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Making the Leap to High School

The transition from primary school to secondary school is a major step in your child's life. Although many children will feel accustomed to the change within the first couple of weeks, the new school transition can be extremely daunting. Even the most confident of children sometimes can feel overwhelmed when starting secondary school and it's normal for the whole family to feel slightly apprehensive when adjusting to the new routine.



What is so different about secondary school?

- Larger school environment
- No personal desks storage space
- Subject specific teachers
- Independent travel
- A greater volume and expectation of work and homework
- Need for greater organisation skills and timekeeping

What are the main transitional difficulties that children face?

- Finding their way around a new, larger environment
- Meeting new children
- Meeting new teachers
- Becoming accustomed to a personal timetable
- Moving from class-to-class
- Keeping belongings on their person throughout the day
- Independently organising work and homework
- Less supervision from teaching staff at break and lunchtimes
- Coping with new, more challenging topics & subjects

OUR TOP TIPS

- Recognise that your child will be anxious and allow them to openly communicate their worries, fears and thoughts with you and other close relatives. Try to help them relax and reassure them that they will become accustomed to their new environment. It is important to not dismiss any worries your child may have – it is important that you listen to their worries and think about what you can do to help emotionally support them.

- It is important to establish a sincere and open relationship with your child's new school. Be honest about your child's needs/requirements and inform the secondary school's SENCO or your child's current primary school if you have any concerns. If you consider your child to be vulnerable, ensure that you have frequent contact with a key member of staff at the secondary school who you can work closely with you to help aid your child.

- Make sure to attend parent induction evenings – it will help you and your child's new teachers get to know one another.

- Make sure that you are familiar with the school's prospectus and policies (including attendance).

- Help your child take responsibility for their belongings and encourage them to use a locker.

- Help your child practice getting to school. Ensure that they are familiarised with walking/ cycling/bus routes, have alternative plans (if they miss for bus, for example) and reach school within plenty of time. Also, do not forget to apply for a bus pass if needed.

- Ensure that all uniform is correct/appropriate (including footwear, hairstyles, jewellery etc.) and contact the secondary school if you have any queries in regards to school uniform codes and cost. It is extremely important that school uniform and supplies are bought in advance to avoid unwanted stress before the big day.

- Encourage and support your child's independence and free thinking – listen to their opinions and freely engage in conversation with them. Not only will they reinforce and share their thoughts about what they are learning in secondary school, it will also help them to develop social skills and help to encourage a strong sense of self.

Checklist

Clothing & Essentials

- ☐ School uniform; shirts/polo shirts, ties, trousers, shorts/skirts, jumpers, blazer, fleece
- ☐ Coat
- ☐ Hat, scarves and gloves
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Comfortable shoes
- ☐ PE Kit; t-shirt, shorts, trainers, socks & gym bag
- ☐ Rucksack/ large bag
- ☐ Lunchbox and bottle
- ☐ Wash-proof fabric markers

School Supplies

- ☐ Plain paper
- ☐ Notebooks
- ☐ Pencil case
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Pencil set
- ☐ Colouring pencils
- ☐ Colouring pens
- ☐ Ruler
- ☐ Rubber
- ☐ Pencil Sharpener
- ☐ Handwriting Pen
- ☐ Scientific Calculator
- ☐ Basic maths set
- ☐ Exercise books
- ☐ Paper clips
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ Post-it Notes
- ☐ Diary
- ☐ Ring binder
- ☐ Plastic wallets
- ☐ USB stick
- ☐ Dictionary
- ☐ Thesaurus

Discover a great read for your child...

The Loudest Whispers

Author: Rhuar Dean & Charlotte Workman

Publisher: The Book Guild Ltd

The Loudest Whispers brings together sixty-four pages of illustrated poems exploring the many wonders and worries of childhood, including early mornings, family walks, the first days of school, dinner-times, losing football matches, the chaos of siblings, staying safe online, words that rhyme with "poo", playground bullying, bedtime reluctance, and plenty of pure, joyful nonsense.

The book aims to encourage and embolden young readers through poems and pictures that are as delicate, mischievous and full of feeling as the children who read them and the adults they will one day become.



Dylan the Dino Boy Saves the Zoo

Author: Andy Day

Illustrator: Alex Patrick

Publisher: Penguin Random House Children's UK

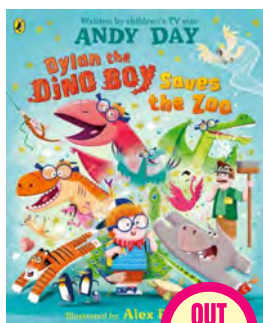
A hilarious new dino-filled adventure written by children's TV star, Andy Day.

Dylan is a pretty ordinary kid. Except for one thing: when he sneezes, he turns into a dinosaur!

He's one of a kind. Or is he . . . ?

When Dylan goes on a school trip to the zoo, his dino-sneezes make him the main attraction - until he hears a BUUUUUURRRRRPPPP and a ROOOOAAAARRR that changes everything. Will Dylan be able to prove he's the best dino kid ever?

With over 30 different dinosaurs to discover in this story, this is a brilliantly funny, heartwarming adventure that shows us how extraROARdinary true friendship can be.



Lily Tripp: Diary of an Accidental Time Traveller

Author: Amelia Tait

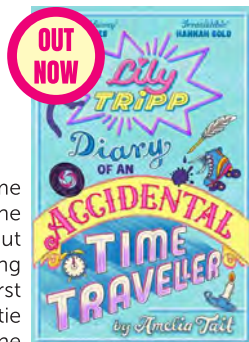
Publisher: Hachette

Children's Group

Meet accidental time traveller Lily Tripp as she bounces throughout history navigating friendship dramas, first love and family. It's Lottie Brooks meets Back to the Future!

Every New Year's Day, Lily Tripp time travels and wakes up in a new century. She's lived in Roman times and the Victorian era and never knows where she'll end up next. Thank goodness her bestie, family and secret crush all time travel with her too...even if they don't know it.

But how will she live in a time before chicken nuggets were invented? Why are her brother's clothes so ridiculous in every era? And how on earth can she cope with being mean girl Georgia's servant?!



