Whitchurch Highlights

Friday 23rd Oct 2026
Issue 1

Message from the Headteacher



Dear Whitchurch Families,

As we reach the end of a wonderfully busy and fulfilling start to the school year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on everything our children have experienced over the past few weeks.

It has been a half term filled with rich learning opportunities, exciting trips and memorable events across all year groups. Our pupils have represented Whitchurch exceptionally well on their visits out of school, including Year 5 exploring Buckingham Palace, Year 6 discovering World War II at the RAF Museum, Year 3 visiting Green Park and Year 4 taking part in a mock trial at the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

In school, the whole school took inspiration from Alex Wharton - award-winning poet and former Children's Laureate Wales - whose engaging assemblies and poetry workshops brought reading to life across the school. Thank you to all our families who contributed to our National Poetry Day fundraising - your generous £1 voluntary donations directly support our efforts to purchase new books and bring inspiring authors to Whitchurch.

Thank you to everyone who has attended our recent parental workshops and participated in our 'Stay and Read' sessions - it is fantastic to see so many of you engaging in these morning sessions, your partnership is crucial in your children's reading development and learning journeys. We look forward to welcoming you to our English workshops coming up in November (details on the next page).

We capped off this half term in festive style with our Friends of Whitchurch Halloween Disco and non-uniform day. It was lovely to see the children enjoy themselves while raising a total of **£1906** for our school community!



Autumn 2 begins Monday 2nd November - gates open at 8.40am

Looking ahead to Autumn 2, we have an exciting festive season planned! We are already anticipating our upcoming winter concert, traditional carol concerts and Christmas Fair - further details and dates will be shared shortly after the break.

I wish all of our families and staff a safe, relaxing and enjoyable half term break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back refreshed for the second half of the Autumn term.

Ms Rachel Inniss
Headteacher



Coffee Mornings / English Workshops

Tuesday 17th November (EYFS/KS1)
Friday 20th November (KS2)

We are excited to invite parents and carers to our upcoming Coffee Mornings, where we will share practical tips and strategies to help you support your child's phonics, reading and writing at home. These will be interactive sessions, giving you the opportunity to watch our teachers model activities and take away simple ideas to use with your child at home.

Tuesday 17th November, 9am-10am: Nursery to Year 2 parents/carers.
Focus on phonics, handwriting, early reading and comprehension.

Friday 20th November, 9am-10am: Year 3 to Year 6 parents/carers.
Focus on reading comprehension, vocabulary and writing.

Ms Inniss will also be sharing the school's key improvement priorities for this academic year, providing an insight into our areas of focus and development. We look forward to welcoming you and working together to support your child's learning.

English Highlights



National Poetry Day - ‘Wonder’

Whitchurch celebrated National Poetry Day at the beginning of October by immersing ourselves in all things poetry and exploring the theme of ‘Wonder’. Across the school we learned poems, wrote our own poetry and had opportunities to perform - whether with a partner, to our class or to children in other year groups.

We were also incredibly lucky to welcome poet Alex Wharton to school. Alex led a fantastic whole-school assembly, followed by workshops with some classes. He brought poetry to life through music, rhythm, rap and plenty of audience participation. From playing the piano and harmonica to getting us laughing, performing and joining in with his poems, his energy was infectious! During the workshops, we were able to draw in response to Alex’s poetry, exploring how words can inspire creativity in different ways.



Our Wonder Boxes (which we made in the run up to the day) were fantastic - helping to spark an all-important sense of wonder, curiosity and imagination that sits so beautifully alongslide poetry. Days like this are a wonderful opportunity for us to experience reading, writing and spoken language in exciting and memorable ways, while developing confidence, creativity and love of language!

Miss Francis-Dottin







Music Highlights



Year 3 and 4 Music Workshop

Year 3 and Year 4 enjoyed a very special music workshop led by professional musicians Emily Andrews and Francisco Correa, supported by the International Guitar Foundation.

Through flute, piccolo, panpipes, voice and guitar, we explored the fascinating world of birds through music. We listened to beautiful live performances inspired by birdsong and flight, explored high and low sounds and trills, and joined in with chants, movement and rhythm.

