

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

Welcome back...and welcome to the Summer Term!

I can't go on without first mentioning how short the first half-term is with now only four weeks to go until the next break. It's going to go by in a flash but there are lots of things to fit in and we are very excited about one thing in particular: *The May Fayre on Saturday May 17th*.

Please see the FOS newsletter attached, full of everything you need to know about the school's main event. As always, the greatest challenge is having enough people to keep things running on the day, so if you do feel able to volunteer (even just a little bit of time), please sign up at the school office, or send us an email. Thank you!

This half-term also includes SATs week, and it has been wonderful to see the children in Year 6 taking a positive view of the tests, and really applying themselves to their learning.

As always, if there is anything that you need to talk to me about, please let me know - and if you've ever had one of those, 'If I'd known then what I know now,' moments about school, please take a look at the next item and contribute if you wish.

Best wishes

Mr Geraghty

Life at Otterbourne Church of England Primary School - FAQ

As well as the recently added 'Concern Form', I would like to create a new section on the school website. Just like many of the non-school websites that we all visit from time to time, I feel that there must be things that don't always get said clearly enough or would benefit from being explained in one easy to find place.

It can be anything to do with the school, or those countless initialisms and acronyms that find their way into school life.

Basically, it could be anything that is worth explaining and having available to all families, especially those new to the school. It will take time to build it up, and it will develop over time, but I would like to start now so it is ready for the new school year. So, if you can think back to some of those occasions of, 'I wish I'd known that before', and are happy to send suggestions for this page, please email me at headteacher@otterbourne.hants.sch.uk

Thank you in advance for your support with this.

This year, the Drama Club includes around 80 children from across Key Stage 2. Rehearsals are well underway and the standard of the individual performances is incredibly impressive already...as is the choir! You can now buy tickets for either (or both) performances to enjoy an evening of entertainment in Old Baghdad.



Date(s)
Tue 17 June 25,
Wed 18 June 25



Production Company:
Otterbourne Church of England
Primary School



Ticket Prices:
£5.00 - £7.00

<https://thorndenhall.ticketsolve.com/shows/873670809/events>

OTTERBOURNE C.O.F.E PRIMARY SCHOOL

17 & 18 JUNE



ARE YOU ABLE TO HELP?

Sadly, our incredible outside classroom, 'The OWL' has suffered from the effects of weather and time, and the decking area by the meadow is in need of some attention. It's a cheeky ask but I wondered if there are any parents in the community who would be interested in helping with it - either to rebuild a deck or help create a gravel path. If you think you can help with this, please call or drop in to take a look. - Thank you in advance.

MISSION OF THE MONTH - NOTICING

Throughout May, the children will be focusing on the skill of Noticing. This skill is all about being confident about finding clues and ideas from different sources and using them to improve our own learning. If you can use the language of 'noticing' at home, this would really add to what we are trying to achieve.



WEBSITE 'CONCERN' FORM

We have added a form to the safeguarding page of our website. This is another way of children sharing with us anything that is bothering them, in a safe and confidential way. If your child comes home with concerns we need to be aware of, you might find this an empowering way for them to contact us directly. Thank you.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SEARCH ENGINES

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Search engines are an integral part of everyday life – with Google alone processing around 100,000 searches every second. Search engines use algorithms to predict which results will be useful to us, though this can expose children to inappropriate content, misinformation and even scams. This guide explains the risks associated with search engines and offers practical advice to help safeguard young users online.

MANIPULATED SEARCH RESULTS

Although search engines take site reputation into account, trustworthiness isn't the main factor. Instead, they use algorithms that can be gamed via tactics like search engine optimisation (SEO), which is big business. As a result, users may encounter misleading content and low-quality commercial products that appear more credible than they actually are.

MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

Search engines index billions of web pages – and not all of them are factual or safe. Children might stumble across false information or even deliberate disinformation, especially when searching for trending topics or controversial issues.

