



24 April 2026

Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a busy and productive start back to the summer term. The children are fully immersed in their new topics and it is lovely to see that there have been some trips outside of school already. I know our Year 2s enjoyed the day at Hatfield Forest, while Year 3 and Year 5 have a number of geography field studies taking place in town over the coming weeks. There is also a renewed focus on some of the fundamentals in English, developing fluency in spelling, handwriting and grammar. This is a whole school focus over the summer term and we are looking forward to seeing the improvements as the term progresses.

We started our assemblies with a reminder of our behaviour expectations. As we always do at the start of term, we took time to remind ourselves of the behaviour that is expected in lessons, at playtimes and when travelling to and from school. This has been followed up in class as the staff have been teaching the age-appropriate expectations from our behaviour curriculum. We know how important it is to ensure everyone feels safe so they can access their learning and will continue to embed this throughout the rest of the term. Children have also been reminded about their trusted adults and who they can speak to if they have concerns about any issues in school.

We also took time to celebrate Earth Day this week. This gave us the opportunity to discuss the theme for this year, 'Our Power, Our Planet', and think about how we, as individuals and collectively in our community, can take action to drive lasting change. It is a topic that many of our children are very passionate about and this shone through during the assembly. We read the story, *The Girl Who Planted Trees* and the children reflected on how one person can make a difference. As a school, we are making lots of changes to become more sustainable through food waste, recycling and energy usage, and the children are also finding ways to support this. They also spent time during our Smart School Council session in Talking Groups on Thursday giving their views on a community project we could start, like a "Pollinator Highway" project where we could develop wildflower areas around the school. Ms Lynch will be announcing our new Eco Warriors in the coming weeks, who will play their part in promoting and making us even more environmentally aware.



The next stage of our OPAL lunchtimes has been rolled out this week. Thanks to Mrs Bugg (and Mr Bugg) along with Mr Gill and Mr Beeson, who were busy during the Easter holidays creating some new areas with log circles, teepees and new hanging tree swings, and getting the large loose parts ready for the children to enjoy. See more detailed information about this later in the newsletter from Mrs Bugg. It has been lovely going out at lunchtimes and seeing the children playing and interacting so well with each other and the new zones. Long may the warm, sunny days continue. You will also have seen the invite for parents to attend the OPAL play afternoon on **Thursday 30th April**. This will be a great opportunity for you to hear about the purpose of our lunchtimes from our OPAL mentor, see the journey we have been on and, most importantly, get the chance to go out and play with the children (and staff). I look forward to seeing lots of you there.



We are also looking forward to our author visit coming up on Thursday 30th April. Ella Dove is an amputee who has written two children's novels. She will take the opportunity to share her journey since becoming an amputee and how she has used her positivity and resilience to bounce back from the accident which left her with one leg. A great chance for our children to meet and learn from this inspirational lady.

There are lots of other exciting enrichment and extra curricular events coming up which we are all looking forward to. The dates for the rest of this term have already been circulated by email and they can be also be found on our [website](#). I hope you all have a lovely weekend.

Kind regards,

Stephen Jess
Headteacher





EYFS

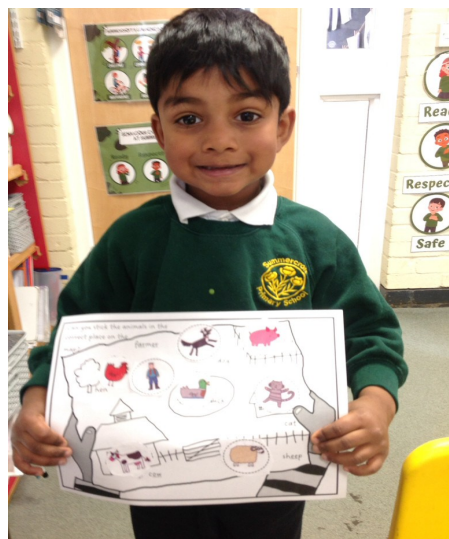
Spring Has Finally Sprung!

