

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

After a few weeks of settling in, it feels good to be able to send you the first newsletter of the year. This is a bit of a 'bumper' edition, with lots of things that we have saved up, including a few photos from across the school. In between 'Bumper Edition' newsletters, which will come out every few weeks, I am also going to go back to a weekly 'Bulletin Edition' to help keep as much of the school communications in one place as we can.

The parent feedback about the newsletter was really lovely and I am glad to hear that so many of you read it regularly, but I also recognise that we use other forms of communication and it can get a bit overwhelming. There will always be things that the class teachers, the office team and I need to send at short notice, but we are going to make a concerted effort to plan things in a more coherent way, with fewer messages and more in the weekly newsletter. It would be good to hear from you, if you feel we have achieved this.

In the meantime, and I'm fully aware I'm repeating a common theme of my messages, but please ensure the children have their wet-weather gear in school...it really isn't very nice out there this week.

Best wishes

Mr Geraghty

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR YEAR 6 PARENTS

The deadline for secondary applications is October 31st!

SNACK TIME

We strive to be a healthy school, so please consider this when sending children in with their break-time snacks and consider options such as fruit over crisps. Thank you.

HARVEST DONATIONS

This year, if you wish to donate to the Harvest collection for the local food bank, please bring your donations in to school from Monday 30th September, so that it can be displayed in St. Matthew's Church from Friday 4th October. Thank you for your kindness and support.

If your children are going to be in church for the Harvest Service on Sunday 6th October and you would like them to be involved in the school's poem, please let me know by emailing the office.

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO IS LOOKING FOR LUNCHTIME WORK?

We are able to offer a role on a casual basis to support the children during lunchtimes each day, and with a particular need for Fridays!

If you, or someone you know, would like more details, please contact the school office.

CYCLING TO SCHOOL?

PLEASE WEAR A HELMET!

We all want our children to travel to and from school in the safest possible way, and we also want to support their independence as they grow up.

Cycling to school, even if that is with an adult close by, is a wonderful way to do this, but it is essential that children are prepared for this. That means, using a bicycle that is well maintained and wearing the appropriate safety equipment.

As a school, we actively encourage children to wear a helmet if cycling to school and I appreciate your support in this. Please come and talk to me if your child is cycling and you need support with getting a helmet.

NEW BIKE SHELTER

You may have noticed Mr Hiscox busily working to have the new school bike shelter up and available as soon as possible. As is so often the case, something has delayed the final build but we are nearly there.

Once completed, this will mean there is secure bike storage beyond the locked gate so I hope this will encourage more, safe, cycling (with children wearing helmets!).

THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF FOS FOR THEIR HARDWORK AND ALL WHO DONATED THIS YEAR. YOU ALL MADE THIS POSSIBLE.

ROUTINES IN SCHOOL?

BUMP HEAD TEXT: Accidents happen, but when an accident includes (or is suspected to include) a bump to the head, we will send a text message home to inform you about it. We will have applied the appropriate first aid and told the class teachers to keep a watchful eye, but the accident wouldn't have been enough to cause undue concern, so if you get a message please don't worry.

We will always call home immediately, should anything more serious occur, and where there is a health and safety concern, we always complete an accident form and ensure we learn from such events.

CAN YOU HELP US?

Occasionally, there are some little things that we need around the school, that might be simply left, unloved, out in the community. If you have any of these at home, and are happy to donate them, we are looking for:

- 2 wooden fence posts and 2m x 1m of any kind of carpet for the Year R children's outside stage.
- An old brown (preferably mahogany effect) A3 picture frame.
- Hay or straw to stuff a school scarecrow.
- We are also collecting old school shoes and PE trainers in school.

Rather than risk being inundated with items, please do contact the school office first, if you can help. Thank you.

THE PUPIL PARLIAMENT

PROMOTING 'PUPIL VOICE' WITHIN THE SCHOOL

For many years, the School Council has been the main way for children to get actively involved in the school and all that it offers. To add to this, over the last few years, we have introduced new groups for children to join such as Eco-Council and Sports Council amongst others. These give children the opportunity to use their passion, or leadership qualities, in a way that is directed into something purposeful, and helping to deliver my aspiration for children to have the opportunity to hold a responsibility if that is something they hope to do.

Last year, we introduced to the children "The Pupil Parliament" and this year, we have seen the successful launch of the 8 councils that form that parliament. Each council is lead by a House Captain and a Representative supported by a school adult and a number of Members from across Key Stage 2. In all, there are over 100 roles being filled by children this year, and their influence will be felt by all children in all key stages throughout the year.

Each half-term, the House Captains and Representatives will come together with me and Mrs Simpson (who is my Personal Development Leader) at a Pupil Parliament meeting where we will discuss what we are all doing and what else might be possible to make the school a richer experience for all children.