ENGINES BEYOND GOOGLE

Even if Google's SafeSearch is enabled, children may use lesser-known search engines that don't have similar protections. Some of these alternatives are less effective at blocking unsavoury content – sometimes by design – making it easier for children to encounter harmful or explicit material. Parental controls may also struggle to detect and block these sites.

FUNNY JOKES

ILLEGAL CONTENT CAN SURFACE

Search engines are designed to retrieve content based on keywords – not to judge whether that content is lawful. As a result, even illegal or harmful material can appear in search results. Children might assume that anything found through search engines must be safe, just because they're so widely used. This misunderstanding can lead to accidental exposure to seriously inappropriate content.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT EXPOSURE

Although parental controls like Google's SafeSearch exist, they aren't foolproof, and search engines may bypass them. Young users may still see inappropriate images or content, especially in image searches, even though they may not be able to click on the results. Some niche search engines lack even basic filtering, posing further risks.

UNRELIABLE AI SUMMARIES

Some search engines now offer AI-generated answers at the top of results. While these can be helpful as webpage summaries, they're not always accurate. There have been instances where AI summaries have presented false or even dangerous information, reinforcing the need for critical thinking.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ACTIVATE PARENTAL CONTROLS

While no parental controls tool is perfect, this software can help reduce the likelihood of inappropriate content appearing in search results. Use tools like Google Family Link to set search restrictions and monitor your child's browsing activity.

QUESTION AI-GENERATED CONTENT

While AI content is generated quickly and often appears legitimate, teach children that, just because an AI summary is well presented, it doesn't mean it's accurate. Encourage them to review the sources behind AI summaries and check the information with reputable sites or fact-checkers.

IDENTIFY AND AVOID ADVERTS

One of the ways search engines generate revenue is by showing adverts to their users. Sponsored search results are labelled, but they're not always easy to spot and can sometimes be malicious. Show your child how to distinguish between paid ads and organic search results – explain why some ads might be misleading or unsafe.

PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY

Encourage children to question the motivation behind online content and develop critical thinking, as not all sites can be trusted. Some deliberately misinform users in order to sell products or promote misinformation. Developing a critical mindset is one of the best defences against these tactics.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.



The National College

Here is a little more information about those red envelopes that came home this week, containing important details about a special event we'll be participating in over the next five weeks. Each child will be learning a dance routine, and we invite you to join us on **Friday, 23rd May** for the final performance, where the children will showcase their collaborative efforts. More details will be shared as the event approaches.

Throughout the coming weeks, the children will practice the routine during class or as part of their PE warm-ups, gradually building up to the final performance. If your child would like to practice at home, they can follow along with the instructional video using this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBXXhuc_CwA.

The performance only video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbSO88QLzs0>

As part of this event, we're aiming to raise funds for a great cause. The children can be sponsored for their participation either on paper or online and details of how to do this are included in the red envelope.

60% of the funds raised will benefit the Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation, while the remaining **40% will support our school**. Every contribution counts and will make a difference!

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you at the performance!

Warm regards,

Zoe Simpson

Personal Development Co-Ordinator



A SCHOOL FUNDRAISING COLLABORATION
DANCE
FOR DIABETES



Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

Whether you are part of a returning school or new to us, welcome!

This term your school have partnered with Hampshire based Charity **Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation** (DRWF) and **FunKidz Dance**, working together on a school fundraising and awareness initiative called **Dance for Diabetes**.

Over the next five weeks, the children will be learning a simple, choreographed dance routine to a popular song, in bitesize sections per week. Teachers will lead this during school hours, in lessons such as PE, so there will be no need to learn the dance yourself, unless you wish to (available on school platforms). Your child will then come together with the whole school and perform this during the last week of this term.

Most schools will be holding a non-school uniform day at the end of term to celebrate the conclusion of the initiative and we are asking all children to attend in something colourful and comfortable that you already own.

How can we join in and fundraise?

