EXCALIBUR PRIMARY SCHOOL

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

October has been another busy and rewarding month at Excalibur.

Our school choir represented us brilliantly at the One World Festival at Alsager Civic. Members of the public shared many positive comments about their performance, and Mrs Clark was extremely proud of every pupil. We look forward to hearing the choir at many more events during the year.

During Passport to the World Week, children enjoyed exploring the culture, geography and traditions of Peru, Iceland, Switzerland, Ireland and Greece. It was wonderful to see such curiosity and enthusiasm across school.

We have also welcomed visitors from our local community, including Ian White, Pete Howard, Jonny Newbould and Jen Follett. Their stories and messages have enriched our assembly programme alongside No Outsiders, singing assemblies and our weekly Stars celebration.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Harvest Festival. Your generous donations were distributed within the Alsager community by Pete Howard and will make a real difference to local families.

Finally, we are very proud of Jacob in Year 6, who raised money for school by litter-picking at his local cricket club. This was a thoughtful example of initiative, community spirit and care for the environment.

Year 6 Residential at Robinwood

Year 6 travelled to Robinwood in Wales with Mr Hancock, Mrs Clark, Mrs Bundy and Mr Reid. Pupils embraced activities that developed courage, resilience, teamwork, new skills and confidence, while supporting one another throughout.

Safeguarding Champions

Our newly formed Safeguarding Champions joined Year 6 at Crucial Crew, hosted at Crewe Alexandra FC. Practical activities helped pupils learn how to keep themselves and others safe as they grow.

SPORTS NEWS

Year 5/6 Girls' Football Tournament | 15 October 2026 | Alsager School
The team opened with a 2–1 win against St Gabriel's, with goals from Nelly and Rosie. After facing strong opposition from Rode Heath and Highfields, the players responded with a determined 0–0 draw against Cranberry and finished fifth overall. The girls showed resilience, enthusiasm and outstanding support for one another. Well done to the squad, and thank you to Mr Hancock and Mr Reid.

Class Learning Afternoons

This year, each class will invite families into school to share some of the learning that has taken place. We hope you will be able to join us at 2.30pm on the dates below:
Reception: 20 October | Year 1: 10 November | Year 2: 17 November
Year 3: 24 November | Year 4: 1 December | Year 5: 9 December*
Year 6: 11 December *Please note the revised Year 5 date.

Chancery
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

GOVERNANCE AND OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The Local Governing Board of Excalibur Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

Who are our governors?

Governors are volunteers from the school and wider community who want to make a positive contribution to children's education. Our Local Governing Board has eleven members who are appointed or elected by different groups.

What does the Local Governing Board do?

Governors help to set the strategic direction of the school, hold leaders to account and monitor the school's progress and performance. They support and challenge the headteacher as a "critical friend", while remaining separate from the day-to-day management of the school.

Our parent governors

Parents and carers may raise general governance matters with our parent governors: Nicola Cowell, Rachel Hackney-Gidman and Catherine Greaves. Individual concerns should continue to be raised directly with the class teacher or school office in the first instance.

Become a School Governor

We are seeking volunteers from across our trust community to join the Local Governing Board of Elworth Hall Primary School, Sandbach, one of the schools within our Trust.

Being a governor is an opportunity to:

- Develop strategic leadership and governance skills.
- Gain insight into how schools are led and held accountable.
- Contribute to the education of children across our trust.
- Work alongside experienced educational leaders.
- Enhance your CV and professional development.
- Bring fresh perspectives and ideas to support school improvement.

Full training and ongoing support are provided. No previous governance experience is required. We welcome applications from staff, parents and members of the wider community who are passionate about education and making a difference. Please see the attached poster for full details.

Friends of Excalibur (F.O.E.)

We warmly invite parents and carers to join Friends of Excalibur. Whether you can volunteer occasionally, help at an event or take on a larger role, every contribution is valued. Funds raised are returned to school to provide memorable experiences and opportunities for our children.

A special thank you to Heather Swift, who is training for the Chester Marathon and raising funds for Excalibur Primary School. If you would like to donate, please use the fundraising link included in this newsletter.

To find out more or offer your help, please email clerical@excalibur.cheshire.sch.uk.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

GROUP CHATS

Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert: potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the users sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

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.

National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

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AUTUMN TERM DATES	
DATE	EVENT
November	
2	INSET Day – school closed to children
3	Children return to school
4	Individual and sibling Academy photographs
5	Y5/6 Basketball League
5	FOE Disco further details to follow
10	Year 1 Learning afternoon 2.30pm
12	Y5/6 Basketball League
17	Year 2 Learning afternoon 2.30pm
19	Y5/6 Tag Rugby
24	Year 3 Learning afternoon 2.30pm
26	Y5/6 Tag Rugby
December	
1	Year 4 Learning afternoon 2.30pm
4	Christmas Fair TBC 5pm-7pm
8	Reception and Year 1 trip to Lowry Theatre
9	Year 5 Learning afternoon 2.30pm
9	KS1 Christmas Performance 10.00am and 2pm
10	Reception and Pre School Christmas Nativity 10am
10	KS2 Christmas Performance 2pm
14	Reception and Pre School Christmas Party
15	KS1 Christmas Party
16	KS2 Christmas Party
17	Christmas Dinner and jumper day

Please note: Dates are subject to change