I am very excited about what this will achieve and I know that the children are excited about being involved. I would be very interested to hear from you if you have any ideas or can offer an experience or insight related to the councils, which are:

Eco-Council, Sports Council, Community Council, Learning Council, Worship Council,
Children's Council, Wellbeing Council, Diversity Council

FUNDRAISING OUT OF SCHOOL

This really is wonderful...over the summer, Scarlett (supported by her brother Alexander) gave up her time to bake as many cookies as she could, which they then took to sell at the Winchester car boot sale to raise money for the school. She set up her stall, chatted to people about what she was doing (and about the school), even loading some up into a crate and walking around, approaching people

to buy from her. As a result she raised £144 which has been used to support her class with a new Samsung tablet. Both children worked incredibly hard and we are all very proud of them for dedicating their time and effort to supporting the school in this way.



We are also very proud of Alfie and George who made muffins and cookies that they sold to neighbours and friends, raising £60 for Wateraid and Eastleigh Basics Bank. Well done both of you!

NHS

School Age Immunisation Service

Get protected against flu

COMING SOON

The Immunisation team will be coming to school soon to administer the flu nasal spray to the students.

Date Monday 18 November

FLU: 5 REASONS TO GET PROTECTED AGAINST FLU

1. Protect your child - The vaccine will help protect your child against flu and serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia.
2. Protect you, your family and friends - Having the vaccine will help protect more vulnerable friends and family.
3. No injection needed - The nasal spray is painless and easy to have.
4. It's better than having flu - The nasal spray helps protect against flu and has been given to millions worldwide
5. Avoid costs - If your child gets flu, you may have to take time off work or arrange alternative childcare

Scan the QR code

School Code
SH 116304

Friends of Otterbourne School (FOS)

The first annual meeting of the FOS, our incredibly supportive team of parents, was held at The White Horse last week. Thank you to everyone who gave up their time for this and for the fun and fundraising ideas. There is plenty to look forward to and lots more information to come out across the year.

In the meantime, if you would like to be more involved, please speak to one of the FOS team, or contact the school office if you would like us to connect you. And to get things started...



IN NEED OF A NEW HOME...

We have been kindly provided with an Avigo Breeze bike.

If you would like to come in and take a look, please do. Although it looks to be in very good condition, we aren't mechanics, and are not able to guarantee the quality and can not accept and liability for the condition of the bike.

YEAR R PRIORITY TICKETS AVAILABLE!

KS1 QUIZ NIGHT!
FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER 2024
FROM 7:30 IN THE SCHOOL HALL, QUIZ STARTS AT 8

FRIENDS OF OTTERBOURNE SCHOOL INVITE YOU TO

TICKETS £12 PER PERSON
 INCLUDES BOTTLE OF PROSECCO AND 4 BEERS PER TABLE OF 8
 BRING YOUR OWN SNACKS, CASH/CARD BAR

ALL PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS RESOURCES FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Our Future Energy Landscapes
 Join us for an exciting workshop to explore how we can power our community using locally generated renewable energy sources?

Saturday 5th October 10am-12.30pm
Otterbourne Village Hall

See <https://esd.energy/events> for more information, and to book a free place

Supported by **Winchester City Council**, **South Downs National Park Authority**, and **centre for sustainable energy**

DETAILS FOR PURCHASING TICKETS WILL BE OUT ON THE FOS WHATSAPP GROUPS VERY SOON.

WESSEX ROTARY CIO SHOEBOX APPEAL

We have been allocated 25 shoeboxes to fill for the Wessex Rotary Shoebox appeal. Rotary is a worldwide organisation dedicated to helping others throughout the world.

This year, our brand new community, wellbeing and diversity councils will be collaborating on this project and we need your help!

We will sort through donations and fill the boxes in school. They will be delivered to disadvantaged and displaced children throughout the world.

There will be a donation box on the playground each morning, or you can pass to your child's class teacher.

We are kindly requesting donations of the following:

| | |
|---|--|
| AGE 1 - 3 YEARS (Boy or girl) CHOOSE FROM Small soft toy, picture book, hat, gloves, socks, soap, hairbrush, flannel, toothbrush and toothpaste, plus any other suitable small items. | AGE 4 - 7 YEARS (Boy or girl) CHOOSE FROM Pictorial educational book and game, simple jigsaw, ball, lego, crayons and colouring book, hat, gloves, scarf, socks, soap, hairbrush, flannel, toothbrush and toothpaste, toy vehicle, small doll, skipping rope. |
| AGE 8 - 11 YEARS (Boy or girl) CHOOSE FROM Pictorial educational book and game, playing cards, ball, card game, felt tip pens, pencils, pencil case, drawing book, hat, gloves, scarf, socks, wide toothed comb, soap, flannel, toothbrush and toothpaste, sports item, skipping rope, hair accessories. | AGE 12 - 15 YEARS (Boy or girl) CHOOSE FROM Pictorial educational book and game, playing cards, geometry set, pens, pencils and case, pencil sharpener, rubber, writing/drawing book, hat, gloves, scarf, socks, wide toothed comb, soap, flannel, toothbrush and toothpaste, washbag, hair accessories, sports item. |

FINAL DONATIONS BY 14TH OCT



October half term Multi-sport (MS) and Football courses

4 day courses for boys & girls - Years R to 6
Closing day to book your place, the Thursday
before course starts.