Our red enveloped information & fundraising pack will be sent home during the first week of summer term and everything you need will be in this pack. We have made getting involved super easy this year. You will find a QR code / link to create your child's online fundraising page (or a sponsorship form for those wishing to donate cash).

Plus, don't forget to encourage your child to colour in the sponsorship return envelope for an extra chance to win one of 10 x £10 Smyths Toys vouchers.

Does this challenge benefit our school?

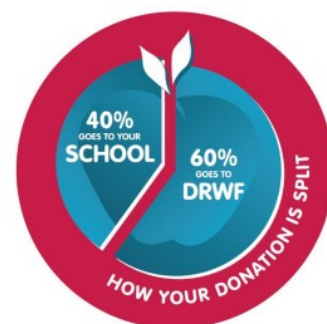
Your donations will be split into two. 60% will be donated to DRWF, whilst 40% will be donated and reinvested back into our school. This means you will be fundraising to support people living with diabetes as well as benefiting your school financially.

I hope your child is as excited about this opportunity as we are.

Tim Green

Head of Community Fundraising

Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation
02392 637808 / fundraising@drwf.org.uk



Registered Charity No: 1070607 - Registered in England
Company No: 03496304
Company Limited by Guarantee

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MAKING FRIENDS ONLINE

In today's digital world, it's increasingly common for children to form friendships with people they've never met in person. While online connections can offer children a sense of belonging, they also carry significant risks. Around 19% of children aged 10 to 15 in England and Wales have chatted online with someone they've never met face to face. This guide offers expert advice for parents and educators on helping children navigate online friendships safely.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONLINE GROOMING THREATS

Predators can use games, chat apps or social media platforms to build relationships with children and gain their trust. This may quickly develop into grooming or exploitation. Between April 2017 and March 2023, UK police recorded nearly 34,000 online grooming offences – an 82% increase in just five years.

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Children may encounter distressing or explicit material while interacting with online contacts – especially via TikTok, Instagram or Snapchat. This is evidenced in a survey by the Children's Commissioner for England, which found that 45% of children aged 8 to 17 had seen content online that made them feel uncomfortable, worried or upset.

PRIVACY AND DATA RISKS

Children and young people often overshare personal details – such as where they live or go to school – without understanding the consequences. In fact, 4.4% of 10 to 15-year-olds in the UK have met up in real life with someone they'd only spoken to online.

COMPROMISED PERSONAL SAFETY

Meeting an online 'friend' in real life risks placing a child in serious danger. From abduction to coercion, the consequences can be devastating. Reports of children being harmed after such meetings are becoming increasingly common in the UK, highlighting the need for safeguarding intervention.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Online harm – such as cyberbullying, grooming or exposure to disturbing content – can lead to long-term emotional issues, including anxiety, depression and PTSD. 'Sextortion' gangs, who threaten to release sexual information about a person unless they pay them money, have reportedly targeted children as young as 11, leaving them traumatised and ashamed.

LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS

Children exposed to harmful online relationships early on may develop unhealthy beliefs about relationships, consent, or self-worth. In a recent case, a 28-year-old posed as a girl on Snapchat to befriend children aged 10 to 16, manipulating them into sexual activity and causing profound emotional distress. One 12-year-old tragically died by suicide, highlighting the long-term psychological harm online friendships with strangers can cause.

26 FRIENDS ONLINE NOW

Advice for Parents & Educators

TEACH SAFE ONLINE HABITS

Help children understand how to use privacy settings, protect their personal information, spot fake profiles, and report anything suspicious or concerning, like pressure tactics. Encourage them to think critically about what they share – and whom they're talking to.

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Let children know they can talk to you about their online life. Avoid reacting with anger or judgement, as this may prevent them from opening up in the future. A child who feels listened to is more likely to disclose problems before they escalate.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTIONS

Support children in building friendships through school, clubs, hobbies and activities in the real world. Strong offline relationships help reduce children's reliance on online platforms for social interaction, and can help them develop resilience and social confidence.