Who Said Poo?

Author: Saskia Gwinn

Illustrator: Paul Nicholls

Publisher: Harper-Collins Publishers

A poo-filled animal caper that will have kids laughing their bottoms off!

Someone said POO!!!

But who on earth said it?

Porcupine is on a mission to find out ...

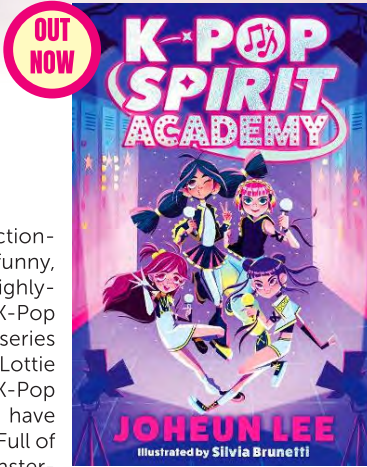
Discover animal poos galore – and the wildly imaginative names that their 'creators' have given them in this hilariously funny picture book.



K-Pop Spirit Academy

Author: Joheun Lee
Illustrator: Silvia Brunetti
Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers

The young action-packed, funny, accessible and highly-illustrated K-Pop chapter book series that fans of Lottie Brooks and K-Pop Demon Hunters have been waiting for! Full of friendship, monster-fighting and being true to yourself.



Star Kitties: Detective Kitty Is on the Case!

Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers

An a-PAW-rable two-colour, highly-illustrated young fiction series from best-selling author and illustrator Laura Ellen Anderson, purr-fect for fans of Isadora Moon.

Meet the STAR KITTIES – the cutest cats ever!

These loveable, magical kitties get up to all sorts of fun adventures and mischief in Whiskery Paw with their best friend Tabitha Flair.

Today it's Tabitha's birthday! She's so excited to spend the day with the Star Kitties ... but when she gets to Whiskery Paw, Queen Moggaline has gone missing and any plans for a birthday party soon change into a search party. Can Tabitha solve the missing moggy mystery AND still have a super special birthday?

With each book illustrated in two colour – this book in eye-catching turquoise and black – the Star Kitties series is just purrfect for readers looking for a first chapter book filled with adventure, friendship and fun.



Pablo and Splash: Viking Voyage

Author: Sheena Dempsey
Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC

Time-travelling penguins Pablo and Splash are on board a Viking longship in this hilarious full-colour graphic novel. Fans of Bunny vs Monkey or InvestiGATORS will love it.

When Pablo and Splash tell their cheeky friend Benji about the Vikings and their impressive longships, Benji is desperate to steal a time machine to go plundering for treasure with those ancient warriors. Our intrepid time-travelling heroes Pablo and Splash must get to Viking-era Ireland in time to warn the monks about the imminent invasion - and make their own mark on history.



Riley Wright Is Always Wrong

Author: Mel Taylor-Bessent
Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers

Riley Wright is starting at Heverton Junior School with one awkward disadvantage: her MAJORLY embarrassing dad is the new head teacher ...!!

New school, new friends (hopefully!). Riley Wright has to figure out how to fit in, pin down a talent for the talent show, look out for her unpredictable new BFF Emmie and face down super mean girl Harper ... As someone who gets a lot of stuff wrong, when will Riley finally get something RIGHT?





THE £1.99 SUBSCRIPTION THAT'S HELPING FAMILIES EAT OUT FOR LESS

The summer holidays are all about making memories, but keeping children entertained for six weeks can be expensive.

Between days out, sports clubs, cinema trips and endless snacks, many parents are looking for simple ways to make their budget stretch a little further.

One area where costs can quickly add up is eating out as a family. That's why Prezzo Italian recently launched its Kids Eat Free Forever subscription, helping families enjoy meals together without worrying quite so much about the bill.

For £1.99 per month, up to three children can enjoy a free three-course meal when an adult purchases a full-priced main course, making family lunches and dinners more affordable throughout the year.

The subscription was designed around real family life. Whether it's a quick meal after a busy day, a treat during the school holidays or a chance to spend time together around the table, the aim is to make family dining easier and more accessible.

Parents can also feel good about what's on the menu. Prezzo Italian's children's menu includes healthier options such as hidden veg Rainbow Pasta, unlimited peas and dishes designed to support growing appetites. Every children's main meal contains at least two portions towards a child's recommended five-a-day. What's more, menus are 3D, come with 3D glasses and you can even scan the menu to play a fun digital game.

Some of the best summer holiday memories aren't the biggest or most expensive days out. Sometimes they're simply the moments spent together around a table, sharing stories, laughter and great food.



DOWNLOAD
Club
PREZZO





HELPING CHILDREN BUILD HEALTHY EATING HABITS THAT LAST A LIFETIME

By Chad Crooks, Food Director at Prezzo Italian

When building our kids menus at Prezzo Italian, we consulted many parents, and the common theme was that mealtimes can sometimes feel like a balancing act. We all want children to enjoy food, try new things and build healthy habits, but we also know that life is busy and children can be picky eaters.

The good news is that healthy eating doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, some of the most effective ways to encourage children to eat well are often the simplest.

Make Vegetables Fun and Familiar

Research shows that children may need to be exposed to a food multiple times before they are willing to try it. Rather than giving up after one refusal, keep offering vegetables alongside familiar favourites and celebrate even the smallest wins.

At Prezzo Italian, we know how important this is, which is why we offer unlimited peas with our children's meals. They're a familiar vegetable that many children enjoy and are packed with nutrients.

Small Changes Can Make a Big Difference

Parents often tell me they struggle to get vegetables into their children's diets. One simple approach is to include vegetables in meals children already love. For example, our hidden veg pasta contains a blend of vegetables incorporated into the pasta itself, which gives a lovely rainbow effect, helping children enjoy extra goodness while eating a dish they recognise and enjoy.

Focus on Balance, Not Perfection

Healthy eating isn't about making every meal perfect. It's about building good habits over time.

