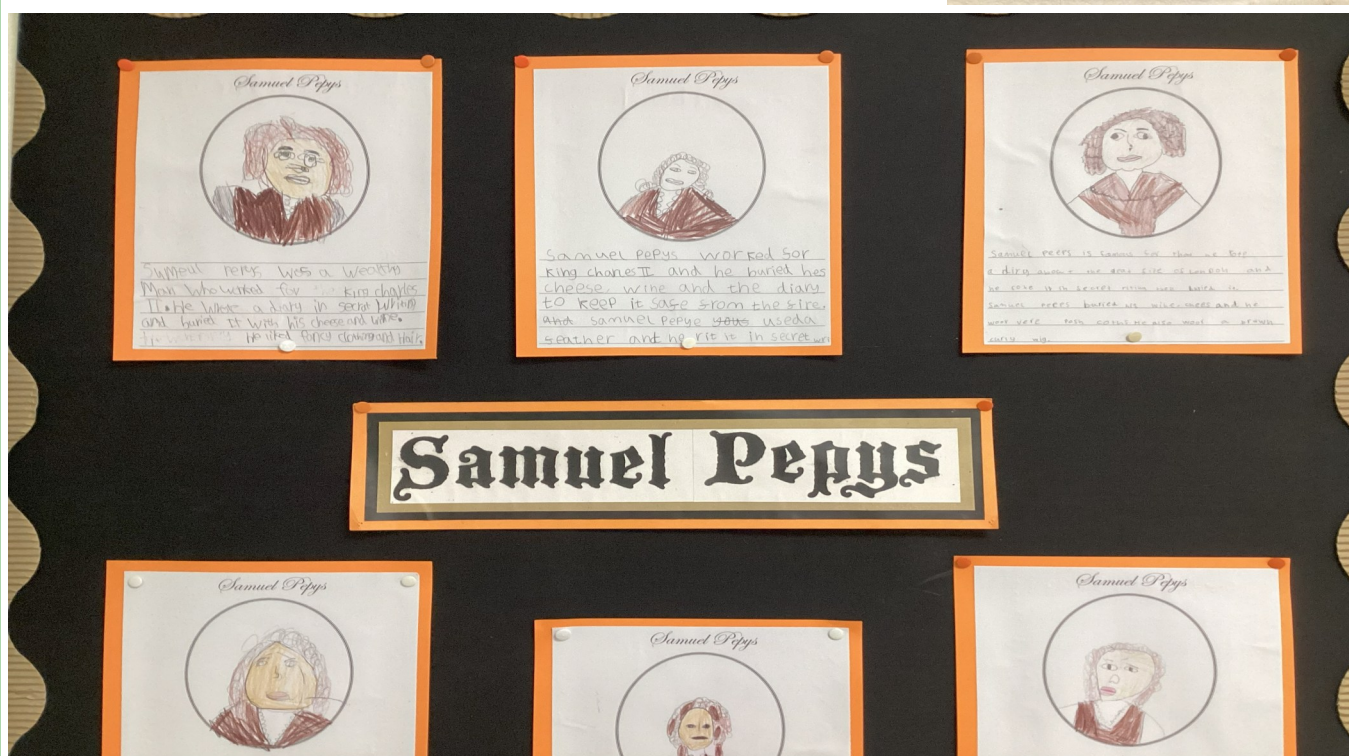
Fire! Fire!

What a fantastic start to the new term we have had! We began by taking time to reset and reflect on our goals for the year ahead. As part of this, we watched the New Year's Eve fireworks and listened to the countdown accompanied by the chiming of Big Ben. This provided an excellent link to our maths learning about time. We explored how time is measured and discussed the different units of time. The children have impressed us with their understanding of time measurements, including decades, centuries and millennia. We have also been learning to tell the time using analogue clocks and have been practising telling the time to o'clock, half past, quarter past and quarter to. Please continue to support this learning at home, as telling the time requires plenty of practice.

This term's topic takes us back in time as we begin our study of the Great Fire of London. The children are already fully immersed in their learning and many have chosen to extend this during their free time. The role-play corner has been particularly popular, with children pretending to be bakers and using playdough to create bread rolls. Last week, we learned about Samuel Pepys and his diary, discovering how this important source helps us understand the events of 1666. We also created artwork using paint and collage to represent London's skyline at the time.