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental control settings on devices, games and apps can help manage screen time, filter out inappropriate content, and monitor activity. While no system is perfect, they provide a valuable layer of protection as children explore digital spaces.

Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with over 30 years' experience in supporting children, families, and adults across education, local authority, and mental health settings – both in the UK (including at Parliamentary level) and internationally.



The National College

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

ZEPETO

AGE RESTRICTION
14+

ZEPETO is a fast-growing app blending social networking with a virtual world experience – attracting around 20 million monthly users, with 15% from Europe. Players create 3D avatars to explore immersive environments, play games and interact with others; however, with minimal safety controls, anonymous chat and monetised content, ZEPETO poses a number of online safety concerns that parents and educators should be aware of.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NO PARENTAL CONTROLS



Although ZEPETO is intended for users aged 14 and up, it lacks built-in parental controls or age verification, instead relying on safety features on the device it's played on. This lack of a parental controls feature raises concerns about whom children may be interacting with on the platform.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT



As a mix between a virtual world and a social media platform, ZEPETO features a wide range of user-generated content. Some areas may reference mature themes, such as TV series aimed at adults, or include inappropriate material created by other users – all of which children may stumble across without warning.

STRANGER DANGER



By default, users can message and interact with anyone else. This open communication creates an environment where predatory individuals can pose as peers to gain trust, potentially leading to grooming, scams, and exploitation, such as blackmail.

Hi there...

CYBERBULLYING RISKS



As with many social platforms, children can be targeted for bullying, harassment or exclusion by both strangers and their peers. Unfiltered chat and avatar-based interaction can allow bullying and other forms of harassment to continue, impacting children's wellbeing and mental health.

ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY



Daily log-in rewards, such as coins, and in-game incentives can encourage compulsive behaviour, with some users feeling pressure to check in constantly to avoid missing out. This can lead to excessive screen time and conflict with schoolwork or offline hobbies or commitments.

SPENDING REAL MONEY



While the game is free to play, ZEPETO includes a store offering virtual clothing and accessories for avatars. These items are bought with 'ZEMS' – a paid currency – and the appeal of exclusive items or branded collaborations can make it easy for children to overspend.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE PRIVACY SETTINGS



Visit the child's profile settings to restrict who can send messages – options include Everyone, Followers Only, or No-one. Encourage children to avoid sharing any personal information on their profile, as this is visible even on private accounts.

CONTROL SPENDING



To prevent accidental purchases, set up purchase approval systems such as Apple's Ask to Buy or Google's Purchase Approvals. Alternatively, consider removing payment methods or using pre-paid cards with set budgets.

LIMIT IN-APP TIME



Use parental controls on Android (Google Family Link) or iOS (Screen Time) to restrict app usage by setting hours or daily limits. Encouraging breaks can help children develop healthier habits and reduce app dependency.

HAVE REGULAR CONVERSATIONS



Talk openly with children about whom they interact with online and the kinds of things they see or experience. Encourage them to speak up if someone makes them uncomfortable or if they come across inappropriate content. Teach them how to recognise red-flag behaviours such as asking for secrets, giving gifts, or requesting personal information.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, The Telegraph, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.

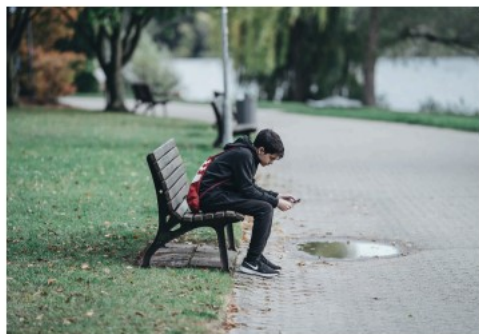


#WakeUpWednesday

The National College



'Adolescence' TV show highlighted the issues



What is INCEL culture?
Isolation and rejection
Lack of positive role models
Over dependence on Smart phones
Screen addiction
Vulnerability to online bullying
Influenced by negative role models
Toxic websites
Violent behaviour & misogyny

Emotional Resilience for our Children Online Talk for Parents

from FACE Family Advice £24

email Jane Keyworth, FACE Lead Facilitator

info@facefamilyadvice.co.uk



Saturday 3rd May 10:00-11:30

Thursday 8th May 19:00-20:30



Talks are recorded and available for 48 hours after each talk

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

Here are some of the important items from previous newsletters.



