

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

There hasn't been a newsletter for a couple of weeks but now it's back in your inbox - although it's on a Wednesday this week - and there can't be a better place to start than with a reflection on the Drama Club's performance of Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits at Thornden Hall last week. It really was an incredible show, with the children not only in great voice but also working together brilliantly to deliver two evenings of pure theatre. I am very proud of them all for the effort they put in to the rehearsals, and for making their characters truly believable. It really was a 'proud headteacher' moment.

My thanks to Mrs Simpson and Mr O'Dowd for their amazing directorial talents, to Mrs Tear for all the time and energy she gave to the eye-catching costumes, and to the many, many parents, staff and ex-pupils who helped with hair, makeup and as stage hands. Our thanks must also go to the team at Thornden Hall for helping us put on the show, which we know will be a lasting memory for everyone involved.

We will soon be making photos and short videos available on the school website so you can relive some of the highlights.

Sports Day – 4th July

I hope you were able to see the recent letter about our annual sports day. If not, it's at the end of this newsletter. The morning is a carousel for all children and then at 12:00 families are invited to join us for a picnic followed by the races the races, and then there is the option of staying for the after-party which is being arranged by our amazing FOS. When visiting the school for Sports Day, can we please ask, on behalf of The White Horse, that you don't use their car park as this reduces the spaces they have for their customers.

A Sports Day Plea!

We would always prefer to have all the children out together supporting each other for sports day but this can present a bit of challenge in the heat. To help with this, we would like to have all children in the shade. If you have a gazebo at home that you would be happy to lend the school for Sports Day, we would be extremely grateful. Please contact the school office or drop them in to school before the day – THANK YOU for your support.

Lockers and Locks

There is a rising trend in children bringing in decorative locks for their lockers. These aren't necessary in primary school as the lockers are near to classrooms. We recently had to get involved in helping when a key to one such lock had been lost. We will be asking children who have locks, to take them home.

Cycling to School

It really is lovely to see the bike shed full each day as the children build their confidence cycling to school. There have however, been a few comments on the gate about how children are riding on pavements without paying attention to pedestrians, and also of a group of older children cycling around the roads without noticing approaching cars. The last thing anybody would want is for one of our children to have an accident, so please do have a road safety conversation at home if your child cycles in. Children are also being reminded each day that they should mount and dismount their bikes at the main double green gate, rather than riding in to where children and families are gathered.

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House Captain Elections

Next week, we will be asking the children to vote for next year's House Captains. The first part of the process is for children in Year 5 to write to me in order to be included in a shortlist. I have to say that the standard of letters was incredible this year as was the volume I received. For the children who don't become House Captains, we have a lot of other roles available to them as part of our Pupil Parliament so that all children who strive to have a responsibility in the school, gain that experience.

Carpentry Work in The School

We have a small project that we are hoping to complete in order to develop different areas across the school to support the needs of children, staff and parents. I look forward to sharing more details with you in the new school year but in the meantime we are looking for a contractor who can install pocket doors and a stud wall. If you are interested, or know somebody who would be, please let us know so we can make arrangements to get quotations for the work.

Transition Morning – 1st July

Next week, the children will visit their new classrooms and meet the teacher they will be with in September. During the morning, they will complete some transition and collaboration activities as well as games and tasks that help with getting to know each other better. This can be a tricky time for some children and we would always want to know if they come home with any concerns so that we can be better prepared to help them resettle in their new class after the summer break.

Pencil Cases and Rucksacks

It's a bit early for this really but the more I look around the school, the more it becomes something to share. We have a lot of big bags and big pencil cases in school, and although they look lovely, they aren't really necessary. Please bear this in mind if you are buying new items over the summer break. Thank you.

Lost Property

Once again, we have a very big collection of unclaimed items. We will do everything we can to have these out for you to look through before the end of the year, but we can't hold on to it for long and will donate anything uncollected to a local charity.

Care for Our School Environment – CAN YOU HELP?