In DT this half term, the children are taking part in a bread-making project, which links perfectly to the bakery on Pudding Lane. Last week, we enjoyed tasting and evaluating a variety of breads. Over the coming weeks, we will move on to designing and making our own bread rolls. We are confident they will be delicious!

This week, we have begun building our Tudor houses, which we are very much looking forward to sharing with you at our Meet the Experts presentation on Tuesday 10th February at 2:30pm. We hope you will be able to join us.





Year 3

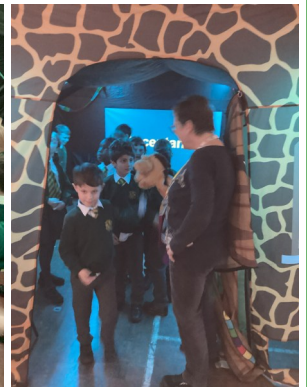
A Tasty Start To The Year!

Apple and Maple Classes began our DT topic with an evaluation of a variety of different sandwiches. This was a great start to their first Year 3 DT project, especially as it involved tasting them! After recording what they liked and disliked about the pre-made sandwiches, the children set about designing a healthy sandwich for their learning partners. Before making these, we had to refresh our knowledge of how to cut, spread and grate correctly and safely. The children learnt how to cut using a claw and bridge technique. Using their sandwich designs, they spread and filled their bread with their chosen ingredients. Finally, the children evaluated the sandwiches they had made – needless to say, they all thought their sandwiches were great and needed no improvements whatsoever! We hope all the sandwiches make it home safely so you can enjoy them too!



Scarf Space

We were lucky enough to have a visit from The Coram Life Education & SCARF team last week where the children were reunited with their friend Harold the giraffe and Nancy, who delivered a wonderful workshop relating to acceptance. The children discussed how and when they might need to accept a situation that has happened and ways in which they could adapt their way of thinking. The children had some insightful views and ideas which left Harold and Nancy super impressed! Mrs. Brodie and Mr. Webb were also super proud of both classes' contributions.



Journalist Jottings!

We started the New Year with a new English Text, *The King who Banned the Dark*. The children have put together their very own news teams and have been reporting about the events that occurred at the palace following the king's banning of the dark. Our Year 3 journalists have been using their questioning skills to find out the 5W's of reporting - Who, What, Where, Why, and When of the event - by role playing as characters from the story.



Mountains of Fun

We embarked on our new topic in preparation for our parent presentation at the end of this half term on **Thursday 12th February at 2:30pm**. The children have been sharing their knowledge of mountains with each other and learning the features of a mountain by drawing and labelling their own mountains. We have also learnt about the different types of mountains and how they are formed. Fold mountains are formed when tectonics plates collide and push rock upwards. To understand this better, we carried out an experiment using two towels, stacked on top of each other, to represent the plates. We pushed them together from either end and could see what happens when plates are forced together. Each time a slightly different 'mountain range' was formed. We also learnt about volcanic mountains, dome mountains and plateau mountains – we'll tell you about these at our presentation. In our mountain groups we have been challenged to make one of the four types of mountains and are looking forward to using art rock to create our 3D models.





Year 4

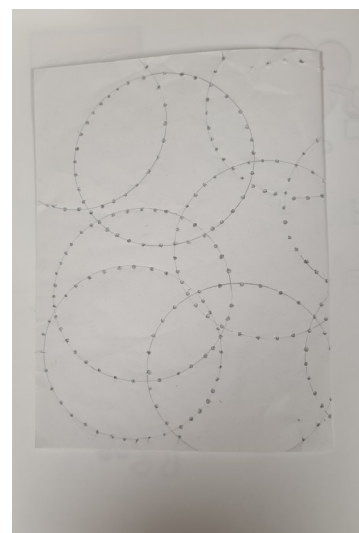
Maps, Poems, Storytelling And Sounds

In topic lessons this term, we will be considering the question, 'How did the Ancient Greeks change the world?' We began by investigating the 'who, when and where' of the Ancient Greek civilisation, looking at maps and timelines to place Ancient Greece in context and then zooming in to find out more about key events from the five distinct time periods associated with the Ancient Greek civilisation. We have also been investigating why Alexander the Great was a significant figure and analysing his historical impact.