A balanced plate might include:

- Starchy carbohydrates such as pasta, rice or potatoes
- Protein such as chicken, fish, beans or cheese
- Fruits and vegetables
- Dairy foods such as yoghurt or milk

It's also important to remember that treats can absolutely be part of a healthy lifestyle when enjoyed in moderation.

Encourage Independence

Children are often more likely to eat foods they've helped choose or prepare. Let them wash vegetables, stir sauces or help build their own pizza toppings.

Giving children ownership over food can help build confidence and curiosity around trying new things. We've recently launched our Pizza Parties, which puts kids in control of preparing their own food.

Making Every Bite Count

As parents, we're all trying to help our children get the nutrients they need to grow, learn and thrive. That's why we've carefully designed our children's menu so that every main meal contains at least two portions of a child's recommended five-a-day, helping families make nutritious choices while still enjoying a meal out together.

Most importantly, remember that healthy eating is a journey, not a destination. Focus on progress, enjoy family mealtimes together and celebrate the small victories along the way.

Those positive food experiences can help shape healthy habits that last a lifetime.

Making The Most Of Open Evenings: Our Top Tips

If you're a parent of a year 5 or 6 pupil, you may be planning to attend secondary school open day/evening.

During open days/evenings, prospective pupils and their families can visit the school to see whether the facilities on offer are suitable. You will be able to visit classrooms and talk to pupils who currently attend the school.

There may also be an opportunity to listen to a talk given by the school's head teacher or relevant head of department.

As this is a very important time (and unfamiliar territory for some parents), it is crucial to know what to expect and to know how to make the most of open events.

Top Tips

Do some background research before you visit a school:

- Ofsted reports are readily available on the school's website and also on local council websites.



- Does the school stipulate that certain academic requirements are necessary for entry?
- Does your child require Special Educational Needs (SEN) support? Each school should have a SEN officer who will arrange help for pupils who require extra support.
- Do you live in the school's catchment area?
- Compare the school's exam results with the national average. How do the grades add up?
- Over-subscribed schools are often extremely busy during open events.
- Bring your child with you. It is important to ask them their thoughts and what they think about the school's atmosphere.
- Talk to the school's pupils. They are the best ambassadors for the school and can provide you a wealth of information and authentic opinion of school life.
- Are there any extra curricular activities on offer? It is important for a school to nurture a wide variety of student interests.
- Listen to the head teacher's speech – it will give you a good feel for the school's approach to learning and atmosphere. If the head teacher offers to answer questions, don't hold back!

Keep in mind that certain individuals may not be able to speak to you directly.

Snapchat

Parent / Carer Advice



What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is one of the image-based social media platforms which is incredibly popular with children. One of the key features of Snapchat is that, by default, messages sent through Snapchat disappear seconds after they are viewed by the recipient. The minimum age to use Snapchat is 13 but it is a popular and widely used platform among children younger than this.

Safety Tips



As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use Snapchat, the importance of not 'oversharing', and any issues they have faced.



The default privacy setting of 'My Friends' prevents children from sharing 'snaps' with users unknown to them. However, children may change this setting and make their posts public. Ensure your child is aware of the importance of maintaining strong privacy settings and check the settings your child has selected.



In the settings options, ensure your child has Snapmap set to 'ghost mode'. This will ensure that nobody can see their current location.



Ask your child if they know how to report or block a user who sends them anything that upsets them. This can be done by going to the friends list, selecting the person creating the issue and then selecting the gear icon.



Remind your child that although Snapchat automatically deletes images once seen, somebody can copy the image and share it with others.

Reasons for concern



Abuse and bullying

As messages disappear shortly after being read, Snapchat has become a popular tool for abuse such as online bullying as abusers feel they will not be held to account for messages posted once they are deleted. This is supported by the fact that if somebody takes a screenshot of a message posted on Snapchat then the person who posted it is informed that this has happened, making it more uncomfortable for people to take evidence of abuse they have suffered or witnessed.



The Snap Map

The Snap Map allows users to see the live location of their friends on a map. Cartoon-style avatars are used to represent people in a move that was clearly designed to be popular with younger users. This feature can result in children sharing their location (including effectively their home address) with individuals.



Addiction-inducing features

Children are naturally more prone to addictive behaviour than adults. As such, the inclusion of features such as 'Snap Streaks' (where two users share pictures with each other on consecutive days) encourages addictive behaviour. Snapchat rewards longer streaks with special emojis. This can result in children increasing their daily usage of the app.



Risk of secondary apps

Snapchat allows users to link to secondary apps that can be used inside Snapchat. A recent concerning example is YOLO which allows users to offer people the opportunity to anonymously ask them questions. Such apps have led to online bullying and hate crime.





Screens have become a feature of everyday life – everywhere we go they encourage us to watch, touch and interact with them, whether it is entertainment, shopping or even just checking in at the doctor's surgery.

The NSPCC knows how important a balanced use of screens can be for families and shared this article about recent expert guidance on children using screens at home.

Whether using computers at school or tablets for homework, our children's lives centre a lot more around screens than they used to.

But away from education, it's important families don't become too reliant on screens when it comes to entertaining or keeping young children occupied. The NSPCC recently welcomed the new Government guidance which advised parents and carers that under-5s should spend no more than an hour a day on screens.

As well as a 60-minute limit, the guidance also advises that when children are using screens families should ensure they avoid fast-paced, social media-style videos and toys and tools that use artificial intelligence.

In addition, it's important to keep bedtimes and mealtimes screen-free, with the suggestion that parents and carers should instead use background music, table games, bedtime stories and art.

The Government is also recommending that parents and carers should watch any screens with their children and avoid letting them use them alone.



There are studies which show that extended exposure to screens at a young age can impact on a child's language development. Studies also show that spending extended periods of time in front of screens can have a negative impact on sleep, physical activity, creative play and interaction with others.

The panel which drew up the new guidance has also recommended that parents and carers should also become a digital role model and think about their own screen use in front of children and also consider screen-free time for all the family.

The NSPCC welcomes this guidance and the recognition from the Government that early years is a critical time for establishing healthy habits for children's physical and social

development around screens and technology.