(Please circle the No. of days you wish to attend)

| | 4 Days | 3 Days | 2 Days | 1 Day |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Monday 28th October to Thursday 31st October | £76 | £58 | £40 | £22 |
| Otterbourne Primary School (S021 2EQ) - (MS) | 4days | 3days | 2days | 1day |
| Halterworth Primary School-Football Course | 4days | 3days | 2days | 1day |
| Halterworth Primary School (S051 9AD) - (MS) | 4days | 3days | 2days | 1day |

Confirm dates wishing to attend on 1, 2 or 3 day bookings:

Halterworth School (Football course): _____

Otterbourne Primary School (Multi Sports Course): _____

Halterworth School (Multi Sports Course): _____

Children will be grouped in school
year/age appropriate groups;

Equipment & rooms will be cleaned end of each day.

Please provide a Packed lunch & drink each day.



Follow us @R&R Sports



Booking Details



| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| *Child or Children's name/s: | *Age: | *Yr. Group: (Please circle) R; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5 or 6 |
| Address: | Post Code: | |
| School: | *Parent Contact Number: | |
| Email Address: | | |
| *Illness/Allergies or Disabilities: | | |

(R&R will occasionally take pictures of the course & attendees for future marketing/promo use, please circle NO if you do not wish to have them taken of your child/rem: NO)

Payment Details: Place confirmation by text or email from R&R Sports

| Method | Details | Where to send |
|--------------|--|---|
| BACS | Account Name: R&R Sports Courses Acc. No: 699 651 09 Sort Code: 09-01-28 | Ref: HaltFOOT & (Your child surname) Ref: HaltOMS & (Your child surname) |
| CHEQUE | Payable to: R&R Sports Courses Ltd | Please contact for further details via the contact information |
| CASH | In a sealed envelope marked for R&R Sports | School Office Let R&R know to allow them to collect |
| CONTACT INFO | Send via email: mail@randrsportscoaching.co.uk info@randrsportscourses.co.uk ENQUIRIES: Contact Robbie 07515 881 574 | Send via email: mail@randrsportscoaching.co.uk info@randrsportscourses.co.uk |

Please note that once an application has been processed refunds cannot be given. I understand that no liability in respect to loss or damage to personal property or effects (eg: mobile phones, electrical devices or trading cards/stickers) is accepted by the course organisers or their servants whilst the above named person/s are attending the course.

Signed: _____ Parent / Guardian



If you're in need of a professional massage then R&R Sports Massage can provide this for you. To make an appointment or to find out more information then please contact R&R sports.

R&R SPORTS BIRTHDAY PARTIES

From just £70 per hour, we come to you and deliver a party tailored exactly to your requirements.

Please contact R&R sports for more info or to make a booking.

Next Thing education camps

Ofsted Registered

OCTOBER HALF TERM TECH CAMP

IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS ACROSS THE UK

21ST OCT - 1ST NOV

CHILD CARE VOUCHERS ACCEPTED

ROBOTS
INVENTIONS

MINECRAFT + LEGO
ENGINEERING

VR
& TECH FUN

AGES 5-11 | £45 PER DAY
9AM - 3PM DAILY

5 DAYS
for only
£175

www.nextthing.education

OCTOBER HALF TERM 2024 What's on?

MINECRAFT
ENGINEERING

PROGRAM
ROBOTS

SPOOKY FILM
MAKING

LEGO
ENGINEERING

3D
CREATIONS

Different activity theme each day, please check website for your camp activities.

21ST OCT - 25TH OCT LIMITED SPACES
28TH OCT - 1ST NOV LIMITED SPACES

Check out what parents are saying...

"The kids absolutely loved the camp. They could not stop talking about what they did and how much fun they had and begged to go back. Great tech camp!"

★★★★★

SPECIAL OFFER

BOOK 5 DAYS FOR ONLY £175

What to bring to camp

Packed Lunch and Snacks
(NUT-FREE)

Water Bottle

Medication
If Required

Halloween Costume
(Friday Optional)

www.nextthing.education E: info@nextthing.education
T: 01442873150

AROUND THE SCHOOL

INVESTIGATING THE NATURE AROUND OUR SCHOOL IN SQUIRREL CLASS.



MARVELLOUS MATHS IN YEAR 1

AROUND THE VILLAGE, LEARNING ABOUT GIVING DIRECTIONS



It's all about the circus in Year 3/4



AROUND THE SCHOOL

CREATING CAVE ART IN ROBIN CLASS



LEARNING TO WORK IN THE THOUSANDS COLUMN IN YEAR 3/4



MAKING NATURE CROSSES IN RED KITE CLASS



VIRTUAL REALITY: ALL ABOUT BIRDS OF PREY, IN YEAR 5/6



What Parents & Educators Can Learn from the OFCOM MEDIA REPORT 2024

Each year, Ofcom – the UK’s regulatory body for communications – produces an overview of children and parents’ media experiences over the course of the previous year. At the time of writing, the latest of these reports, ‘Children and parents: media use and attitudes 2024’ has just been published, and we’ve plucked out some of its most thought-provoking findings regarding online safety.