In English, we have been exploring a range of poems from *Stars with Flaming Tails* by Valerie Bloom. When studying the poems, the children are exploring what they like about a particular poem; asking questions about it; looking for connections within the poem or between this poem and others they know; and commenting on the themes or use of language. They have also been listening to Valerie Bloom's advice for performing poetry to help develop their own performances. The children have been enthralled when listening to poetry performances by some other inspiring poets such as Matt Goodfellow, Joseph Coelho and A. F. Harrold.

In art lessons, we have begun a new unit where the children will have the opportunity to explore pattern and develop a range of technical skills and knowledge through drawing and collage. They will be introduced to the idea that working with pattern can be a mindful activity. Our first activity was making a sensory drawing and the children responded well to the idea, creating patterns of dots by pushing a sharp pencil through their paper. They were pleased with their outcomes and many commented that they found the activity made them feel calm.

Our new science topic is sound and our first lesson was spent investigating vibrations produced on some of our school instruments. This unit ties in well with our music lessons and this week the children accompanied songs on the glockenspiel, using the note A. We have started to learn our unit song "Stop" and the children really enjoyed rapping and dancing along. It was lovely to see them joining in with fabulous musicality.



Birthday List

Happy Birthday to the following children who have celebrated their birthdays recently.

Aisha B-T (Lime)
Oshsenya P (Oak)
Kassius M-S-S (Acorn)
Mimi-Rose J (Chestnut)
Phoebe G (Willow)
Freya L (Birch)
Oscar A (Chestnut)
Zak S (Apple)
Luna S (Maple)
Robyn B (Hazel)
Chloe S (Apple)
Georgia H-H (Cherry)
Sereia C (Willow)

Teddy W (Holly)
Matty G (Apple)
Alec (Apple)
Isabella F (Maple)
Locksley T-S (Ash)
Beauden T-S (Ash)
Nieva H-E (Cherry)
Freya C (Chestnut)
Elsie B (Lime)
Aurelia L (Elm)
Blake D (Willow)
Ella S (Oak)
Harry S (Hazel)

Jeevan M (Willow)
Bonnie G (Sycamore)
Isla A (Beech)
Teddy V (Chestnut)
Blake S (Chestnut)
Martyn C (Lime)
Evelyn C (Lime)
Hannah F (Oak)
Maxwell S-S (Willow)
Leo K (Maple)
Jimmy C (Lime)
Woody S (Cherry)





Year 5

Dearest Mr Speaker!

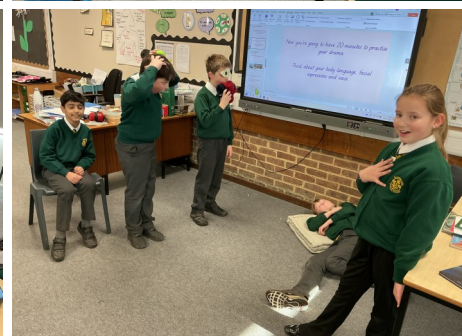
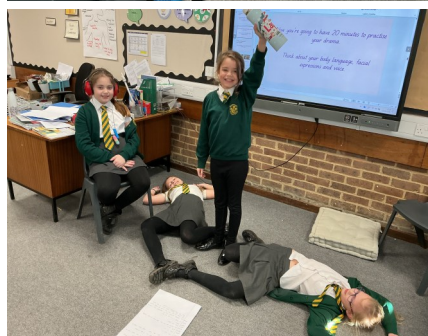
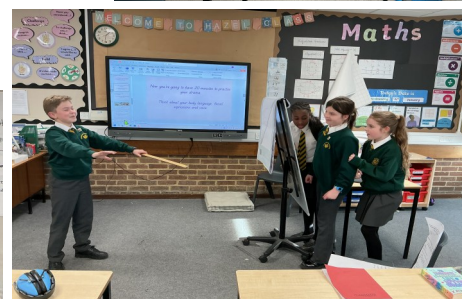
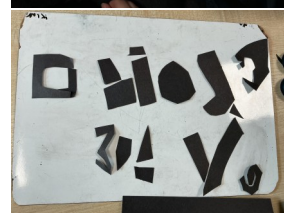
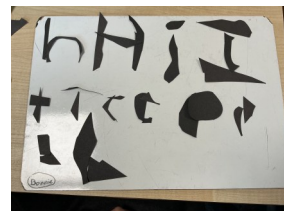
The children have settled back into their routines beautifully and have shown great excitement about the term ahead. It's wonderful to see their curiosity shine as we explore new topics and activities together.