We know that many families are feeling overwhelmed when navigating today's fast-changing digital environments. This kind of guidance and advice is crucial to give parents and carers the knowledge they need to keep their children safe.

With screen use increasing rapidly for some of our youngest children – and with that their exposure to online harm – it has never been more vital to understand and meet the unique needs of babies and young children.

Online safety is not only an issue for older children and teenagers – early education and support are key to preventing harm and helping parents and carers

protect their children and build a health relationship with technology as they grow.

To help parents and carers the NSPCC has created Techosaurus, a friendly dinosaur who can help families have those tricky conversations with their children about using technology and the internet.

Techosaurus can help your children to form healthy online habits, routines and behaviours from an early age and build basic knowledge and skills related to online safety.

You can find out all about Techosaurus and access resources which will help you guide your children at www.nspcc.org.uk/advice-for-families/techosaurus/

And if you're struggling with finding activities to do with your toddlers then why not look at the NSPCC's Look, Say, Sing, Play which encourages ways to interact with young children that will also aid their early development. Not only does it give you a chance to have fun with your children, you can also make your bond even stronger.

You can sign up for weekly tips which can give you ideas of how to interact with your children whether it's bathtime, bedtime or you're washing up. To find out more about Look, Say, Sing, Play go to www.nspcc.org.uk/advice-for-families/look-say-sing-play

NSPCC

**Adults with concerns
about children can contact
the NSPCC Helpline
on 0808 800 5000 or
email help@nspcc.org.uk**

**Children can contact
Childline on 0800 1111
or go to childline.org.uk**





KEEP SAFE IN HOT SUMMER WEATHER

By Dr Lynn Thomas, Medical
Director, St John Ambulance

First aid and health response charity St John Ambulance explains how you can stay safe in hot weather this summer.

Knowing how to spot the symptoms and treat common heat-related conditions such as heat exhaustion, sunburn and dehydration can also be vital in helping people look after themselves and others, as well as preventing avoidable trips to hospital.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Long periods in the sun can take its toll after a while and can lead to heat exhaustion, which is caused by a loss of salt and water from the body, usually through excessive sweating. It develops slowly and usually happens to people who aren't used to hot, humid weather. If you're at a festival and it's very hot, it's easy to suffer from heat exhaustion.

These are typical symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

1. Headache.
2. Dizziness and confusion.
3. Loss of appetite and feeling sick.
4. Sweating with pale clammy skin.
5. Cramps in the arms, legs and stomach.
6. Fast, weakening pulse and breathing.



Signs and symptoms of Heat Stroke

Fast deterioration in level of response
Behavioural changes (agitation or aggression)

Vomiting
Delirium

Stumbling gait (ataxia)
Flushed or pale skin
Seizures

Hypotension
& cardiac arrhythmia
Urinary or faecal incontinence
Coma
Collapse
Temperature usually greater than 40°C

Treating heat exhaustion:

1. Help them to lie down in a cool place and raise their legs.
2. Give them lots of water to drink or isotonic sports drinks.
3. Check their breathing, pulse and responsiveness.
4. Suggest they get medical advice. Call 999/112 if you are concerned.

The initial first response for this is known as "S3F":

- Shade: get them out of the sun or away from the heat source
- Strip: take all extra layers off the person, ideally down to their underwear
- Spray: spray misted water over the patient or pour cool water over them
- Fan: waft air across them with a fan to promote evaporation

HEAT STROKE

Heatstroke should be suspected when someone becomes unwell with altered behaviour or reduced consciousness in hot conditions, particularly if they are very hot.

- Shade: get them out of the sun or away from the heat source
- Strip: take all extra layers off the person, ideally down to their underwear
- Spray: spray misted water over the patient or pour cool water over them
- Fan: waft air across them with a fan to promote evaporation

Heatstroke can be life threatening. If someone is unconscious, fitting, or getting worse, call 999 immediately. If the patient becomes unresponsive, check their breathing.

SUNBURN

It's important to avoid too much exposure to the sun by covering up with clothing, staying in the shade and applying high factor sunscreen. Most sunburn is mild, but in severe cases the skin can become damaged, turn lobster red and blister. They may also develop heat exhaustion.

Symptoms of sunburn include:

1. Reddened skin.
2. Pain in the area of the burn.
3. There may be blistering.

Treating sunburn:

1. Move them out of the sun, into shade.
2. Cover the skin with light clothing.
3. Give them cold water to sip.
4. Cool the skin with cool water for 10 minutes.
5. Apply aftersun cream or spray, or a perfume-free moisturiser to soothe mild sunburn.
6. If there are blisters, advise that they see a healthcare

professional.

7. Treat any symptoms of heat exhaustion or heatstroke and get medical help.

DEHYDRATION

Dehydration happens when someone loses more fluid than they take in, especially if it's really hot outside, so make sure you're sipping lots of water at regular intervals.

There are four key things to look for:

1. Headaches and light-headedness.
2. Dry mouth, eyes and lips.
3. Passing only small amounts of dark urine.
4. Muscle cramps.

Treating dehydration:

1. Move them out of the sun, into shade.
2. Help them to sit down and give them plenty of water to drink.
3. Giving them an oral rehydration solution to drink will help replace salt and other minerals which they've lost – you can buy this in sachets from any pharmacy.

4. If they have any painful cramps, encourage them to rest, help them stretch and massage their muscles that hurt.
5. Keep checking how they're feeling – if they still feel unwell once they're rehydrated then encourage them to see a healthcare professional straight away.
6. If left untreated, someone with dehydration can develop heat exhaustion, which is more serious, so it's important to make sure they rehydrate themselves as soon as possible.

Keeping well hydrated, staying in the shade during the hottest part of the day, and applying a high factor sunscreen regularly are all straightforward ways to reduce the risk of heat related illness. Wearing a cap or a sunhat in the sunshine is also advisable.

Finally, remember that even if it's not direct sun exposure, your body can still be affected by the heat.

For much more information about heat-related conditions please visit <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice>





Social media is a huge part of modern society for so many people, but the NSPCC has serious concerns about how it puts children in harm's way.