ONLINE LIVES

99%
of 8-17s
had regular
access to the
internet

65%
of 13-17s
prefer short videos
to films and TV

34%
experienced
harassment or
bullying online

11-18s
felt more confident
communicating online (71%)
than in person (53%)

87%
of 8-17s
felt pressure to be
popular on social media

SCREEN TIME

By children’s age group, the percentage of parents who felt less able to manage their child’s screentime were ...



POPULAR PLATFORMS

Most used by children ...

Under-12s

Over-12s

YouTube
89%

YouTube
88%

WhatsApp
37%

WhatsApp
82%

TikTok
35%

TikTok
78%

Snapchat
27%

Snapchat
73%

Instagram
22%

Instagram
69%

ONLINE GAMING

68% of children played video games online

Who did these children most commonly play with?

74%
played with
someone they know

32%
played with
strangers

ONLINE SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

93% 8-17s had at least one lesson about online safety

93% of children are aware of at least one thing they can do to stay safe online

91% children found these lessons useful

78% of 8-17s were aware of age restrictions for apps

40% admitted to faking their age to bypass these limits

PARENTAL CONCERNS

The things that most commonly worry parents and carers about their child being online include ...

77% seeing age-inappropriate content

70% being harassed or bullied

68% seeing pro-self-harm content

62% having their data gathered by companies

59% being influenced by extreme views

55% having their reputation damaged

51% being pressured to spend money

DEVICES MOST USED TO GO ONLINE

| Age Group | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
| 3-4s | 67% |
| 5-7s | 77% |
| 8-10s | 73% |
| 11-15s | 95% |
| 15-17s | 97% |

use tablets use tablets use tablets use phones use phones

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO MANAGE CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY

Disagreement is a natural part of human interaction. This can seem particularly true when dealing with the sensitive issues that arise for secondary-aged pupils. This guide brings you 10 top tips which can help prevent conflicts arising or mitigate their impacts when they do.

1 INSPIRE RESPONSIBILITY

The best approaches to conflict resolution are restorative. This means that rather than adults imposing their own solutions on children who have had a disagreement, they should work with them. Allowing them to handle it can feel empowering to young people and will hopefully teach them to manage their own disputes as they move towards adult life.

2 ACTIVELY LISTEN

Remember to give every child the opportunity to voice their opinion, regardless of their age, stage of development, special educational needs, or other individual requirements. This can be done using a variety of different communication methods. For example, some children find it easier to express how they're feeling using pictures and drawings, while some prefer to write their ideas down.

3 BE CURIOUS

Demonstrating how to approach conflicts with a mature and empathetic mindset can set a good example to children, which can prove a useful skill for them later in life. Model this by asking inquisitive-yet-respectful questions about the issue at hand. Really try to understand where all parties are coming from, and share information between them when and where appropriate. This should encourage young people to mirror your behaviour, teaching them to be curious about the other sides of a conflict, and thus being more willing to hear them out.

4 PROMOTE DIFFERENCES

Children and young people may come from a range of different backgrounds and cultures or have protected characteristics which may cause them to see things from various angles. Having a school and community culture which celebrates and embraces diversity in all things – including diversity of opinion – means people are more likely to feel heard and understood.

5 BE SUPPORTIVE

Discussions may be sensitive or, in some cases, even trigger negative emotions. Pupils may have mixed feelings about the issue at hand. They could be nervous or anxious before even coming to the table to talk about it. Try and create a space where all parties feel safe, welcome and comfortable. Allow breaks and time-outs if the conversation gets heated, to prevent anyone from saying something they might later regret.

6 MENTALLY PREPARE

Think of how you can approach the conflict in a calm and regulated manner. Consider taking some extra time to prepare beforehand and finding somewhere quiet to relax. Even if you're not directly involved with the conflict, mediating can be a stressful experience in its own right. Make sure you're hydrated, fed and comfortable, and do the same for the young people involved. These may seem like insignificant factors, but it's important to remember that physical discomfort can trigger dysregulation, which can make it much harder to have a calm, productive conversation.

7 GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT

Make sure you have all the facts, figures and timelines of the situation prior to the discussion. This should be done as objectively as possible with the aim of resolving the ongoing issue. You may want to risk assess any problems that may arise and look for possible solutions during your preparation time.

8 STICK TO THE POINT

Make the reason for, and purpose of, any meetings or communications clear prior to setting them up. Provide an agenda. Act as a neutral chairperson who can keep all parties on track. Make sure everyone has a chance to air their concerns about the issue being discussed and try to avoid talking about unrelated incidents. Close off with some action points, detailing what everyone can do to resolve the conflict.

9 BE SOLUTION FOCUSED

It's often said that the art of diplomacy is about giving others ladders to climb down. This means the main aim of any meeting or correspondence should be finding mutually acceptable and amicable solutions. Parents, carers, teachers and pupils should be aware there may need to be a compromise for the common good – and, most importantly, the good of the children you're supporting.