Spanish4Kids

AND ADULTS!

Did you know Spanish is in the TOP 3 most spoken languages?

Spanish Lunchtime Club – Monday's – Summer Term 2025

We will be continuing to run our Spanish Lunchtime clubs at Otterbourne Primary School on Monday's from 12 noon – 12.30pm (KS2) and 12.30pm – 1pm (KS1)

If you are interested in signing up your child, please click on my booking link <https://spanish-4-kids.classforkids.io>, selecting the relevant school club to secure your child's place.

Alternatively, if you wish to book a TRIAL lesson to give your child a chance to try a Spanish club, please feel free to using the above link!

If you have any questions, please do feel free to get in touch with me direct.

Many thanks,
Pippa Chia

www.spanish4kids.co.uk

spanish4kidshants@gmail.com

07971 213619

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

INSTAGRAM

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

Instagram remains one of the world's most popular social media platforms, especially among teens – with around 70% of 13 to 17-year-olds using it. Owned by Meta, Instagram allows users to share photos and videos, create interactive 'stories', broadcast live, send private messages and follow others. With regular updates and new features, it's essential for parents and educators to stay informed about how children are using the app – and what the risks are.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

Instagram's design encourages prolonged use through endless scrolling of trending content and generating a fear of missing out (FOMO). Children can quickly lose track of time browsing posts from friends, influencers, and strangers, which may disrupt their day-to-day activities.

AI CHATBOT CONCERNS

Meta's AI, which is available on Instagram, allows users to chat with an in-app chatbot. While often helpful, it can blur boundaries for young users, who may ask for or read content that is inappropriate or see it as a real friend or confidant. Privacy issues also arise, as conversations may not be as secure or private as children assume.

RISKS OF GOING LIVE

The livestream feature allows real-time broadcasting to followers – or anyone, if the account is public. This increases the chance of unwanted contact from strangers and pressure to act in ways that gain attention, including engaging in inappropriate behaviour. Viewers may also post offensive or harmful comments during live sessions.

THREADS INTEGRATION

Threads is Instagram's sister app for public, text-based conversations. Posts from Threads appear in users' Instagram feeds and can lead children to view, share, and comment on public conversations with strangers. The content may not always be age-appropriate and can be misleading or false.

SCHEDULED MESSAGING

Instagram's newer ability to schedule direct messages means that children could receive messages late at night or early in the morning. This can disrupt their sleep or keep them preoccupied before the school day even begins.

EXCLUSION AND LOW SELF-WORTH

Feeling left out online can have a real emotional impact. Being left out of photos, receiving fewer likes, being unfollowed, or being ignored in chats and comments can leave children feeling excluded, which often hurts as much as in real life. There is a risk this can lead to reduced self-esteem and a sense of not belonging.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE INSTAGRAM'S SUPERVISION TOOLS

Instagram's built-in Family Centre lets parents monitor how much time their child spends on the app. Specialised 'teen accounts' are private by default and offer controls on who can message them. Make sure that children use their real age when registering their account to ensure they have these protections.

OPEN UP THE CONVERSATION

Talk regularly to the children in your care about what they enjoy on Instagram – and what makes them uncomfortable. Encourage honest chats about filters, body image, and online approval. Reassure them that they don't need to edit their appearance or chase 'likes' to feel valued.