We estimate that over 2.5 million children are accessing social media despite being under the minimum age requirements of the platforms, and we know the number of online crimes against children is significant.

Last year, police recorded 7,263 sexual communication offences with a child, and forces across England and Wales recorded an average of more than 100 child sexual abuse image offences every day in 2024/25 – more than 37,000 in total.

New data from Childline reveals that between April 2025 and March 2026, the NSPCC-run service delivered 2,444 counselling sessions about online child sexual abuse and exploitation, marking a 36% annual increase.

For months now, there has been talk about a potential social media ban for under-16s being implemented by the UK Government, following similar legislation in Australia.

At first glance, you may think this seems like a neat solution, but the NSPCC believes there are better ways to keep children safe online. Our call to the Government on this matter consists of three main asks which we believe would tackle the real problems in a way which goes much further than a simple ban.

Firstly, young people must get a genuinely age-appropriate experience online. Minimum age limits should reflect the safety and risk of harm on a platform. We set age-appropriate limits for films and gaming, and online platforms should be the same.

By enforcing their own age limits, social media companies would protect 2.5 million children from online harms like grooming or abuse. The technology is there, but a choice has been made to prioritise profit over safety and let families deal with the fallout.

Second, platforms must stop using addictive design tools to keep young people scrolling endlessly and leave them feeling out of control. Current features keep teenagers hooked, endlessly scrolling, receiving constant notifications, and include algorithms that push extreme



content. We want to see these design tricks removed and give teens a safer experience.

And third, we need the Government to use the full force of the law to block illegal and harmful content at the source to help prevent it ever reaching young peoples' feeds across the platforms they are using – including AI chatbots, gaming and messaging services. Tech companies have the tools to stop illegal and dangerous material being created, shared or viewed, but they're not using them consistently.

A ban for under-16s would be better than the status quo. The longer we and the Government accept the inaction of tech firms in protecting children on their platforms, the greater the number of young people who will experience harm online – harm which could have devastating

consequences for them and their families.

However, this is the time for our Government to be brave. To stand up for our children and against the tech firms, and to create an online world which is safer for generations to come.

Public consultation on the proposals on the Government's website recently ended, and we are waiting to see the outcome. Whatever the result, it's important that the choice does not boil down to a simple choice of 'ban or no ban' but considers potential solutions and ensures the voices of parents, carers and children across the country are heard.

Our young people are being exposed to addictive and harmful content using platforms which have chosen not to offer a safer environment.

Laws must be strengthened,

regulators must take swift and severe action where platforms put children at risk, and tech companies can no longer be let off the hook for endangering young people.

Ultimately, this process can only be judged on whether it swiftly leads to safer, healthier, age-appropriate online lives for our children.

Yes, a ban would be better than no change at all.

But there is a safer, smarter and bolder approach which would tackle the root causes of online abuse, harm and addiction that is causing so much disruption and damage to children's lives.

NSPCC



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CHILDREN
IN NEED

Moments That Matter: Pudsey Is Hitting The Road This Summer!

Summer holidays are made up of moments that children remember forever. Meeting a favourite character, listening to a great story, winning a prize, sharing lunch with family, or having their face painted for the very first time.

That's why Prezzo Italian is proud to be partnering with BBC Children in Need for Moments That Matter - a summer programme designed to bring families together while raising money for children and young people across the UK.

At the heart of the partnership is Pasta for Pudsey, a simple £1 donation that families can add to their bill when dining at Prezzo Italian. Every £1 helps BBC Children in Need support local projects and charities working with children facing challenges.

But this summer, the partnership is going even further.

Pudsey will be going on Tour and visiting seven Prezzo Italian restaurants across the UK, bringing a series of exciting family events packed with activities, storytelling and memorable experiences.

Families attending can look forward to meeting Pudsey in person, collecting special Pudsey Packs and enjoying a morning designed entirely around family fun.

Each event will feature a live storytelling session of Pudsey and the Thread of Hope, creative activities, face painting, games, prize giveaways and interactive experiences, before families sit down together to enjoy lunch from a dedicated family menu.

The tour has been designed to create unforgettable experiences for children while bringing communities together for a fantastic cause. Every event will also capture family stories, community moments and special memories that can be shared across social media and local communities, helping spread the message even further.

The Pudsey on Tour summer schedule includes visits to the following Prezzo Italian restaurants:

- Kingston
- Glasgow
- Nottingham
- Manchester Media City
- Chelmsford
- Milton Keynes
- Cambridge

BBC Children in Need currently supports more than 1,600 charities and projects across the UK, helping children and young people overcome some of the toughest challenges they face. By buying a Pasta for Pudsey or joining one of the Pudsey on Tour events this summer, families can enjoy moments that matter while helping create brighter futures for children across the country.

Because sometimes the biggest difference starts with the smallest moment.



TikTok

Parent / Carer Advice



What is TikTok?

TikTok is a social media app where users share short video clips of 15 seconds duration. It started out as an app named 'Musically' and was used to share videos of dancing and lip-syncing to music. Much of the content on TikTok still reflects these origins, but popular videos now also include pets, makeup, magic tricks, fashion, art, people reacting to situations, etc. According to OSA research, TikTok is now as widely used by 11-14 year olds as SnapChat and Instagram.



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Safety Tips

-  As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use TikTok and any issues they have encountered.
-  Discuss whether it would be best to change your child's account to private to avoid interactions with non-friends. If you agree to keep the account public you should discuss strategies for coping with negative feedback and for blocking users.
-  Help your child to spring clean their account from time to time by removing videos you agree to be inappropriate.
-  Ensure your child knows not to post videos in their school uniform. Also discuss how recording videos at school might break school rules and what the consequences could be.
-  The TikTok settings allow you to set a time limit for how long each day you want your child to be able to use the app. This can be password protected to ensure they stick to the limit.