10 DON'T IGNORE OR AVOID CONFLICT

No one benefits from allowing concerns and grievances to fester, as this can lead to further division and mistrust, and ultimately doesn't help the children involved. Use our tips to open meaningful lines of communication. These should help you find a suitable resolution and minimise the number of conflicts you're faced with mediating overall.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a neurodivergent former SENCO and advisory teacher. She founded her company, Neuroteachers, to improve inclusion for neurodivergent people. She works with nurseries, schools, colleges and businesses providing consultancy, training and mentoring to create belonging and understanding for people with the full range of neurotypes.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/supporting-children-to-manage-conflict-effectively>

X @wake_up_weds

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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 11.09.2024

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about FINAL FANTASY XIV

AGE RESTRICTION
PEGI
16

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

The video game Final Fantasy XIV launched in 2010, and, despite being critically panned, it saw an overhaul that has made it one of the biggest success stories in gaming. Its huge world, epic story and versatile combat system have continued to draw in new players, but there's a lot that trusted adults need to be aware of – not least the cost of paying monthly to play.

ALWAYS ONLINE

Final Fantasy XIV is an MMORPG, which stands for Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game. Much like World of Warcraft, players create a character in a chosen class and level up by completing quests to gain power and items. The game requires a constant internet connection, whether you're playing on PC, Mac, PlayStation or Xbox, and there's no option to play offline.

REGULAR EXPANSIONS

As with similar titles in the genre, players can purchase expansions to unlock additional content for the game. Those without the expansions will be locked out of certain new quests and activities, meaning that young people who play regularly will potentially have the next release earmarked on their calendar, ready to buy it as soon as possible.

IN-GAME PURCHASES & SUBSCRIPTION FEE

Users need to pay £8.99 per month to play Final Fantasy XIV, but there is a free trial. If someone stops paying, they'll lose access to their character (although they'll be able to pick up the payments again and resume where they left off). If a player forgets to cancel their payments, however, those subscription fees will continue rolling on automatically.

FREE TRIAL

Advice for Parents & Educators

MANAGE PLAYTIME

Playtime limits are a great way to counter the addictive qualities of games like Final Fantasy XIV. They allow you discuss why it's still important to enjoy things outside of gaming while still letting a child enjoy playing online with their friends when it makes sense to do so. It's all well and good to have fun with a game, so long as they're able to step away and reconnect with the real world.

MAKE USE OF THE FREE TRIAL

The Final Fantasy XIV free trial is a generous one, with no limits on how long someone can play until their character hits level 70. That's easily dozens of hours for a child to go through the game, complete quests, and see if they enjoy it before purchasing expansions or subscribing to a membership. They may well move on to something else before you need to spend so much as a penny.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor-in-Chief of GGRecon, and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A longtime fan of online games, he's also a parent, and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has previously been published at sites including IGN, TechRadar and plenty more.



PLAY TOGETHER

The free trial makes it extremely easy to jump into Final Fantasy XIV and play alongside a child, provided they're old enough. Not only does that help you ensure that settings are adjusted for their privacy and safety, but it may also end up becoming a bonding experience for you both and any other family members that want to try it out.

REMEMBER, IT'S A PEGI 16

Despite its often-relaxing nature, Final Fantasy XIV carries a PEGI 16 rating for violence and drugs (although the latter is due to a character smoking a pipe on occasion). There's minimal blood, but characters can attack enemies (and other players) with weapons and spells. Take a look at some gameplay videos to see if the content is appropriate for a younger player.

VOICE & TEXT CHAT

Final Fantasy XIV lets players send chat messages in-game or speak to each other over voice chat. On the one hand, that provides plenty of choice for how those enjoying the game can interact with their fellow fans. On the other hand, however, it's easier than in many games to receive unprompted messages from a stranger, with whom you constantly share your play space.

VIOLENCE

While Final Fantasy XIV has a fairly light tone throughout some of its quests, many involve killing enemies and sometimes even wild animals. The violence isn't especially strong – more comparable to a cartoon or anime style – but the act alone may make some children feel uncomfortable, if they're not yet able to separate fictional harm from the real kind.

POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION

As with World of Warcraft, there's an element of addiction to Final Fantasy XIV. The gameplay loop can be quite engrossing, as minutes turn into hours and hours into days while playing alone or with friends. This can potentially lead to missing real-life events, a lack of interest in any activities not related to the game and procrastination around responsibilities like schoolwork.

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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

FAIR PLAY AND FRIENDLY COMPETITION

In school sports, fair play and friendly competition are important for character development. Fair play embodies respect and integrity while good-natured competition balances rivalry with camaraderie. This guide addresses potential challenges – like the pressure to win – and offers practical tips on instilling values of fair play and cultivating a positive sporting environment for young athletes.

1 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Parents, carers and teachers should try to exemplify fair play: demonstrating respect for opponents, coaches and officials. Children frequently learn by observing adult behaviour, so displaying a sense of fair play sets a powerful precedent for them to follow in their own actions on and off the field.

2 EFFORT OVER OUTCOME

Encourage children to focus on giving it their all, rather than basing their entire performance on whether they win or not. This fosters a growth mindset, where the journey and the process of improvement are valued just as much as the end result. It also reduces the pressure to “win at all costs”, which can be a harmful outlook in some situations.