One of the improvement priorities for the school next year is to ensure that we are maximising the use of the wonderful outdoor spaces that we have, including the pond, woodland and meadow. Recently, our older children enjoyed some outdoor learning in these spaces, but at the end of the lesson, they asked their teacher if they could do something to try and get help to make the spaces clearer, safer and more inviting. The following few pages are the 'Meadow Newsletter' that the children created by way of an appeal for support from the community.

They are asking for anyone who would be happy to spare some time to become 'Meadow Maintainers'.

If you think you could help us with this, please email me at headteacher@otterbourne.hants.sch.uk and we will arrange a few different dates for working parties to come together – your support with this would be greatly appreciated.

Best wishes

Mr Geraghty

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Meadow Newsletter

By Year 5/6 children

Welcome to our meadow newsletter. The aim of our newsletter is to:

- 1) Address your attention to the beauty of our school meadow - the home of many beautiful plants and creatures
- 2) Appeal for your help due to a few issues that need fixing (we can only accomplish this with your help).

Learning opportunities

In our fascinating meadow (which we are extremely lucky to have) there are many interesting learning opportunities and this is an amazing environment to support many subjects allowing children to thrive in their learning.

- English - for examples of descriptive writing on foliage
- Science - to learn about data and information which the children keep track of over the seasons: this is called a longitudinal study.
- Art - to see the beauty of nature and let creativity flow on the children's pages.



Our Y5/6 children carry out Wild Worship in the meadow to our younger children too.

As a school we think it is extremely important to learn outside and give our students the best learning opportunities so they can have the best possible experience at Otterbourne.

What is flourishing in our meadow?

Our magnificent meadow is blessed to have lots of flora and fauna which you may not find in your usual walk in the field. In addition to this, the meadow is lucky to have a wonderful pond and majestic wildlife.

When we were exploring the meadow, we found lots of minibeasts like:

- Butterflies
- Ladybirds
- Grasshoppers
- Crickets
- Bees



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Lots of the minibeasts that embrace the beauty of our meadow have to go through a process known as metamorphosis. This is a time where minibeasts change bodies. For instance, caterpillars maturing into butterflies and tadpoles evolving into frogs.



We love minibeast hunting but we also think about where all the creatures live and how to protect them. When we lift up logs, we make sure that we put them back because that is their home.

Furthermore, our fantastic meadow is home to numerous spotted-orchid plants. These plants are incredibly rare which is why it is so important that we let the grass grow wild and long: that's a plant worth saving.



Pond Life:

In our pond, we have species that thrive like dragonfly larva and tadpoles ready to develop into their adult forms. In addition to this, there are an abundance of newts and greater and lesser water boatman.

When we went pond dipping, we made a shocking but amazing discovery. In one dip of a net, the number of tadpoles and dragonfly nymphs in one tray was over ten which is good because that shows that our pond is clean and a good habitat for them and other pond life.



This creature might look ugly but it is a dragonfly nymph that will turn into an awe-inspiring dragonfly and it lives in our incredible pond. Did you know, that 90% of dragonfly nymphs die a year due to predation? Yet in our pond they thrive.



Newts and froglets



One dip of a net!

Please Help - We need meadow maintainers!

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Although our pond is thriving, it is also in danger. There has not been enough rain: the dry weather means the water levels are very low and the water is slowly running out. Also, plants and trees are starting to over populate the water, causing less space for our beloved creatures of the depths. Our pond has never dried out before. We must act now and save our precious pond before it has come to an end.



Our pond needs urgent care!

As well as this, some parts of the meadow are now so overgrown that we can't access them. Sadly, our path that leads to the woodland is no longer accessible. Brambles and nettles are taking over and a risk to little ones who want to explore and discover.



Our overgrown path

We need your help: parents, family and friends our school needs you to be our superheroes! Why don't you volunteer to keep our school's wildlife happy and healthy?

Can you join us to continue to make our meadow and pond thrive?

So, we ask you today if you will you join us in our mission to truly make our meadow thrive again and kindly put yourselves forth as meadow maintainers and generous volunteers to save our meadow and the beautiful creatures in it.