Reasons for concern

-  TikTok has a minimum age rating of 13 and anybody under 18 should have parental permission to use the app. However, new users simply enter a date of birth to indicate their age and there are no verification steps. As such, children of any age can create an account by using a false date of birth.
-  New users will be shown a range of video clips the app feels may be of interest. Many of these will quickly expose users to offensive language which will be inappropriate for children.
-  The clothing worn and the type of dancing in some videos could be deemed sexualised and therefore something that might be inappropriate for younger users to be exposed to.
-  The default privacy settings in the app are concerning. Although only friends can send users direct messages, the videos posted by users can be seen by anybody and anybody can like / comment on the videos. New users are also available for anybody to perform a musical duet with. Such default settings can leave children vulnerable to unwanted communication from others.
-  Many children in the UK are posting videos to TikTok where they are wearing their school uniform, making it possible for strangers to identify their location.
-  The nature of videos children are posting to TikTok (singing, dancing, etc) can leave them vulnerable to receiving negative comments which can have an impact on mental health.
-  The company that owns TikTok is facing legal issues and stands accused of illegally collecting data on children (when it was Musically) and the app has been deemed a 'potential security risk by the FBI'.



A World of Opportunity through Adult Education

Improved prospects, learning new skills and enhanced self-confidence are a few of the many benefits experienced by 'mature' students. A survey conducted by the Workers' Educational Association found that adult education can help to benefit local communities and boost confidence in regards to finding employment.

Research has shown that amongst the typical benefits associated with adult education, continuing learning later in life can be extremely advantageous in regards to health. It has been speculated that adult learning can help sharpen cognitive function and delay declines in mental acuity (often associated with ageing).

When it comes to education, there are no age or time restrictions - the old saying 'there is no time like the present' rings true. If you have been contemplating boosting your knowledge to help further your career, gain long-term employment or even for fun, there are a wide range of pathways available across the region offering a selection of courses, designed for a variety of subjects and vocations.

When juggling various components of a hectic lifestyle, it is easy to dismiss the thought of continuing education. An assumption which many make is that adult education courses require a lot of time (which many do not have to spare). Educational institutions recognise this, and there is an ever growing number of adult education programmes specifically designed to cater to busy adults. If you have been previously interested in returning to education but have had other commitments, it may be worthwhile researching what programmes are running in your local area and how often they run.

Whether your goals are personal or professional, adult education can help open the doors to success.

Instagram

Parent / Carer Advice



What is Instagram?

Instagram is a social media platform which focuses on the creation and sharing of images, providing users with a range of filters and special effects popular among younger users.

Despite requiring users to be 13 or older, a study in January 2017 indicated that 43% of 8-11 year olds in Britain are using Instagram.

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Safety Tips



As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use Instagram, the importance of not 'oversharing', and any issues they have faced.



It is safest to change the default privacy settings in your child's account from public to private. If your child is older and you agree for them to have a public account, you should discuss strategies for coping with negative feedback and for blocking users. You should also monitor messages they receive.



Given Instagram's reported impact on young people's mental health, keep an eye out for early warning signs of such issues with your child. Seek professional support or consult online services



such as Shout at the earliest point of concern.



Regularly spring-clean your child's Instagram account with them by removing any posts and images you agree are inappropriate and blocking any concerning contacts. If you have any concerns that somebody might be trying to groom your



child you should immediately contact CEOP.

Reasons for concern



Privacy settings

A key concern regarding children's use of Instagram is the fact that the default privacy setting for accounts is 'public'. As such, unless a child actively alters their privacy settings, all of the pictures they post to Instagram will be available to anybody. This could result in their images being seen by inappropriate individuals and might lead to receiving unwanted communication.



Follower lists

In a world where celebrity success is measured by numbers of social media followers, it is understandable that children might want to grow their own list of followers. A child's non-private account can quickly grow with followers, some of whom might not have entirely innocent motives.



Terms and conditions

Instagram's 5,000-word terms and conditions states that users agree that Instagram can use and sell their sell images for others to use (without paying or further consent). Instagram also retains the right to store, use and share the personal information and direct messages of their users.



Grooming

In 2019 the NSPCC reported that Instagram was involved in more online grooming cases than any other online platform. Where the police recorded the method of communication, Instagram was used in 32% of cases, in contrast to Facebook at 23% and Snapchat at 14%.



Mental health issues

A report by the Royal Society for Public Health found that Instagram rated as the worst social media platform when it comes to its impact on young people's mental health. Being image-centred the RSPH claimed that Instagram (along with Snapchat) appears to be driving feelings of inadequacy and anxiety in young people.

For most families, summer is a time to get together and connect. It's a break from the strenuous term-time routine and time to rest and be creative. However, for some parents, the school holidays and the pressure to live up to the ideal summer break, can lead to stress.

Children's routines and structures are often built around term-time to ensure children's wellbeing with exact mealtimes and bedtime routines to balance rest, homework and extracurricular activities.

During the holidays, children often expect and look forward to changing routines, including relaxed or no screen time limits, bedtime, fun activities and connecting with friends. Parents also want to give their children a well-deserved break from school term routine and support fun holiday activities.

CHALLENGES FOR PARENTS

The perfect holiday myth - the pressure to live up to the ideal Summer break, meeting everyone's expectations and keeping children entertained, can leave parents feeling stressed. Parents can place unrealistic expectations on themselves to create special memories for everyone without taking into account how much time they actually have for everything and how much time is left for them, or other commitments such as work

When routine disappears - challenges can arise when adapting to a holiday routine, as parents may debate whether to maintain similar rules, relax them slightly, or abandon them altogether. This can include decisions around screen time, bedtimes, junk food, sweets, and sleepovers. For most young people, a lack of routine and structure can lead to disrupted sleep and poor diet, resulting in irritability, isolation, and a general decline in mental health.

Financial pressure - alongside the emotional and logistical pressure, there is increased financial strain due to the cost of everything. Days out, activity clubs, and the expectation of doing something memorable can add up quickly. Financial pressure to keep children happy and occupied over the school holidays can be a significant source of anxiety.



Dealing with stress as a parent over the holidays...

EVERYTHING IN GOOD MEASURE – FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Balance and moderation are key to a healthy, sustainable, and fulfilling life. Balance is even more important for children and young people's stability and healthy development, which in turn reduces parental stress. Finding the right balance starts with setting realistic expectations, helping to prevent tensions and avoid disappointment when things don't go exactly to plan.