3 SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Establish clear guidelines and expectations for behaviour before, during and after sporting events. Ensuring that children understand what is considered acceptable conduct helps prevent misunderstandings and promotes a positive, respectful atmosphere.

4 HIGHLIGHT COOPERATION

Underline the value of teamwork and cooperation in achieving success. Success isn't just about individual achievements, but about how well the team communicates, encourages each other and works together towards a common goal. A strong focus on cooperation fosters camaraderie and mutual support among players.

5 DISCUSS ACCEPTING DEFEAT

Help children to understand that they can't win every contest – that losing occasionally is a natural part of both sport and life in general. Teaching them to accept defeat gracefully and learn from their mistakes promotes resilience, humility and the ability to bounce back stronger from setbacks. Taking a loss in one's stride is also an admirable trait and can help children and young people garner respect in their future life.

6 ENCOURAGE INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

Promote an environment where all children feel welcome and valued, regardless of their skill level. Prioritise the importance of participation and enjoyment over winning, creating a supportive atmosphere where every child can thrive and develop their abilities without unnecessary pressure.

7 FOSTER CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Teach children how to resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully, both on and off the field. Providing them with strategies for effective communication and problem-solving helps build stronger relationships and enhances their ability to navigate challenges, which can be a huge boon to them throughout their adult lives.

8 TEACH RESPECT

Emphasise to children the importance of respecting everyone involved in the game, regardless of the outcome. Respect for your teammates, opponents, coaches and officials helps to create a positive, inclusive sports environment where everyone can feel valued and appreciated.

9 GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Offer feedback that focuses on areas for improvement rather than unfiltered criticism. Praise what a child has done well and advise on how to improve, rather than simply pointing out shortcomings. Encouraging a growth mindset and highlighting progress helps children to develop confidence, resilience and a desire to continue striving for excellence.

10 CELEBRATE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

Try to avoid solely drawing attention to children's physical performance on the field. Recognise and celebrate acts of sportsmanship, fair play and kindness, too. By spotlighting positive behaviour, you reinforce the importance of such conduct and inspire children to practise this in the future, creating a culture of respect and camaraderie within the sports community that does wonders for morale.

Meet Our Expert

Caroline Holder is a PE consultant based in Staffordshire. Having worked across all age ranges delivering PE in schools, she now trains teachers and works with schools to develop their provision and ensure it achieves maximum impact for pupils. She passionately believes in the impact that PE, sport, and activity can have on children.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/friendly-competition>

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GAMBLING

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Gambling can be defined as betting or risking money or something of value on the outcome of a situation involving chance. Under current regulations, gambling is legal for adults in the UK. Its potential impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities are well documented – emphasising the importance of safeguarding children and young people against these hazards.

MANIPULATIVE ADVERTISING

FREE BET!!

Adverts for online bookmakers and betting exchanges can raise concerns about targeting vulnerable groups, fostering addiction, promoting misleading expectations, impacting mental health, affecting social norms, posing regulatory challenges, influencing minors and other ethical issues. Effective regulation, responsible advertising practices and public education are essential to mitigate these concerns and address the potential harms associated with excessive exposure to manipulative advertisements.

ADDICTIVE FEATURES

All gambling products carry safety concerns, but some can be even riskier and more addictive. The frequency with which people can place bets can encourage them to do so often – with rapid spins and multiple betting options, for example. Betting on sports events, especially with live in-play betting options, can be highly engaging and habit forming. The 24/7 availability of online platforms can also increase the risk of excessive gambling, particularly among young people.

PEER PRESSURE

Exposure to gambling through friends, influencers or social circles can normalise risky behaviour and create unrealistic expectations about the chances of winning. Addressing peer influence requires support services, responsible advertising practices and effective education on the subject to minimise the impact on children and promote healthier choices.

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Gambling can exacerbate mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress – especially if it leads to financial loss. Individuals with existing mental health conditions may use gambling as a coping mechanism – but the cycle of gambling can worsen their symptoms, creating a detrimental impact on overall wellbeing. Integrated support services and treatment options are crucial to address these interconnected challenges effectively.

GATEWAY BEHAVIOURS

Certain features of other products – such as video games that offer in-game purchases – can lead to gambling among young people. These mechanisms can sometimes be designed to exploit psychological vulnerabilities, encouraging repeated spending to acquire virtual items or advantages. Such practices can normalise the associated risks and desensitise young people to putting their or their family's money in danger.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

The most common impacts of online betting come in the form of financial losses and debt. This, in turn, can lead to distorted perceptions of money, deterioration of relationships, social isolation, and poor academic and career outcomes. Regular gambling can even exacerbate other risky behaviour by making it seem less significant – potentially leading to a cascade of health impacts and financial loss.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Sporting events can be a good opening for conversations about gambling, as some sponsorships may reference and even glamourise it. Talk to children about how these promotions make them feel and encourage frequent conversations about any concerns they may have. Adverts, influencers and online platforms may also feature gambling products. As a child grows, it's important to encourage their critical thinking skills to help them avoid being manipulated by this type of marketing.