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A Reminder About The Science Fayre

OTTERBOURNE'S 3RD ANNUAL

SCIENCE FAYRE

WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY 2025

Dear Young Scientists,

We're very excited to invite you to take part in our upcoming Science Fayre, and this year's theme is something really special: "Thinking Outside the Box" – also known as "Forward Thinking"!

This is your chance to let your imagination run wild and explore BIG ideas! Do you ever wonder what the future might look like? Have you ever thought of a clever invention that could help people, animals, or even the planet? Or maybe you've learned about a brilliant scientist whose ideas changed the world – like Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, or Mae Jemison – and you'd like to follow in their footsteps. At the Science Fayre, you can present your own ideas – no idea is too small or too unusual. You can link your project to a real-life scientist, or you can create something brand new that's completely your own. Maybe you'll design a flying car, a robot helper, a plant that grows without soil, or a way to clean up pollution from the ocean. The sky's the limit (and even space isn't off-limits!).

You can work by yourself, in a pair, or with a group. Projects can be models, posters, experiments, or even videos. We can't wait to see how you use your creativity and curiosity to show us your forward thinking!

Get your thinking caps on – we believe in your amazing ideas!

If you have any questions or need help getting started, we will host a drop-in session shortly. We can't wait to see what you'll come up with!

Mrs Simmons & Mrs Simpson

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Monday 14th July

Please place your bags under the gazebo by 9am
(or in the School hall if wet weather)



What can be donated

**Good quality men's, ladies'
and children's clothing**
Paired shoes
Handbags & hats
Belts & bags
Scarves & ties
Socks & bras
Jewellery & accessories



What cannot be donated

Duvets & blankets
Pillows & cushions
Carpets, rugs & mats
Soiled, painted, ripped or wet clothing
School uniform with and without logo
Corporate clothing and workwear
**Textile off cuts, yarns or threaded
material**
Furniture and large items
Batteries

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Otterbourne Church of England Primary School

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Telephone: 01962 712020 www.otterbourneprimaryschool.com

Headteacher: Martin Geraghty



*With God's love,
all are encouraged to thrive.*

SCHOOL SPORTS DAY 2025

Monday 23rd June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted to invite you into school on the afternoon of Friday 4th July to enjoy the annual school sports day fun.

There are two parts to our sports day, as the children all participate in a more inclusive carousel of different activities in the morning before returning to class to cool down and prepare for lunch.

At 12pm on sports day, you are welcome to come on to the school field to share a picnic lunch with your children – PLEASE NOTE: if you are unable to attend, and are happy for your child(ren) to join another family, please fill out the Google form at <https://forms.office.com/e/U7uzy7dwNn> otherwise children will stay in their year groups. You can bring your own lunch and blankets with you but you can also order a school packed lunch for your child, which will be brought out to the field for the children at the start of the lunchtime.

After lunch, the children will be brought in for registration and a quick freshen up before returning to the field for the races. For this, we need all parents to be on the far side of the running track towards the edge of the field, and not at the end of the track please – this is for safety reasons as we must keep this area clear.

Once the races are over, the fun doesn't stop at the finish line and you are welcome to join us for the annual after-party! We will end the day in the usual way so please collect your children from the playground as you do each day. Then, if you are staying for the party, there will be music, pizza, ice-cream and drinks available (for children and adults!) on the school field. We will be setting up for the party to start as quickly as possible with the disco winding down from 6:00pm. I hope you can join us!

Kind regards

Mr Geraghty

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Theme for Hampshire Young Poets 2025: Friendship

"There is nothing I would not do for those who are really my friends."
Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey

In 2025, people across the world are celebrating the birthday of Hampshire author Jane Austen, who was born 250 years ago. Jane had many friends and often wrote about friendship in her novels. Inspired by Jane, her life and the stories she wrote, you are invited to explore the theme of 'Friendship' – we want to read about what friendship and your friends mean to you.