This term, we have begun our exciting new topic on Africa: Past and Present, which integrates history and geography. To launch the topic, we explored the rich diversity of Africa by identifying different countries on the map. We located Benin on the map, examined replica bronze artefacts and discovered why they are so important in telling us about the history of Benin. We learnt about an African named Olaudah Equiano and his autobiography, which is the only one written by someone who was enslaved that has been discovered by historians. We discussed whether artefacts should be kept in museums around the world or returned to their country of origin. This culminated in a heated debate with some very convincing arguments and rebuttals. It was a close vote, overseen by The Speaker (Mr Wilson) but most children thought that the artefacts should be returned.

We have started our new art topic, typography, looking at the work of an American designer, Louise Fili. We had lots of fun cutting out different shapes with black paper and then putting them together to create our own letters.

In English, we have enjoyed reading *The Adventures of Odysseus* and, in particular, creating and acting out our own scripts for 'The Cyclops' chapter. We have written in role as Odysseus, sending letters home to our wife, Penelope, and son, Telemachus. The children have impressed with their emotive language and reference to the text. We look forward to reading more of Odysseus's adventures.

In computing, we have started our new topic on quizzing. We had lots of fun learning how to use 2Quiz in Purple Mash and finishing a quiz with a variety of questions styles.





Year 6

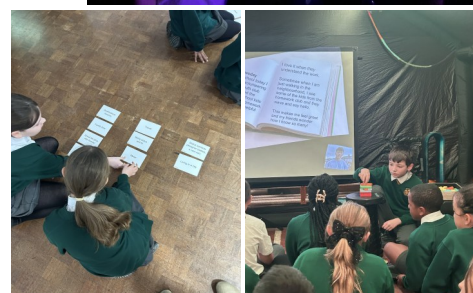
Year 6 Shine On The Big Stage And Beyond!

What an unforgettable evening! On Wednesday, the highly anticipated Young Voices concert finally arrived, with Year 6 joining over 8,000 children for an incredible performance at the O2 Arena. Following a full day of rehearsals, last-minute learning, and perfecting dances and changes, the children were more than ready to take to the stage. As the lights dimmed and the arena filled with families, Year 6 sang and danced with energy, confidence, and joy. They truly gave it their all, creating a spectacular performance we will remember for years to come. We are immensely proud of how brilliantly they represented Summercroft through their outstanding behaviour, enthusiasm, and teamwork.



Visit to the SCARF Life Space

Year 6 also enjoyed their final visit to the SCARF Life Space, where they had their last ever session with Nancy and Harold. This was a fantastic and thought-provoking session focused on goal setting and wellbeing. The children engaged particularly well in discussions around protective factors and how these can help us manage challenges and stressful situations. It was a valuable opportunity for reflection and learning, rounding off the programme in a meaningful way.



Sportshall Athletics

After a late night at the O2, our tired but determined Sportshall Athletics team competed at the Birchwood Games event on Thursday and we couldn't be more proud of them! Despite a busy week, every athlete demonstrated fantastic skill, perseverance, and teamwork, supporting one another throughout the competition. One of twelve schools, our team was sharing the lead for the competition all the way to the final race, making it a nail-biting afternoon. However, our superstars kept their composure and went on to win the final race by half a length and claim the gold medal! They were brilliant throughout.



What an amazing start to 2026 for Year 6!

Thank you, as always, for your continued support, especially in helping to make the Young Voices experience possible.





SEND Updates

We would like to make you aware of some of the local support available for parents of children with SEND.

You can find lots of articles to support children's wellbeing and emotional health [here](#).