In Early Years, our learning has continued to blossom as we celebrate the arrival of spring! The children have loved exploring this topic, learning new vocabulary such as 'lamb', 'calf', 'blossom' and 'petals', and are beginning to use it confidently in their discussions and play.

Inspired by our books, *When Spring Comes* and *Ten Little Seeds* (in Nursery) and *The Curious Garden* (in Reception), we explored the wider signs of spring. The children reflected on seasonal changes they have noticed, including baby animals being born, flowers blooming and the warmer weather. They created their own spring-themed artwork, in Reception carefully painting scenes with flowers, butterflies, bees and blossom, and writing captions or simple sentences to match using their phonic knowledge, and in Nursery, by making flower yarn pictures and printing sunflowers and focusing on initial sounds.

In maths, Nursery have been looking at sequencing numbers to 5 and representations of these numbers and Reception have moved onto teen numbers, thinking about 10 and how many more are needed. The children used practical resources such as ten frames, bead strings and blocks to support their understanding. We have also begun solving simple addition and subtraction problems using the structure, "First there were...; then... were added or taken away; now there are..."

In expressive arts and design, alongside our artwork, the children enjoyed learning a daffodil finger action rhyme, singing familiar songs and using instruments to keep a steady pulse. During Forest School, the children explored the work of Andy Goldsworthy and created their own natural artwork inspired by him using spring materials.





Year 1

A Roaring Start To The Term!

It has been an exciting start to our new term. The children have ventured into the savannah in English. We have investigated what animals can be seen hiding throughout the savannah and described how they move within their habitat. We have also become lion experts! The children gathered their own information on lions through reading a variety of non-fiction texts. The children used an oracy technique called a 'traverse' to practise saying the facts they had learnt. This helped to support us to write sentences about lions. Finally, we illustrated pictures of the lions and published our own fact file.

In maths, we have been messy mathematicians, using time in the water trays to support our understanding of capacity and volume. The children have used the vocabulary 'full', 'empty', 'nearly full' and 'nearly empty' throughout the school day to describe the volumes of liquids around the classroom. We have been able to compare the volumes by using 'less' and 'more'. They have also been able to identify how much an object weighs by using scales. The children have learnt that when the scales are balanced, that is how much the object weighs. We have been hearing the vocabulary 'heavier' and 'lighter' regularly in our maths lessons to compare the weights.

In computing, we have started to create our very own e-book. The children have begun by illustrating their character online, adding different colours and textures, as well as changing the backgrounds to fit their stories.

We have also been practising our drawing skills in art, understanding how different lengths of time can help with the details of our drawings and using shading to create dimension.





Year 2

Forest Fun!

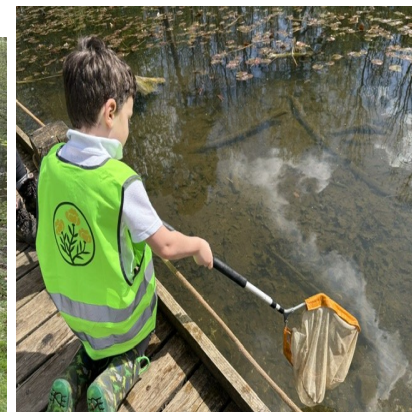
We hope you all had a lovely Easter break; seems a long time ago!

We've had a busy couple of weeks in Year 2. What an exciting start to the term we've had! Our visit to Hatfield Forest was a fun-filled way to finish our *Forests* unit. The children were excited for their first school trip on a coach. Each class had two activities – den building and pond dipping. They worked well in teams to create and build their own dens and loved being able to sit inside them. The children were taught the correct and safe way to move large sticks or even huge branches! They were also fascinated to go pond dipping to see what different minibeasts they could find in the water.