Write a poem of no more than 14 lines on this theme and send it to us for a chance to be one of the winning poets announced at the awards ceremony on:

Saturday 11 October 2025, at The Arc, Winchester as part of Winchester Poetry Festival

Competition closing date: Monday 30 June 2025

<https://www.winchesterpoetryfestival.org/young-poets-competition>

First prize in each category:
£50 National Book Token
plus £50 P&G Wells Book Token for your school/education provider to spend on poetry books

Second prize in each category:
£25 National Book Token
plus £25 P&G Wells Book Token for your school/education provider to spend on poetry books

Third prize in each category:
£10 National Book Token
plus £10 P&G Wells Book Token for your school/education provider to spend on poetry books

Additionally, certificates will be awarded to three commended poems and three poems with the best line in each age category.

*Hampshire Young Poets is a partnership between Hampshire Cultural Trust and Winchester Poetry Festival.
Prizes kindly sponsored by P&G Wells and Paris Smith*

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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 YOUTUBE KIDS

AGE RESTRICTION
4+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

As its name suggests, YouTube Kids is a child-friendly version of Google's online video-sharing platform. Its colourful user interface is designed with young people in mind, and it offers a curated, family-friendly experience with features like age-based content settings and parental controls.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT BYPASSING FILTERS

YouTube Kids is less likely to show inappropriate material than YouTube, but there have been reports of the app showing age-inappropriate content to young viewers. One investigation found that YouTube Kids had shown videos that promote skin bleaching, weight loss, drug culture and firearms to children as young as two, as inappropriate content had bypassed the platform's algorithms and human moderators.

18
CENSORED

BE WARY OF ADVERTISING

Like Google's regular YouTube app, YouTube Kids features pervasive advertising before a video plays. While these adverts are designed to be family friendly and are subject to a strict review process, it's worth noting that YouTube Kids collects information around children's viewing to inform targeted content and advertisements.

BUY NOW!

DESIGNED TO BE ADDICTIVE

YouTube Kids is designed to be addictive. The platform's design features, such as the constant stream of new videos and the reward system of points or virtual stickers, can be very engaging and make it difficult for children to switch off. Research has shown that spending too much time using digital services such as YouTube can lead to screen addiction, affecting children's daily routines, studies, and even their social lives.

SETTINGS CAN BE CIRCUMVENTED

YouTube Kids offers built-in parental controls, enabling you to set screen time limits and curate the content children are able to view; however, children are often more tech-savvy than we think. They can easily bypass or tweak these settings if they have access to the associated Google account password, thereby exposing themselves to age-inappropriate and potentially dangerous content.

AI-GENERATED MISINFORMATION

There is also a risk of children accessing videos that contain disinformation and misinformation. A BBC investigation found that some YouTube channels are using artificial intelligence (AI) technology to create misleading 'scientific' videos that are recommended to children as educational content. These videos included conspiracy theories and ideas that lack scientific backing.

DATA COLLECTION RISK

While there are limits on the data that YouTube can collect on children under 13, children can still inadvertently give away sensitive information when using YouTube Kids. The platform collects data on children's viewing habits, content searches and location, which YouTube and third-party advertisers can use.

Advice for Parents & Educators

PARENTAL CONTROLS

YouTube Kids offers several settings that allow you to manage what content children can view. For example, you can choose what level of content you want them to access, such as 'Preschool' or 'Younger'. You can also turn off the search function, so that only those videos approved by the YouTube Kids team themselves will appear on a child's recommendations list.

SET TIME LIMITS

The built-in parental controls let you keep a tab on how long children spend watching videos. You can set a timer that limits screen time and disables the YouTube Kids app once a specified length of time has been reached. It's also worth speaking to children about the dangers of spending too much time on YouTube, to ensure they remain focused on other, more important activities.

CHECK WATCH HISTORY

YouTube Kids has made it easy for you to keep an eye on what the children in your care have been watching on the app. By clicking on the 'Recommended' icon at the top right of the home screen, you can see which videos they've been viewing, and how much of each. If a child watches YouTube Kids while signed into a Google account, you can check their history through Google's 'My Activity' page.