Planning and sharing responsibility - planning holiday activities in advance helps everyone understand what to expect and what is expected of them in return. Talking openly as a family about plans and priorities can support a smoother, more enjoyable break.

It may also help to modify certain holiday traditions to make them more manageable. Assigning each family member a specific task can ease the pressure, with the understanding that things may be done differently than in previous years. Planning a budget for activities and any gifts in advance can also help manage expectations and reduce financial strain.

Having a flexible approach - agreeing a flexible routine with clear expectations can help strike the right balance between time to rest and time to be active, screen time and off-screen time, quiet time and opportunities for real



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connection

Focusing on what really matters - children are most likely to remember connection, time with loved ones, laughter and a sense of novelty. Many of the most effective mood-boosters are also free, whether that's walking somewhere new, baking together, enjoying a film night with homemade popcorn, creating a scavenger hunt in the garden, or exploring a local park.

The Summerr break can also be an opportunity to model positive values. Encouraging children to contribute, for example, by offering small rewards for additional chores, can help introduce the principle of giving and receiving and reinforce a sense of shared responsibility.

Recognising and preventing parental burnout

- Parenting today occurs in a fast-paced and stimulus-filled world due to the digital environment, social media, and information overload, with potential negative impact on mental wellbeing. The parental role by nature demands continuous compliance, availability, and high-quality care for the children. Luckily, the positive aspects of parenting usually compensate and often outweigh the stressful aspects.

Parental burnout is a result of enduring exposure to chronic parenting stress. It is characterised by prolonged physical and mental exhaustion associated with the parental

role and may be accompanied by emotional detachment from the child, overwhelming exhaustion, and even self-doubt regarding parental abilities as a nurturer.

For working parents, the pressure to meet expectations at home as well as in the workplace can be a constant source of stress. It is essential to recognise the early warning signs.

- Early recognition of stress - identify signs of stress early and note the stressful situation/s. It might be helpful to ask yourself how you feel emotionally and physically, what are your thoughts about it and what do you need to do to deal with the situation?
- Balance resources and demand - remember, parenting is one of the most energy-consuming and one of the most energy-giving activities, it both taxes and replenishes your emotional resources and empties and nourishes you.
- Self-care - incorporate into the family routine regular relaxation or mindfulness exercises
- Make time - for leisure activities to mentally rejuvenate and relax.
- Movement - physical activities release endorphins, helping regulate sleep and anxiety.
- Rest - genuine rest without screen, whether it's half an hour with a book, a bath, or time to catch up with a friend. Protecting small pockets of downtime for yourself is not indulgent, it's necessary.
- Connection - make time for real connection with others. Isolation amplifies stress.
- Lower expectations - holidays are times for family get-togethers, connection, and enjoyment. Releasing the pressure on things to be ideal creates space for enjoying the experience.

Ask for help when needed. If you experience anxiety which feels unmanageable, speaking to a therapist can make a real difference. Cognitive behavioural therapy is the effective evidence-based recommended psychological therapy for common mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression.

Remember, you need to 'put the mask on yourself first' to ensure your own mental and physical well-being in order to support others best.

7 affordable ways to create a child-friendly garden....



As summer approaches and temperatures begin to rise, more children are expected to spend time outdoors, making family gardens an increasingly important space for play and exploration.

Recent figures show that over a third (34%) of school children do not play outdoors on school days, while 20% also miss out on outdoor play at weekends.* Creating a safe, engaging and imaginative outdoor environment can help encourage activity, learning and enjoyment throughout the warmer months.

Below, Emily Green, garden maintenance expert at Howarth Timber, shares 7 child-friendly garden ideas on a budget:

1. CREATE A DIY PLAY AREA

Families do not need to invest in expensive play equipment to create engaging outdoor spaces for children, as simple DIY alternatives offer a cost-effective solution. Repurposing wooden pallets into playhouses or dens, turning old car tyres into swings and using exterior chalkboard paint on fences can all encourage creative outdoor play while keeping costs low.

2. USE SOFT SURFACES FOR SAFETY

Safety remains an important consideration in any family garden, with several affordable options available to create softer play surfaces for children. Grass or artificial turf can provide natural cushioning, while bark chippings, wood mulch and foam play mats can help soften areas around climbing equipment. These low-cost solutions can help reduce the risk of bumps and falls.

3. GROW A KID-FRIENDLY GARDEN

Gardening can also be used as an educational tool, helping children develop a sense of responsibility and patience. Planting easy-to-grow varieties such as strawberries or sunflowers allows them to observe the natural growing process over time. Using colourful pots and encouraging children to decorate their own plant markers can further increase engagement and encourage a sense of ownership in the garden.

4. ADD A SENSORY ZONE

Sensory gardens can be created on a budget by focusing on variety, texture and natural stimulation. Fragrant plants such as lavender and mint, combined with features like wind chimes or simple DIY instruments made from household items, can help spark curiosity and engagement. Incorporating a range of surfaces, including pebbles, grass and sand, can further enhance the sensory experience and create a more interactive and enjoyable outdoor space for children. .

5. INCORPORATE SAFE WATER

Children can enjoy water play without the need for costly installations, using simple and affordable additions to the garden. Options such as a shallow water table or basin, recycled containers for pouring and splashing, or a DIY sprinkler made from a hose and plastic bottle can all provide engaging activities. With appropriate supervision, these budget-friendly ideas can offer hours of outdoor entertainment.



6. UPCYCLE & REUSE MATERIALS

One of the most effective ways to create a child-friendly garden on a budget is to reuse and repurpose existing items. Old furniture can be transformed into outdoor seating or play kitchens, while wooden crates can be stacked for storage or used as simple climbing features. Leftover paint can also be used to refresh fences and brighten the space. Upcycling materials in this way helps reduce costs while adding character to the garden.