The children had a wonderful day, and the sun was shining for the afternoon which made it even better. It was such a great opportunity to bring our *Forests* topic to life and linking it to our science learning all about habitats. Thank you to those parents who volunteered and supported the children with the trip; it was very much appreciated!

We started a new book in English called *Slug Life*. We met a slug called Stevie, who is the grumpiest slug in the world! The children started the week by working in pairs to write down all the information they knew about slugs. From this, they identified the difference between facts and fiction. Did you know that ladybirds bleed poison from their knees?

The children then wrote reliable and true facts about their chosen animal or a slug. Towards the end of the week, the children were tasked with making Stevie the slug happier. They came up with more positive words to describe him and other slugs. We can't wait to continue finding out more about slugs!





Year 3

The Moving Pictures Project

We have kicked off the new half term with a bang (and a few snips of card!). Our classroom turned into a mini-design studio as we tackled an exciting DT project on mechanisms.

The Science: We discovered that a lever is a rigid bar that moves around a pivot. Things got really clever when we experimented with fixed and loose pivots!

The Magic: By joining levers to create linkages, the children learned how to change the direction and type of movement.

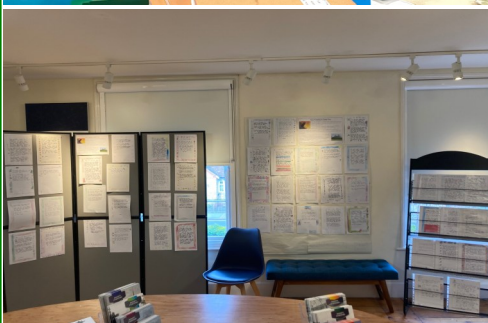
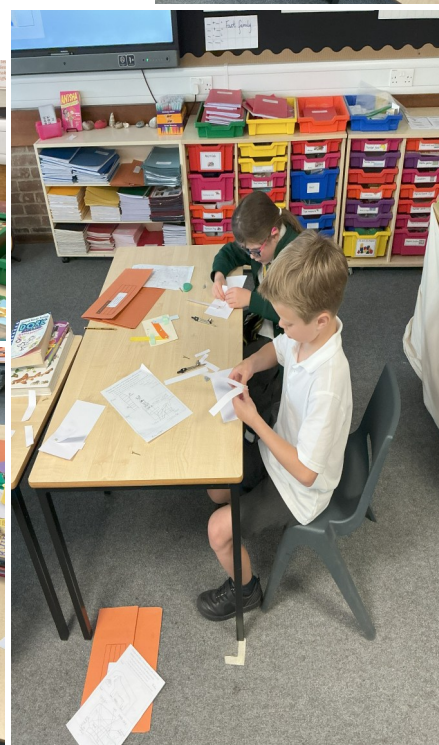
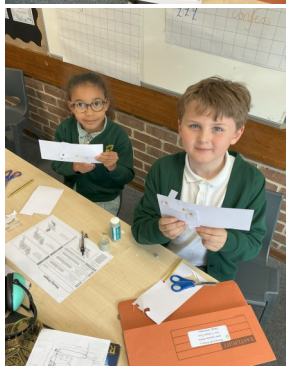
The Mission: Our challenge was to design a moving animal picture for a children's book. The children were absolute pros, creating prototypes first to test their theories before bringing their final designs to life. From hopping bunnies to flapping birds, the creativity was through the roof!

From the Heart: 'Special Items' in English

A massive thank you to everyone who helped their child bring in a 'special item' last week. Hearing the sentimental stories behind these objects gave us a wonderful window into what matters most to the children. These treasures are now serving as the inspiration for their personal narratives - helping the children write about the most important topic of all: what makes them, them!

Our Stars in the Spotlight: South Mill Arts

If you visited South Mill Arts over the Easter break, you might have spotted some very familiar writing! A huge thanks to Janet Shepherd for displaying our narratives inspired by our class text, *A Pebble in My Pocket*. We hope you enjoyed seeing your child's hard work on display and perhaps caught a show or two at the theatre while you were there. It's not every day you become a published author in a local gallery!