Please access the Developing Special Provision Locally, Area 3 (DSPL3) website and Facebook page linked below. There you will find a range of helpful information, advice, courses and further SEN support.

DSPL3 Website- [Developing Special Provision Locally \(DSPL\) 3 - Home](#)

DSPL3 Facebook page- [Delivering Special Provision Locally Area 3 - East Herts | Facebook](#)

There are also a range of other support groups, including:

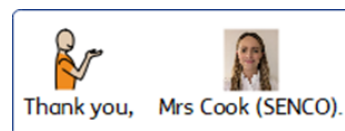
[SPACE Hertfordshire – Supporting families in Hertfordshire | Autism | ADHD | Neurodiversity](#)

[ADD-vance](#)- The ADHD and Autism Trust- courses include 'Understanding my ADHD'.

[Families in Focus | Courses for Parents, Hertfordshire](#)

[Families Feeling Safe](#) • Protective Behaviours training, courses and workshops.

SENDIASS- [Home](#)- Info, advice and support with the SEN systems.



New SEN Signposts:

- 'Understanding My Autism' & 'Understanding My ADHD' courses for children starting in January 2026
- Neurodiversity support Hub- for children with a diagnosis or awaiting an assessment



Punctuality Matters!

Did you know?

The early work in our classes helps the children to embed and practise the skills that they have learnt previously.

Our registers close at 8:55am.

Missed minutes = missed learning = missed opportunities!

Being frequently late for school means lost learning:

- o Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- o Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- o Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

Our school attendance policy can be found [here](#).

If you need advice or support regarding attendance or punctuality please contact our Pastoral Lead, Mrs Willis, at jo.willis@summercroft.herts.sch.uk.



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 DIGITAL DEVICES & WELLBEING

Children aged 7 to 14 now spend roughly 3 to 5 hours a day on phones, tablets, consoles, and computers. That much screen time has parents and educators worried – not just about the hours logged, but about online safety and the knock-on effects on mental health. This guide brings together practical, expert-backed strategies so adults can nurture healthier digital habits and help young people thrive both on and offline.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SLEEP DISRUPTION

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, can interfere with melatonin production and delay sleep onset. Children may struggle to concentrate or regulate emotions due to poor sleep hygiene linked to late-night device use.

ONLINE PEER PRESSURE

Social media platforms expose children to unrealistic standards and peer validation loops. Likes, comments, and follower counts can influence self-worth and lead to anxiety or risky behaviour to gain approval.

CYBERBULLYING EXPOSURE

Children may encounter bullying through messaging apps, games, or social media. This can be persistent and anonymous, making it harder to detect. Victims often feel isolated and reluctant to report incidents.

REDUCED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Time spent on screens often replaces outdoor play and physical activity. This sedentary lifestyle can contribute to obesity, poor posture, and reduced cardiovascular health.

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Fast-paced digital content can overstimulate young brains. Children may become irritable, impatient, or struggle with boredom and emotional control when not engaged with screens.

PRIVACY AND SAFETY RISKS

Children may unknowingly share personal information or interact with strangers online. Without guidance, they may not understand the long-term consequences of digital footprints or unsafe online behaviour.

Advice for Parents & Educators

SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Establish screen-time limits and device-free zones, e.g. classrooms and dinner tables. Use parental controls and co-create a digital use agreement with children to encourage accountability. Trying a visual schedule or timer app can help children understand and stick to limits.

MODEL HEALTHY HABITS

Children mirror adult behaviour. Demonstrate balanced device use, take regular screen breaks, and prioritise face-to-face interactions to reinforce positive behaviours. Making a habit of putting your phone away during meals and conversations can show that real-life interactions come first.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

Create a safe space for children to talk about their online experiences. Ask open-ended questions like, "What did you enjoy online today?" to build trust and awareness. Try setting aside 10 minutes each day for a digital check-in where children can share what they've seen or done online.

PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY

Teach children how to evaluate online content, recognise misinformation, and understand privacy settings. Empower them to think critically and act responsibly in digital spaces. You could use real-life examples from the news or social media to help children practise spotting fake information.

Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is Associate Vice Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School and works on secondment one day a week for Minds Ahead, which works with schools on improving their mental health provision.



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