WATCH TOGETHER

It's important that you try to make YouTube Kids a fun and positive experience for children. One way to do this is by introducing watching sessions, where you all gather around and share the most enjoyable videos that you have recently watched. This can be a great way of giving you both new things to talk about and of keeping an eye on what they're watching.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced journalist with more than 10 years of experience covering the technology industry. Previously a senior cybersecurity reporter at TechCrunch, Carly is now a freelance journalist, editor, and copywriter. Her bylines include Forbes, TechRadar, Tes, The INQUIRER, The Metro, Uswitch, and WIRED.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/youtube-kids-2025>



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GENERATIVE AI SAFETY

Generative AI tools – such as ChatGPT – are now commonly used by children. In fact, 3 in 4 pupils in the 2024 Annual Literacy Survey reported using generative AI, up from just 2 in 5 the previous year. While these tools can boost learning and creativity, they also raise concerns around misinformation, privacy and overuse. This guide explores the key risks and how to support safe use.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MISINFORMATION AND ACCURACY



Generative AI can sometimes produce false or misleading content. Children – and even adults – may assume the information is accurate and trustworthy. This can affect learning and understanding of important topics. It's vital to teach children to critically assess all information, even when it comes from AI.

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Because generative AI is trained on vast datasets from across the internet, there is a chance it may occasionally generate harmful or inappropriate content. Without supervision, children could encounter disturbing or unsuitable material. Active monitoring and clear usage boundaries can help reduce this risk.

PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

Some AI tools ask for personal details or store users' interactions. If privacy settings are not correctly configured, children's personal data could be exposed or misused. Teaching good digital hygiene and setting strong privacy controls is essential for protecting children online.

REDUCED CRITICAL THINKING



Relying too heavily on AI-generated responses may reduce children's willingness to think independently. If they consistently use AI to solve problems or complete tasks, it could impact their ability to reason, analyse and form their own ideas. Encouraging thoughtful reflection is key.

DIGITAL DEPENDENCY

Regular use of generative AI can contribute to increased screen time and less real-world interaction. If left unmanaged, it may affect physical activity levels, sleep, and social development. Striking a healthy balance between online and offline activities is important for wellbeing.

UNCLEAR ETHICAL BOUNDARIES

Children may not fully understand the ethical implications of using AI to complete homework or creative tasks. This can lead to unintentional plagiarism or dishonest academic practices. Conversations around responsible use and academic honesty are crucial.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ESTABLISH CLEAR GUIDELINES

Set clear, age-appropriate rules for when and how generative AI can be used. Reinforce these regularly to help children develop a healthy, respectful and informed relationship with the technology.

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL EVALUATION

Help children to question the accuracy of AI-generated information and seek out additional trusted sources. This builds essential digital literacy skills and supports better decision-making.

PROMOTE ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Keep an eye on how the children in your care use AI tools. Check in regularly to ensure they're using them appropriately and be ready to step in if something doesn't feel right.

ENHANCE PRIVACY AWARENESS

Talk to children about the importance of keeping personal information private. Make sure privacy settings are in place and explain how data shared with AI tools could be used.

Meet Our Expert

Brendan O'Keefe, Deputy Headmaster and Director of Digital Strategy at Eaton House Schools, has extensive expertise in digital safety, safeguarding, and generative AI in education. As an author and speaker on digital literacy and online safety for institutions such as The National College, Brendan guides parents and educators in creating safe digital learning environments.



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about NINTENDO SWITCH 2

Nintendo launched its Switch 2 games console in early June 2025 – its first new console in eight years. While it builds on the original's success by remaining compatible with certain existing games, it also adds powerful hardware and new features like GameChat and a USB-C camera. As more children look to upgrade, it's important to understand how this new console might affect their play and safety.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EASIER TO ACCESS MATURE CONTENT

18
CENSORED

Despite Nintendo's reputation for family-friendly titles, mature games like *Cyberpunk 2077* and *Hitman* have been released onto the platform. With the Switch 2's improved performance, developers will be able to port even more mature-rated games. These may appeal to children due to their popularity, but they contain content that is highly unsuitable for young audiences.