MONITOR SPENDING

In-game purchases can be appealing to children, allowing them to unlock new features or cosmetic items in a fraction of the time it would take to win them by playing. Talk to children about how they spend money online; an interest in what video games they play can encourage the conversation. Consider setting up restrictions on their devices, requiring their parent or carer's permission before making any purchases. Talk about finances regularly and openly.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Parents and educators should be vigilant for signs of gambling harm among young people. Look for changes in their behaviour such as increased secrecy, unexplained money issues, mood swings or withdrawal from their usual activities. Open conversations about gambling risks and maintain a supportive, non-judgemental environment. Try to familiarise yourself with resources and helplines for assistance and guidance.

GET FURTHER SUPPORT

Support and treatment for young people is available via the Young People's Support Service at GamCare, who can be contacted at 0808 8020 133. A link to their website has also been included in the sources of this guide, along with links to several other support networks. Your GP and local NHS gambling clinic are also available if you require additional advice. Don't hesitate to reach out for help if you're concerned about a child's gambling behaviour or their financial situation.

Meet Our Expert

Ygam's mission is to prevent children and young people from experiencing gaming and gambling harms through awareness raising, education, and research. The charity was established in 2014 as a result of the lived experience of their founders.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/gambling>



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

Emotionally Based School Avoidance is a term used to refer to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. It's often rooted in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. The rate of children who miss school more than 10% of the time in England has more than doubled since before the pandemic: rising from 10.9% in 2018-19, to 22.3% in 2022-23.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors rather than one single cause. This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, for instance, or a change in family dynamics; bullying and friendship difficulties at school; pressure to achieve in schoolwork and exams; or moving from primary school to secondary school.

PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days). If a child or young person is neurodiverse, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include complaining of a tummy ache, headache, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for the development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

CYCLE OF ABSENCE

Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity which is making them anxious – increasing their desire to stay at home.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WORK TOGETHER

If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

MANAGING OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

While there may be times you feel frustrated or angry, try to stay calm; acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss a range of coping strategies together to help them face the discomfort and overwhelming feelings. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk and practice the strategies in less overwhelming situations first.

FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES

Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and limited time on screens can also give children much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetabled routine for the child's school day, if required.

REDUCE STIMULATING ACTIVITIES AT HOME

If a child is avoiding school, reduce their access to more stimulating activities (such as watching television, playing games and spending time with friends) during school hours, where possible. This reduces the potential for the child having rewarding experiences at home, which could be interpreted as a positive aspect of avoiding school.

Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: nationalcollege.com/guides/school-avoidance

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ENERGY DRINKS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Energy drinks are highly caffeinated beverages often consumed for a quick energy boost. However, excessive intake can lead to health risks like increased heart rate and sleep disturbances. Statistics underline these products' popularity among young people – many of whom consume them regularly. Here's our expert's advice on addressing the concerns surrounding energy drink consumption in adolescents.

HIGH CAFFEINE CONTENT



Most energy drinks contain high levels of caffeine: often much more than a typical cup of coffee or fizzy drink. Excessive caffeine consumption can lead to increased heart rate, high blood pressure, anxiety, insomnia, digestive issues and – in extreme cases – even more severe conditions. For children and adolescents, whose bodies are still developing, excessive caffeine intake can be particularly harmful.

INCREASED RISK OF HEART PROBLEMS



The combination of high caffeine levels and the other stimulants found in energy drinks can put extra strain on the cardiovascular system. Potentially, this could lead to irregular heart rhythms, palpitations and increased future risk of heart attack – especially in individuals who have an underlying heart condition.

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH



The significant levels of caffeine and sugar in energy drinks can exacerbate anxiety, nervousness and even – in susceptible individuals – contribute to panic attacks. Additionally, the crash that often follows the initial energy boost can actually make mood swings worse and possibly lead to feelings of depression and irritability.

DISRUPTED SLEEP PATTERNS



Consuming energy drinks, especially during the afternoon or evening, can disrupt normal sleep patterns. The stimulating effects of caffeine can make it difficult for children and young adults to fall asleep – leading to insufficient rest and its associated health risks, including impaired cognitive function, mood disturbances and decreased academic performance.

LINKS TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE



Some research has suggested a correlation between energy drink consumption and higher rates of alcohol and drug use among young adults. Young people may mix energy drinks with alcohol, mistakenly believing that the energy drinks' stimulant effects will counteract the sedative nature of alcohol. This combination, however, can be dangerous and increase the risk of accidents, injuries and alcohol poisoning.

POTENTIAL FOR DEPENDENCY



Frequent consumption of energy drinks can lead to tolerance – meaning that individuals may need to consume increasing amounts to continue achieving the desired effects. This can potentially lead to dependency and addiction, especially in younger individuals who may be more vulnerable to addictive behaviours.

Advice for Parents & Educators

LIMIT CONSUMPTION



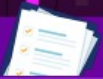
It's wise to educate young people about the potential risks related to energy drinks, emphasising the consequences of excessive caffeine consumption. Encourage healthier alternatives like water, herbal teas or natural fruit juices. You can model healthy behaviours by restricting your own consumption of energy drinks and creating a supportive environment for informed choices.