The workshop took us on a musical journey through classical, folk and Latin American music, finishing with plenty of energy and fun! It was a wonderful opportunity to experience professional musicians performing live and to discover music in such an engaging and creative way.

Mrs Leutfeld, Director of Music







Music Update



Farewell from Mrs Leutfeld

As I prepare to leave Whitchurch at the end of the Autumn term, I wanted to write to you to say what a privilege it has been to lead the school's Music Department and help shape your children's musical education. Being entrusted with the musical development of so many children over the past five and a half years has been a great responsibility and one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.

Through the collective dedication of our pupils, staff and families, we have achieved a great deal. Our successful Ofsted inspection, which recognised the ambition of the music programme, our achievement of Music Mark status, high musical standards and a culture of high expectations are all a testament to our shared commitment to a rich and holistic education. It has been a privilege to work alongside so many committed individuals to make this vision a reality. From our weekly whole-class music lessons and lively singing assemblies to the inspiring debut of our Rock Band, Wind Band and Percussion Ensemble, whether in rehearsals, concerts or external festivals, watching the children develop their musical skills, grow in confidence and take pride in performing has been very rewarding. Together, we have shared so many memorable moments: packed Winter and Summer Ensembles Concerts, Soloists' Concerts, festive Carol Concerts, inspiring music workshops, as well as Harrow Music Service festivals and Choral Days at local independent schools.

Most of all, I want to thank you - the parents and carers - for your unwavering trust and for encouraging your children's musical journey throughout my time here. Your role in the progress we've made cannot be overstated. I would also like to thank the school staff and, of course, the dedicated Harrow Music Service teachers who made our vibrant music programme possible.

Music Update

Many congratulations to our new music captains for this year: Jasmine and Siya (6HH), Elissabeth (5RC) and Aarna (5MD)

Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery

Although I am returning to the independent sector next term to take up a new role as Director of Music, I leave Whitchurch with fond memories and will always look back on my time here with great affection. Above all, I will remember the children who have made my efforts so worthwhile. Whitchurch is a truly special place and the musical opportunities it provides are exceptional. Your children are incredibly fortunate to be part of such an inspiring and creative environment.

I wish you and your families every happiness for the future and I hope the children will continue to embrace the beauty and value of music-making to a high standard, make the most of every opportunity and enjoy the lasting benefits and memories that come from making music together.

Mrs Leutfeld
Director of Music



OPAL Highlights



Our Lunchtimes Are Getting Better and Better!

Our OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) journey is going from strength to strength - and we absolutely love lunchtime play! We would like to say an enormous thank you to Fedor, Joshua, Eli and Katie's Dad for giving up his time to build us a fantastic HUGE sandpit. A massive thank you also goes to FoW for generously funding this wonderful addition to our play provision. The sandpit is already bringing so much joy, creativity and excitement to our lunchtimes. We are incredibly grateful for the support of our wonderful school community.

Our OPAL lunchtime play offer continues to grow, and we can now enjoy:

- Sand play - digging, creating and exploring
- Den building - using imagination and teamwork
- Loose parts play - building, designing and inventing
- Mud kitchens - cooking up wonderful imaginary creations
- Music - dancing and performances
- Dressing up - becoming whoever we want to be!
- Small world play - bringing little worlds to life
- Scooters - whizzing around and keeping active
- Sitting boards - having fun moving and playing together



It has been wonderful to enjoy greater freedom, using our imaginations, working together, making new friendships and discovering exciting ways to play. Our lunchtimes are full of creativity, laughter, adventure and happy children - and that's what OPAL is all about! Thank you to everyone who is helping us make our playtimes the very best they can be.

Together, we're making lunchtime play amazing!