7. ADD LIGHTING FOR EVENING USE

Affordable lighting can help extend the use of a family garden into the evening, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Solar-powered string lights, lanterns or LED candles and simple pathway lighting can all improve visibility and enhance safety. These additions also allow children to enjoy outdoor spaces for longer during the warmer months.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Designing a child-friendly garden doesn't have to involve a large financial investment, but instead benefits from creativity, planning and the thoughtful use of available space. With simple, budget-conscious ideas such as DIY play features, sensory planting, upcycled materials and safe, adaptable play areas, families can transform outdoor spaces into environments that encourage learning, imagination and active play.

"From water play and gardening activities to

affordable lighting and repurposed household items, these approaches show that even small changes can have a meaningful impact on how children use and enjoy the garden. Ultimately, with a little imagination and effort, any outdoor space can be developed into a lasting, engaging environment where memories are created and children can explore, play and grow for years to come."

Many thanks to Howarth Timber

<https://www.howarth-timber.co.uk/gardening-landscaping/>

SPLASH SAFELY



at home

Supervise at all times

After use cover it

Fence it, gate it, or grill it

Empy it, turn it

Enjoy Water **Safely** | **Free From** Drowning



The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) has collaborated with the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) to release new data on children who tragically drowned in England between April 2019 and March 2025.

RLSS UK believes no child should drown and has created the biannual Splash Safely at Home campaign to educate parents and carers about water safety for under-fives, as the NCMD's data shows this age group continues to be at high risk for drowning (1).

RLSS UK's advice for parents emphasises constant adult supervision, as a lack of appropriate supervision was highlighted by child death reviews as a factor which, in many cases, could have been changed to prevent drowning.

An alarming 88% of all child drownings occurred in the absence of adult supervision.

The Splash Safely at Home campaign also aims to correct common misconceptions parents may hold.

For example, 24% of surveyed parents falsely believe it is okay to leave a child alone in water if they are wearing armbands or a swim vest(2). Most parents also wrongly assume they would be able to hear their child struggling in water. Children under five drown quickly, quietly, and in as little as two inches of water. Leaving their side even for a moment can be enough to miss a child silently slipping under the water.

Professor Karen Luyt, Director of the NCMD, said: *"Drowning represents a preventable threat to child health, and these new statistics highlight some of the common factors that could be addressed to improve and save children's lives. We hope the findings will be read and used by policymakers, professionals and families alike, as we all have a role to play to reduce deaths by drowning."*

With summer's warmer weather ahead, our campaign focuses on advice for enjoying water safely in the garden.

RLSS UK encourages everyone to follow their advice to stay safe in and around water at home in the garden:

SUPERVISE AT ALL TIMES

Keep young children within arm's reach when in or around water at home, even if they are wearing swimming aids such as armbands. Don't allow older siblings to supervise in the water. Avoid distractions such as using a mobile phone, because drowning can happen silently and in a matter of minutes.

AFTER USE, COVER IT

Replace hot tub and swimming pool covers immediately after use.

FENCE IT, GATE IT, OR GRILL IT

Keep ponds and pools out of bounds by locking back doors and garden gates and fencing off water areas with sturdy fencing at least 4ft high. Fit a strong mesh or grill that can support a child's weight or fill in ponds until your child is older.

EMPTY IT, TURN IT

Always empty paddling pools immediately after use, empty and turn over containers holding rainwater, and turn off hosepipes at the tap. Visit RLSS UK's website now to access free water safety resources. Share these tools with your children and community and help create a safer summer for everyone.



Dentists Warn Some Bedtime Foods Could Quietly Rot Children's Teeth

Dentists have revealed three common foods they would avoid giving children before bed - warning they could quietly increase the risk of tooth decay overnight.

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While many parents focus on brushing routines, experts say late-night snacks can play a major role in oral health, particularly because saliva production naturally drops during sleep. This means sugars and acids can remain on the teeth for longer.

Dr Andrej Bozic, oral surgeon at Denum, said some seemingly harmless bedtime foods can be especially problematic.

"Night-time is one of the worst times for teeth to be exposed to sugars because the mouth becomes much drier during sleep," he said. "That creates an environment where bacteria can thrive more easily."

DRIED FRUIT

Although often seen as a healthy snack, dried fruit is one of the biggest concerns for dentists because it is sticky and high in concentrated sugar.

Dr Bozic said: *"Foods like raisins or dried mango tend to cling to the teeth for long periods. That prolonged exposure to sugar significantly increases the risk of decay, particularly overnight."*

He said dried fruit can sometimes be more damaging than parents realise because it is viewed as a healthy option.

CHOCOLATE SPREAD ON TOAST

Chocolate spreads are another bedtime food dentists would avoid due to their high sugar content and sticky texture.

"Sweet spreads can coat the teeth very easily, especially if children go to bed shortly afterwards," Dr Bozic said. "If sugars remain on the enamel overnight, it gives bacteria much more time to produce acid."

He added that frequent exposure to sugary foods before bed is one of the biggest drivers of childhood tooth decay.

FRUIT JUICE OR FLAVOURED MILK

Many parents view juice or flavoured milk as harmless evening drinks, but dentists say they can expose teeth to both sugar and acid at the worst possible time.

"Even drinks that seem healthy can contain significant amounts of sugar," Dr Bozic said. "Fruit juices are also acidic, which can weaken enamel over time."

He explained that sipping drinks slowly before bed can make the problem even worse by prolonging exposure.

WHAT DENTISTS RECOMMEND INSTEAD

Experts say the best bedtime drinks for children are plain water or milk.

"If children are hungry before bed, it's generally better to choose foods lower in sugar and less likely to stick to the teeth," Dr Bozic said.

He added that brushing teeth should always be the final step before sleeping.

"One of the most important habits is making sure nothing sugary is eaten or drunk after brushing," he said. "That simple routine can make a huge difference to long-term oral health."

WHY IT MATTERS

Tooth decay remains one of the most common reasons young children are admitted to hospital in the UK, despite being largely preventable.

"Small daily habits have a huge impact over time," Dr Bozic said. "Being aware of hidden sugars and bedtime snacking can help parents protect their children's teeth much more effectively."

Many thanks to Dentum



THANKS FOR READING

**NEXT EDITION
OUT IN OCTOBER**

Hope you all have a fantastic summer!