PROMOTE HEALTHIER HABITS



Schools can help with this issue by including discussions about the possible dangers of energy drink consumption into their health education curriculum. Encourage children and young adults to critically evaluate the marketing messages they see and make informed choices about their health. Teachers could also provide resources and support for children to identify healthier alternatives.

ADVOCATE FOR REGULATION



If this is something you're particularly passionate about, you could work with local health organisations and policymakers to advocate for regulations on energy drink sales to children and young people. Raise awareness among parents, educators and community members about the potential health risks associated with energy drinks and support initiatives promoting healthier options in schools and communities.

SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE



Adults can model healthy behaviours by visibly choosing alternative beverages instead of energy drinks. Maintain open communication with children and young adults about the reasons for limiting energy drink consumption – underlining the importance of balanced nutrition, adequate hydration and sufficient sleep for overall wellbeing and academic success.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Jason O'Rourke, Headteacher of Washingborough Academy, champions food education and sustainability – and his school holds the Soil Association's prestigious Gold Catering Mark. Jason has spoken about food education at Westminster briefings and overseas. A member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food, he co-founded TastEd, a sensory food education charity.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: nationalcollege.com/guides/energy-drinks

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about HELLDIVERS 2



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Within weeks of release, *HELLDIVERS 2* had become one of 2024's biggest gaming success stories. The sequel to a top-down shooter from 2015 has smashed sales expectations, owing to its frantic gameplay and tongue-in-cheek humour. However, the game comes with several risks to younger players, as indicated by its 18+ rating.

PEGI 18 RATING



Due to its intense violence and the presence of in-game purchases, *HELLDIVERS 2* carries a PEGI 18 rating. While players are generally fighting fantastical enemies like giant bugs and robots, their characters can be killed in various gruesome ways, up to and including dismemberment. It's certainly worth considering whether such a game is appropriate for younger players.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

In *HELLDIVERS 2*, players can use real money to buy in-game currency, with which they can unlock cosmetics and new weapons. At the time of writing, all the in-game items can be acquired without spending so much as a penny – but excited young players wanting to keep up with their friends may still feel the temptation to purchase new weapons more quickly, rather than laboriously earning the in-game currency through play.

VOICE CHAT AND MESSAGING

HELLDIVERS 2 is always played online with others, who often use voice chat or in-game texts to coordinate, strategise or just joke around. This does mean that children who play without their friends will be put in contact with strangers. Unfortunately, this represents a roll of the dice, as the game can't control how people treat each other online. However, you can easily report other players for abusive behaviour via the game's 'Social' tab.

FRUSTRATION TRIGGER

The thrill of barely scraping through a dangerous mission in one piece is integral to *HELLDIVERS 2*'s appeal. To accentuate this feeling of achievement, the game includes some very difficult levels that could prove to be too hard for some players – even those who are legitimately old enough to play. Losing streaks can be incredibly annoying, so repeatedly failing in missions could easily provoke frustration or anger in younger players.

LACK OF ACCESS

The game is available on PC and PS5, but not (as yet) on other consoles. Some people will naturally be disappointed they can't get involved and might look for similar alternatives to play on their own console – alternatives which may contain similar levels of violence and gore but lack the same balanced approach to user misconduct and in-game purchases as *HELLDIVERS 2*.

Advice for Parents & Educators

GIVE IT A GO FIRST



HELLDIVERS 2 is a third-person shooter with intentionally humorous elements, but much of its comedy is rooted in satire which may go over the heads of some players. Consider playing the game first yourself – while shooting bugs and robots feels too unrealistic to be upsetting, seeing your character get torn to pieces may be too much for young players.

SET EXPECTATIONS



At the time of writing, *HELLDIVERS 2* costs £34.99. It could turn out to be an expensive and wasteful purchase if a player gets irritated and gives up shortly after receiving the game. If a young person tends to become frustrated easily, it's worth considering whether *HELLDIVERS 2* is really the game for them.

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES



If playing on Xbox – where *HELLDIVERS 2* isn't available – consider something like *Halo: The Master Chief Collection* as an alternative. One of its game modes – Firefight – replicates *HELLDIVERS 2*'s mechanics to some degree. Alternatively, younger players may be better suited to the more light-hearted *Deep Rock Galactic*, which sees them play as fantasy dwarves in space, involving far less gruesome violence.

KEEP AN EYE ON PAYMENTS



Many titles offer in-game purchases, but *HELLDIVERS 2*'s are comparatively cheap. You'll still need to monitor your payment information (or use a prepaid card on the account), in case your child buys the in-game currency in bulk; on the whole, however, the game's selling methods are far less egregious than most similar titles on the market.

MONITOR COMMUNICATION & ADJUST SETTINGS



Thanks to an in-game "Ping" system (allowing players to highlight important details without speaking), communication isn't as integral to *HELLDIVERS 2* as it is in other games. You can turn off the chat options in-game on PC, or on the PS5's own settings, and feel more secure in the knowledge that your child won't be speaking to people they don't know.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GGRcon, and has been working in the games media industry for five years. As well as being an avid long-time gamer, he is also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has been published on sites including IGN, TechRadar and many more.