Year 4

Roses, Rhythms and Roots

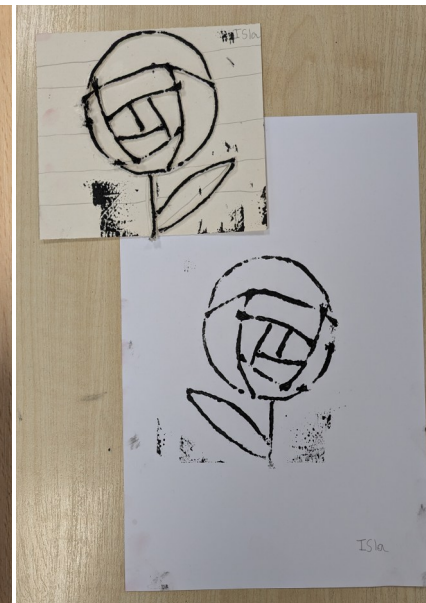
We have been introduced to our new topic, *The Windrush Generation*, through the words of Floella Benjamin and the music of Bob Marley. The children were saddened to discover the discrimination faced by many of the Windrush Generation when they first arrived in Britain. We asked them to think about the special objects they would take with them if they had to leave their home country and move abroad.

In science lessons, the children have been investigating living things and their habitats. They have continued to explore and create classification keys with increasing independence and created their own closed questions that can be answered using 'yes' or 'no'.

Continuing our theme of nature around us, we have begun our next music topic by learning to sing 'Blackbird' by the Beatles. Although many children had heard of the Beatles pop group, the song was new to most and we look forward to broadening our repertoire of Beatles songs over the coming weeks.

In English lessons, we have been introduced to the mysterious Brownstone family vault, containing artefacts 'of great power and rarity'. Professor Brownstone explained that, despite all the weird and wondrous artefacts in the vault, his most treasured possession is his collection of books. This led us to discuss the power of books and what they mean to us. The children wrote some thoughtful poems, using metaphors to describe books as 'rabbit holes into other worlds' and 'comforting cushions which help me drift off to sleep'.

In art, we have continued our study of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. We have been experimenting with recreating the iconic Mackintosh rose in different mediums. Last week, the children used the collagraph printing technique to create prints of Mackintosh-style roses. First, they glued string on cardboard to create their rose design, then covered their designs with ink and made prints. We will then go on to adding watercolour to our designs.



Birthday List

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

Evelyn D	Holly	Theo T	Cherry	Caitlin M	Apple
Bryan P	Apple	Florence Y	Acorn	Harry B	Apple
Oscar W	Chestnut	Alice M	Willow	Hunter M	Birch
Millie O	Acorn	Rudy R	Birch	Phoenix L	Ash
Bear L	Sycamore	Violet K-M	Chestnut	Ella D	Oak
Jacob G	Oak	Harper-Rose D	Birch	Edmund M	Hazel
Harper M	Holly	Elodie C	Acorn	Hazel L	Birch
Orson T	Beech	Mario C	Ash	William H	Beech
Cosimo Q	Holly	Jessica W	Apple	Emma F	Elm
Oscar M	Oak	Sophie S	Maple	Emily H	Birch
Alex W	Apple	Bella S	Apple		





Year 5

Viking Day!

Year 5 finished the term and our topic with a fantastic immersive Viking Day experience. We travelled back in time to the year 878 when the Vikings, under King Guthrum, had taken over England.

The children had to take on everyday tasks in a 9th century village — including weaving, pottery, metal working and medicine making. We were very impressed with their skills and creations, although there was a lot of suffering whilst villagers were waiting for their medicinal potions to be created! Thankfully they all worked in the end.