IN-APP & GAME STORE PURCHASES

The Nintendo eShop enables purchases with just a few taps. If payment details are saved and PIN protection is disabled, children may unknowingly make costly purchases – including game add-ons, cosmetic items or entire new releases – without parental approval.

UNRESTRICTED ONLINE PLAY IN SOME GAMES

While GameChat is one feature, Switch 2 also connects to the broader Nintendo Switch Online service. Many free-to-play titles like *Fortnite* or *Splatoon 4* allow voice or text chat with strangers unless chat settings are adjusted, meaning children could encounter inappropriate language or unwanted contact.

GAMECHAT & REAL-TIME VOICE COMMUNICATION

GameChat enables live chatting with up to 12 people, even across different games, with optional video and screen-sharing. Though children under 16 are restricted to chatting only with approved friends, the sheer interactivity could raise privacy concerns or create pressure to remain online longer.

CAMERA COMPATIBILITY & PRIVACY CONCERNS

The optional USB-C camera supports video calling and facial overlays in games; however, this also raises the risk of cyberbullying or the unwanted sharing of personal images. The camera can be disabled, removed or covered, and parental controls are essential to manage how and when it is used.

POWERFUL PULL OF FAMILIAR CHARACTERS

Nintendo's mascot, Mario – along with Pikachu, Donkey Kong and others – remains hugely appealing to younger audiences, especially after the success of the recent film, *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* (2023). These beloved icons are central to Nintendo's branding and often feature in merchandising, adverts and in-game promotions, creating strong emotional attachments in children and a sense of urgency to keep up with their peers.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK RATINGS & USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Every Switch and Switch 2 game comes with a PEGI age rating. Before buying one, ensure the content matches your child's age. Use the Nintendo Parental Controls app to monitor gameplay, set screen-time limits and manage friend requests.

REMOVE OR RESTRICT PAYMENT METHODS

Avoid accidental spending by unlinking credit cards from the device. Instead, consider adding funds via prepaid eShop cards or requiring a PIN for purchases. Some banking apps can also be set to approve transactions manually.

REVIEW FRIEND LISTS AND CHAT PERMISSIONS

Child profiles are restricted to chatting with approved friends only, but it's good practice to regularly check their friend list and communication settings. Use the Parental Controls app to switch off voice or video chat if necessary.

ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Teach children how to block, report and capture any behaviour or content that makes them uncomfortable. The console's built-in tools allow them to create screenshots and video clips, which can aid in reporting any issues. Keeping an open dialogue helps children feel supported and safe.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Games Editor of *Daily Star* and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new tools, he's also a parent and understands the importance of online safety. He's also a tech and fitness writer and has been published on sites including *IGN*, *TechRadar*, and plenty more.



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JULY 2025
Newsletter

FACE delivers online support via zoom for parents across the UK
Talks are 90 minutes long, £24 each or FREE with a school membership code
Book Online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk on the PARENTS page



Schools can purchase a
FACE School Annual Membership
which means **ALL** parents and **ALL** staff
get unlimited **FREE** access to **ALL** 16 parent talks

Thursday
31st July
19:00 - 20:00
FREE



Supporting Healthy Screen Use

Screens are here to stay.
Identifying the issues and step by step guide to reduce the negative impact.

Monday
21st July
10:00 - 11:30
£24
recording available



Supporting a Child with ADHD

Challenging the stereotypes and giving practical interventions. Clear explanation of the condition in all its forms and extremely useful advice.

Monday
28th July
10:00 - 11:30
£24
recording available



Facing Defiance

Specific strategy to help parents manage defiant and challenging behaviour, especially aimed at ADHD, ODD and PDA conditions, 5 to 12 years old.

Tuesday
29th July
10:00 - 11:30
£24
recording available



Anxiety Based School Avoidance

Understanding and supporting children who are anxious about school.
Steps you can take to help them back into the classroom.

facefamilyadvice.co.uk

info@facefamilyadvice.co.uk