

# St Barnabas CE Primary School Newsletter

16/01/2026



'Let your light shine'

Our children have returned after the break with great attitudes and are rising to the challenges presented to them every day. This term we are working hard on improving writing across the school. Writing is a really difficult skill, as there are so many different aspects to think about including text structure, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. This term we are focussing on accuracy, especially remembering to use capital letters, the correct punctuation and then proof read for mistakes. I am so proud of how hard our children have worked to improve these skills and really risen to the challenge. We have also welcomed a lot of visitors into our school already this term and every one of them have commented on the excellent standards of behaviour and enthusiasm for learning demonstrated by all our children.

Have a lovely weekend everyone!

*Miss Hodgkinson*

**HERE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS OUR AMAZING CHILDREN HAVE 'LET THEIR LIGHT SHINE' THIS WEEK IN SCHOOL...**



### Local Authority Attendance Update

The Local Authority will now be issuing fines (fixed term penalty notices) for parents who take children on holidays during term time. The link below will take you to the LA webpage containing information about penalty notices:

[School attendance | warrington.gov.uk](https://www.warrington.gov.uk/school-attendance)

*Our Christian Value for this half term is:*

**'Compassion'**

This week we pray to give thanks for all the people who help us in our lives.

*"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries.  
Without them humanity cannot survive."*

Dalai Lama

**This week's big question is:**

*Can compassion occur between enemies?*



### Meet and Greet

Don't forget, if you have any issues in the morning or at the end of the day, a member of staff will be outside for you! We have staff available every morning and afternoon at each entrance gate – we can help you with any issues you may have, no matter how small. Please come for a chat if you need to.

### Dates for your Diary

19.1.26	Reception & Y6 Class Photos
27 – 28.1.26	Y3 Winter Warmer trip
27.1.26	Y5 Fire Safety Visit
28.1.26	3:15pm Y6 residential parents' meeting
30.1.26	Multi-cultural Afternoon. Parents invited to attend from 3:15pm
2.2.26	3:15 – 6pm Parents' Evening and Starbooks Reading Cafe
3.2.26	3:15 – 6pm Parents' Evening and Starbooks Reading Cafe
6.2.26	8:45am Parent Coffee Morning
9.2.26 - 13.2.26	Children's Mental Health Awareness Week
10.2.26	Safer Internet Day
13.2.26	School closes for half term
23.2.26	School opens

### Multi-Cultural Afternoon

On Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January, all our children will have the opportunity to take part in a multi-cultural afternoon – this will be a celebration of the rich diversity of our school community. All our children will have the opportunity to prepare and try food from around the world, learn about traditions, costumes, songs and dances. Parents are invited to come and join from 3:15pm – please pick your children up from their classes, then come into school via the main entrance to join the celebration.



## Staying Safe Online

This week's message focuses on online safety and particularly digital devices. This week's guide explores how screen use can influence sleep, emotional regulation, physical health and online experiences, offering clear context around why concerns about wellbeing are growing. The guide shares practical, realistic advice for setting boundaries, encouraging open conversations and building digital literacy.

At The National College, our *WakeUpWednesday* guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DIGITAL DEVICES & WELLBEING

Children aged 7 to 14 now spend roughly 3 to 5 hours a day on phones, tablets, consoles, and computers. That much screen time has parents and educators worried – not just about the hours logged, but about online safety and the knock-on effects on mental health. This guide brings together practical, expert-backed strategies so adults can nurture healthier digital habits and help young people thrive both on and offline.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### SLEEP DISRUPTION

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, can interfere with melatonin production and delay sleep onset. Children may struggle to concentrate or regulate emotions due to poor sleep hygiene linked to late-night device use.

### ONLINE PEER PRESSURE

Social media platforms expose children to unrealistic standards and peer validation loops. Likes, comments, and follower counts can influence self-worth and lead to anxiety or risky behaviour to gain approval.

### CYBERBULLYING EXPOSURE

Children may encounter bullying through messaging apps, games, or social media. This can be persistent and anonymous, making it harder to detect. Victims often feel isolated and reluctant to report incidents.

## REDUCED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Time spent on screens often replaces outdoor play and physical activity. This sedentary lifestyle can contribute to obesity, poor posture, and reduced cardiovascular health.

## EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Fast-paced digital content can overstimulate young brains. Children may become irritable, impatient, or struggle with boredom and emotional control when not engaged with screens.

## PRIVACY AND SAFETY RISKS

Children may unknowingly share personal information or interact with strangers online. Without guidance, they may not understand the long-term consequences of digital footprints or unsafe online behaviour.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Establish screen-time limits and device-free zones, e.g. classrooms and dinner tables. Use parental controls and co-create a digital use agreement with children to encourage accountability. Trying a visual schedule or timer app can help children understand and stick to limits.



### ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

Create a safe space for children to talk about their online experiences. Ask open-ended questions like, "What did you enjoy online today?" to build trust and awareness. Try setting aside 10 minutes each day for a digital check-in where children can share what they've seen or done online.



### MODEL HEALTHY HABITS

Children mirror adult behaviour. Demonstrate balanced device use, take regular screen breaks, and prioritise face-to-face interactions to reinforce positive behaviours. Making a habit of putting your phone away during meals and conversations can show that real-life interactions come first.



### PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY

Teach children how to evaluate online content, recognise misinformation, and understand privacy settings. Empower them to think critically and act responsibly in digital spaces. You could use real-life examples from the news or social media to help children practise spotting fake information.



### Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is Associate Vice Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School and works on secondment one day a week for Minds Ahead, which works with schools on improving their mental health provision.



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