They also learned how to prepare for battle. A group at a time went outside to learn how to make a 'shield wall' and then charge at their enemy, screaming as loudly as they could. This was quite terrifying and would've had any enemy running a mile!

In the afternoon, we watched a demonstration of smelting — we had to watch from a distance as the metal became very hot to melt and be poured into a mould. It cooled very quickly when plunged into water and we were then able to handle it.



Thank you to Mrs Verbrugge, Mrs Walton, Mrs Polkinghorne, Mrs Olaifa, Mr Skea-Stachan, Mrs Leo, Mrs Hayes and Mr and Mrs Gapper for helping on the day. The large number of volunteers enabled the children to have lots of choice of activities so thank you very much. Thank you, too, to all parents for dressing your children up for the day — this really adds to the fun and immersive experience. A super day to round off the term.

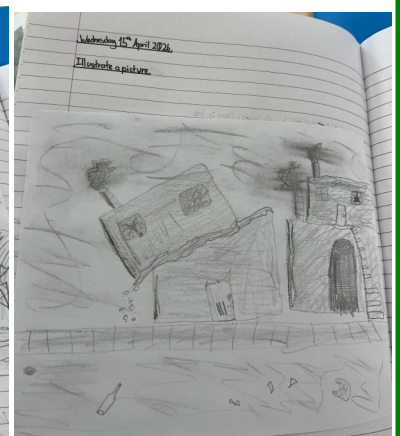
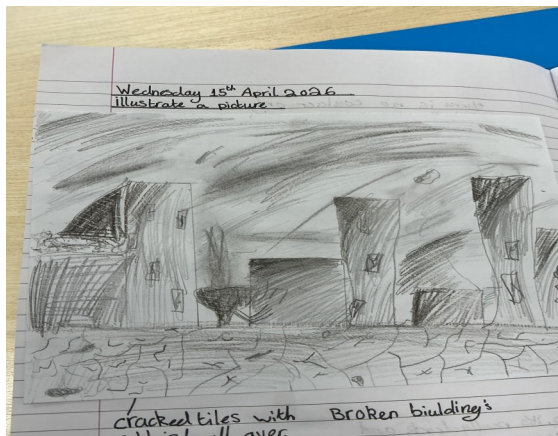
A Growing Promise

We have been very excited to begin our new English unit for the summer term, based on *The Promise*, by Nicola Davies. The children were first introduced to the story through its powerful opening, which paints a vivid picture of a bleak, grey and forgotten city. Using carefully chosen descriptions from the text, pupils worked thoughtfully to sketch and illustrate their own interpretations of the cityscape, paying close attention to the atmosphere and mood created by the author. Building on this, the children explored rich vocabulary and descriptive techniques, discussing how language can be used to evoke emotion in the reader. They then applied these ideas to write their own descriptive sentences, focusing on capturing the harshness and negativity of the setting. To bring everything together, pupils transformed their ideas into poetry, producing some wonderfully imaginative pieces that reflected the gloomy tone of the story. We were particularly impressed with how confidently the children experimented with language and imagery, showing a growing understanding of how writing can influence the reader's feelings.

The Year 5 Singing Festival!

We have some VERY exciting news for Year 5! On Monday 22nd June, Hazel and Sycamore Classes will be performing at the South Mill Arts Centre as part of a local singing festival. This is a fantastic opportunity for the children to showcase their hard work and enthusiasm for music, and they have already begun practising with great energy and commitment.

The performance will begin at 6:15pm, and parents and carers are warmly invited to attend and support the children. Further information, including ticket details and timings, will be shared closer to the event. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak with Mr Wilson or Mrs Brewer at the end of the school day. We are really looking forward to this special event and hope to see as many of you there as possible!





Year 6

Final Term, Full Steam Ahead!

Year 6 have made a fantastic start to their final term, returning with focus and enthusiasm. In English, we have continued our study of the Suffragettes and the children have approached some challenging and sensitive topics, including force-feeding and police brutality, with great maturity. They have thoughtfully channelled their understanding into emotive and sensitive retellings of the tragic events of Black Friday, producing some truly powerful work.

