Points to Remember   No. 15   19.12.25

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The Rowan Learning Trust

DATES

January
Mon 5th—First day of Spring Term 1
Fri 16th—FoWs Break the Rules Day (Details to follow)
Mon 26th—Pianist Iyad Sughayer visiting (performance for parents at 2.45)

February
Mon 16th — Fri 20th—Half Term Holiday
Mon 23rd—First day of Spring Term 2

Term Dates Available on School Website
2025 –2026 —Click here
Please ensure holidays are booked outside of term times because we teach new content every single day

2026 Residentials
Y2 & Y3 Tattenhall Residential -Tues 30th June—Wed 1st July
Y4 London Residential - Tues 24th—Wed 25th March
Y6 Min-Y-Don Residential - Mon 6th—Friday 10th July

Parent Carer Meetings
Here are the key dates for each class:
• **Reception & Year 6:** March 4th 2026
• **Years 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5:** June 17th & 18th 2026

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Please remember to book into the club at least 12 hours in advance. You must have sufficient funds on School Spider to use our Breakfast and After School Club. If you are experiencing any issues with payments, please contact us.

We would like to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year.
Thank you for the generous gifts and for all your support throughout the autumn term.
We hope you enjoy a restful and joyful festive break, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new year.

Friends of Whitley School (FoWS)   Lottery

The lottery lets us raise much-needed funds for school to help pay for Mathletics, coaches for trips, furniture etc.

It costs just £8 a month for 2 draws per week. If your number pops up, you win £25. If there was no winner the week before you win If you would like a number and to help support school,

Please contact Hayley Woodward on 07740043151 or

littlhayjay@gmail.com

Lottery Winners

We have lots of spare numbers so please consider supporting this initiative.

06/12/2025	40	Rollover
10/12/2025	38	Rollover
13/12/2025	59	Mike Ruane

Please consider choosing a spare number

Y4 Multiplication Check

It has been wonderful to see that some more of our children are now achieving **25/25** in the Year 4 Multiplication assessments. If your child has not yet reached full marks, please set aside just five minutes each day for them to log in to **TT Rockstars**, and continue to use the resources we sent home this week.

With consistent practice, every child is capable of achieving 25/25. Secure knowledge of the times tables is essential for success in Year 5 and Year 6 mathematics, and it forms an important foundation as the children prepare for High School over the next 24 months.

A fun and engaging platform where children can practise their times tables in a game-like format.

A tool that mirrors the official Year 4 multiplication check format, helping children get familiar with the style and timing of the test.

Autism Support information is available through the following information Padlet.

CWAC Autism Service Family Support Padlet

Child Initiated Lunchtime Book Club

Some of our children in Year 3 have been so inspired by their reading that they have created their very own book club. We were delighted to make the library available to them once a week at lunchtime so they can meet and discuss the books they love.

Their enthusiasm has been wonderful to see, and Mrs Downey will be ordering a set of books for the group so they can enjoy reading the same title together and share their thoughts.

In 2026, we will be embracing the National Year of Reading, and this is already a fantastic start. Over the Christmas break, please make some time to read with your child. If you are able to sign their reading diary to show that you have shared some reading at home, it would be amazing for us to see in January.

Part of the
National Year of Reading 2026

GO ALL IN.

Please encourage any prospective parents to contact us to arrange a visit.

Starting School in 2026?

Looking for a warm, welcoming school with an Outstanding EYFS?

Tel. 01606 822991

Email r.david@whitleyprimary.co.uk

Miss Baines's class have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas crafting morning as a reward for their hard work this term. Each activity was carefully designed to draw upon the skills the children have been developing in Art and Design, while also promoting creativity, enjoyment, and a sense of achievement.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nestling under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games.

'FREE' ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

CHECK THE SPECS

To avoid let-downs, check a game's specs before buying – especially for PC or Mac, where games often need a particular graphics chip or processor to work. Sites like systemrequirementslab.com can scan your computer to see if it will run certain games properly. On consoles, make sure you're buying the right version: some newer Xbox or PlayStation games won't play on older consoles.

MONITOR IN-GAME COMMS

Voice chat with friends is part of the fun of modern gaming – but danger lurks here too. Many titles have open chat systems, meaning that children could speak to strangers or hear adult language and verbal abuse when games get particularly competitive. Using a shared family area (as opposed to alone in bedrooms) for online gaming is a good way to keep an occasional ear on what's being said.

BE WARY OF GIFTS

Titles like Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite have in-game currencies, which can be earned through progress in the game – but can also be bought with real money. A common scam is for a young player to be offered currency if they click a link, visit a certain site or contact another user directly. Warn your child about such offers; they should show you if they're in any doubt over an in-game gift.

APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.

CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the online store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnight rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for Sky or BT Sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they *can* lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teeming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with 'TV', 'stream' or 'sport' in the name.

IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register: entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using *your* details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, Radio 5 Live and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has writes regularly about internet safety issues.

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