SET BOUNDARIES FOR THREADS AND AI

Parental controls on Instagram also apply to Threads. These allow parents to monitor time spent in the app, check follower lists and adjust exposure to sensitive content. Discuss AI features, too, therefore helping children understand that chatbots aren't real people and should be used with care.

BE MEDIA-SAVVY WITH INFLUENCERS

Parents should follow a few of the influencers their child watches, so they can better understand the content they're seeing. Use this as a springboard to talk about the difference between genuine recommendations and paid promotions – and how online personalities can shape opinions and behaviour.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

ROBLOX



Roblox is one of the most popular video games among children. In 2020, the game's developers claimed that more than half of the USA's children had played it. As a 'sandbox' title, the game lets players create their own gaming experiences with Roblox Studio to build custom levels, which can then be shared online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONLINE PLAY RISKS

Because Roblox connects random players across the world, it can put younger players into an environment with anonymous users who could use the platform for nefarious reasons. For example, some role-play games are used for online dates and mature role play, which could expose youngsters to inappropriate messages in the public chat box.

MATURE CONTENT

Content is difficult to moderate throughout Roblox, due to the number of games available. This is particularly notable on smaller games and experiences, but in summary, some of the games and experiences offered on the platform contain age-inappropriate content that could easily be seen by young players.

IN-GAME SPENDING

The majority of games within Roblox have extensive monetisation options, usually through season passes or microtransactions. Purchases can range in value from a few pennies up to much larger sums of money. While some games offer a lot of content via purchases, others can offer very little for real world money, causing younger players to end up out of pocket.

ANONYMOUS PLAYERS

The anonymity of users can leave players vulnerable to bullying, harassment, and predatory behaviour. Without the right parental controls or monitoring, users can connect with each other via personal messages or friend requests, and it is very difficult to know who's behind a username in this vast online world.

RISK OF ADDICTION

Roblox games can feature rewarding or satisfying mechanics that keep players coming back – or persuade them to stay logged-in for much longer. Like most games, they focus on interactivity, with constant rewards via in-game unlocks and currencies, which can sometimes lead to an addictive need to remain online for long periods of time.

SCAMS

Many of the games on Roblox feature collectible items, pets, or characters. These objects, while digital, are worth a lot of real money on certain online markets. Scammers will attempt to trade with younger users in the hopes of getting rare items that can be sold for real money, manipulating the child into handing them over, usually via misleading information.

Advice for Parents & Educators

MONITOR THE CONTENT

While Roblox does implement plenty of moderation tools and parental controls, it's up to parents and guardians to monitor the types of games a child or impressionable player is experiencing. If a youngster wants to play Roblox, be sure to check out which specific games they want to play within it, and get a good idea of their content.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TOOLS

Use the parental controls within the game itself and teach youngsters how to report and block other players. Knowing the powers within their reach will make Roblox a safer, happier experience. You can set age ranges for who's allowed to contact you, close public chat boxes, block spending, and even make your Roblox profile completely private. All these options are helpful in cutting off bad actors from engaging with children.

PLAY TOGETHER

Consider playing Roblox with the children in your care. There are few more effective ways to see how monetisation works, gauge whether the game could lead to addictive behaviours, or even witness how interaction between players works, than sitting down and trying the game for yourself. This should help you figure out whether it's suitable for particular children.

TEACH ONLINE BEHAVIOURS

Have an open conversation about the risks of online play and how to spend money wisely. By being honest and giving tips on how a younger user can protect themselves, you can empower them to not only take care of themselves, but others too. Any user can be reported to Roblox moderators by other players for behaving inappropriately. With this knowledge, younger players can be aware of what to look for and help prevent it.

Meet Our Expert

Dan Lipscombe is a videogame journalist and author of over 20 books on gaming, including books on Minecraft, Fortnite, Roblox, and more. For 15 years he has been writing about his passion for gaming. When he's not playing games, he's talking about them at GAMINGbible.