We have also been busy on the sporting front, with football tournaments taking place over the past week. Both our girls' team and mixed team represented the school brilliantly, demonstrating excellent teamwork, determination and sportsmanship throughout. We are incredibly proud of their efforts. A big thank you goes to Mr Eaton for organising these opportunities.

With two weeks remaining until SATs week, we are extremely proud of how hard the children have been working and it is wonderful to see the progress they have made over this period. This final stretch is all about consolidating their learning and boosting confidence. We know they will rise to the challenge and be more than ready when the week comes!

Thank you as ever for the support.



Fundraising Champions!

Daniel F (Sycamore Class) and some of his Summercroft friends are part of Navaho Cubs. They recently took part in a sponsored fun run at Grange Paddocks to raise money for Bishops Stortford Food Bank. They ran a total of 4 miles and raised approximately £200, so a huge well done to them!



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:

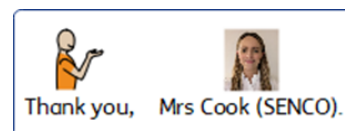
[SPACE Hertfordshire – Supporting families in Hertfordshire | Autism | ADHD | Neurodiversity](#)

[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.



Young Carers

Many young people qualify to be classed as a young carer.

A young carer is a young person who, due to the needs of another family member (including siblings), has adaptations to their general childhood.

If you feel that your child may be eligible to be classed as a young carer, or has been identified and you think that we may be unaware, please contact Mrs Willis via the school office.

For more information, please see the link below, plus details of how the service is changing.

[Young carers in Hertfordshire | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

Young Carers in Hertfordshire | Hertfordshire County Council
Young Carers Offer

From 1 April 2026, Hertfordshire County Council will be bringing support for young carers in-house, when the young carer contract with Carers in Hertfordshire comes to an end, integrating it fully within the council's services. The existing Carers in Hertfordshire contract for adult carers will remain in place.

Work has been ongoing with young carers, families and professionals to make sure the change is smooth, and the support will continue and stay very similar. This includes assessments, help with managing caring responsibilities, regular reviews, ensuring the voices of young carers inform the support they receive, and support in preparing for adulthood.

OPAL: The Power of Play

This term, we have been delighted to introduce some new zones to our OPAL offer, including The Swing Zone, Ready, Steady, Build (Large Loose Parts) and some agility trails.

Following an OPAL assembly last week, the children were very excited to start exploring the new play zones we have created. The large loose parts area has quickly become a hub of imagination, where the children collaborate to build, design and create everything from obstacle courses to imaginative structures. It has been fantastic to observe such teamwork, problem-solving and creativity in action.



Our new Swing Zone has also been a huge success! The children have embraced the opportunity to challenge themselves physically while enjoying the simple pleasure of swinging. It has been lovely to see them supporting one another, taking turns and building confidence.

The agility trails have also brought a new level of excitement and energy to lunchtimes. Children have been testing their balance, coordination, and resilience as they navigate the different challenges. Their determination and sense of achievement as they master new skills each day has been wonderful to see.

We have also welcomed some new social spaces for the children to be able to chat and relax. These include mini log circles, tepees and hammocks. These are nestled around our school grounds and offer the children a calm alternative to high-energy play.

Overall, OPAL play continues to bring a real sense of adventure and joy to lunchtimes and it is great to see our vast school grounds used to their maximum.

We are so proud of how the children have engaged with the OPAL opportunities—showing creativity, cooperation, and enthusiasm in abundance. We look forward to continuing to develop our play provision and seeing even more fantastic play in the weeks ahead.



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 ONLINE TRENDS ENCOURAGING VIOLENCE

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

7 out of 10 teens report seeing violent content on social media, with over half of that content featuring fights involving young people. Most don't 'seek' it but are shown it through social media feeds or messaging groups. 91% of young people involved in violence have seen violent social media content. Viral trends, challenges, or 'wars' that are spread online risk encouraging violence offline, while real-world incidents may also be recorded and promoted online.

ALGORITHMIC EXPOSURE

Social media platforms are designed to keep users engaged, meaning dramatic or extreme content can spread widely and quickly. Algorithms often recommend content that reflects users' past interactions. As a result, young people may see more violent material if they have viewed, commented on, or shared it before. Repeated exposure can make violent content appear frequently in their feeds without them fully understanding why.

WEAPONS AND CRIMINAL RISK

Teens exposed to high levels of real-world violence on social media sometimes report feeling an increased need to carry a weapon for 'self-protection'; however, carrying a weapon increases the risk of victimisation (harm and injury by others) for young people. In addition, carrying a weapon is a serious offence that can lead to police arrest and a criminal record.

SHARING VIOLENT CONTENT

Encouraging or assisting an offence is a crime in the UK, including via social media, and can lead to arrest. This means sharing, forwarding, or reposting violent content carries a risk for young people too. Showing examples of content to a trusted adult is appropriate, but young people should take care not to further spread violent material by posting it online or sharing it within large messaging groups.

FEAR, ANXIETY, AND MARGINALISATION

Research shows young people's emotional wellbeing can be negatively impacted by repeated exposure to violent online content, especially when it depicts 'real-world' violence (as opposed to fictional depictions in games or films). Posts featuring weapons, threats, attacks, and fights – or content that appears to glamorise gang activity – can increase feelings of anxiety or fear among young people. Material that encourages violence targeting people because of their identity, such as their nationality or religion, can also create disproportionate harm for children belonging to those groups.

AVOIDANCE AND ISOLATION

Real-world violence on social media can increase young people's belief that their local communities – or the 'outside world' more generally – are unsafe places. This can result in avoidant and isolating behaviours, which may negatively affect their wellbeing. As well as feeling fearful of others, teens also report feeling judged for spending time together in large groups, which may affect their social interactions and leisure time.

Advice for Parents & Educators

STAY INFORMED

Stay alert for updates from police, schools, or local authorities, and follow the advice provided. Be cautious about unofficial accounts, fake content, and misinformation, which can spread quickly online or in chat groups. Ensure you get accurate information from trusted sources and encourage young people to do the same. Remind them never to share violent content online and to speak to a trusted adult instead.

DISCUSS SOCIAL MEDIA

Encourage young people to talk about the content they see online and the effect it can have. This can be an opportunity to discuss topics such as misinformation, AI-generated material, the attention economy, and algorithms, helping them understand how and why extreme content can spread online. Explore tools available to block, report, and remove harmful content, and signpost where to get support and advice, such as reportharmfulcontent.com.

TALK CRIME AND SAFETY

In most of the UK, the age of criminal responsibility is 10 (12 in Scotland). This means there can be serious criminal consequences for carrying a weapon, taking part in violence, or filming or sharing violent content. Discuss the law with young people alongside practical safety strategies. Ask questions such as: "What could you do if you feel unsafe?" Work together on action plans and remind them they can contact a trusted adult or the police if they witness or experience violence.

ENCOURAGE POSITIVE ACTION

Focus on strengthening young people's positive experiences both online and within their local communities. Discuss strategies to reduce negative social media effects, such as time limits, unfollowing certain accounts, or taking breaks from apps. Encourage offline activities such as spending time with friends, visiting local places, and taking part in hobbies that bring them joy, purpose, and connection. Remind them they can seek support with any concerns at any time via childline.org.uk.

Meet Our Expert

Dr. Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading UK expert in media law, online safety, and young people. Her PhD investigates youth understandings of criminal and legal risks in a digital context. She works in schools to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal, and ethical considerations of rapidly advancing technologies.



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The National College

See full reference list on our website

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