Miss Ward

General Highlights

Follow us on Instagram: WhitchurchPS

Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery

Our Rights Respecting School Journey

This year we are working towards gaining the Silver Rights Respecting School Award. We are focusing on the following articles in particular:

Article 2 - No discrimination
Article 3 - Best interests of the child
Article 6 - Life, survival and development
Article 12 - Respect for children's views
Article 28 - Access to education
Article 31 - Rest, play, cultures and child



Our Rights Respecting team this year are: Eliza (3AM), Jayden (4MS), Bela (4MS), Avyaan (5RC), Shanaya (5RC), Lavinia (5ET), Aanya (6ND) and Tia (6HH). We look forward to continuing our journey together!

Ms Liu, Rights Respecting School leader

Stay and Read Sessions

It has been lovely to welcome parents and carers into school for our Stay and Read sessions. These special moments provide a wonderful opportunity to enjoy stories together, develop a love of reading and support children's confidence and language skills. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to join us and make reading such an enjoyable part of our school day!



Enrichment Highlights

Follow us on Instagram: WhitchurchPS

Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery

Year 3 visit to Green Park

Year 3 had a fantastic day at Green Park and St James's Park, exploring human and physical features for Geography. We drew our route on a map, spotted different trees, observed the lake and discoverd the wildlife around us. A real highlight was watching the pelicans and other wildlife in the park, as well as seeing the amazing Buckingham Palace and other London landmarks.







Year 5 visit to Buckingham Palace

Year 5 visited Buckingham Palace to discover the rich history of the British monarchy. We explored the State Rooms, discovered how the grand Ballroom is set up for lavish state banquets and viewed artwork in the Picture Gallery. We were also fascinated to spot the secret doors used by the Royal Family and learn how the palace's grand architecture has evolved over hundreds of years.







Enrichment Highlights

Follow us on Instagram: WhitchurchPS

Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery

Year 6 visit to the RAF Museum

Year 6 enjoyed an educational visit to the RAF Museum in Hendon to enrich our learning about World War II in History. During the immersive Anderson Experience workshop we dressed in Royal Air Force uniforms and learnt more about life during wartime and the role of the RAF.

We also discovered the history of aviation in Hangars 1, 3, 4 and 5 and learnt how air transport has developed over time. The visit was a great experience, bringing our learning about the Second World War and the history of flight to life.













Enrichment Highlights

Follow us on Instagram: WhitchurchPS

Year 4 visit to the Royal Courts of Justice

Year 4 visited the Royal Courts of Justice, where we took part in a mock trial based on a true story involving a Victorian child accused of theft. Taking on the roles of lawyers, witnesses and jury members, we explored how the justice system works and considered the importance of evidence, fairness and making informed decisions. We listened carefully to the arguments presented, examined the evidence and debated the case before reaching our verdict.

It was a fantastic opportunity to experience the world of the courtroom and the importance of justice, whilst developing our understanding of poverty and crime affecting young people in the Victorian era.

"I was so happy to be the judge. I like responsibility so I knew I would be a good judge." David

"I loved being the clerk. I am a very honest person so making notes was a perfect job for me." Layla



Sporting Highlights

Follow us on Instagram: WhitchurchPS

Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery

Hockey Festival



Year 5 and 6 children took part in a hockey festival at Harrow School. We practised some hockey skills and then played matches against other Harrow schools, showing resilience and teamwork throughout the morning.

Indoor Cricket Tournament

Year 5 and 6 children represented Whitchurch in an exciting indoor cricket tournament, competing against several local primary schools in Harrow. These indoor matches required quick thinking, brilliant communication, and true teamwork.

Badminton Festival



Year 5 and 6 delivered an outstanding performance at the local primary schools Badminton festival. We fought for every shuttlecock and showed incredible resilience and determination on the court.

Table Tennis Festival

Year 5 and 6 brought high energy and fantastic sportsmanship to the Table Tennis festival, having fun and showing resilience.

Football Festivals



Our Year 5 and 6 girls' and boys' football teams brought fantastic skill, teamwork and unstoppable determination to the Football festivals. We represented the school with pride and gave it our all on the pitch.

The Whitchurch Woodland



Woodland News

Following the fantastic success of achieving the Woodland Trust Gold Award, we are excited to be working towards the Platinum Award this year.

We are also delighted to have achieved the Level 4 School Gardening Award, thanks to the hard work of our Garden Club pupils. Our Woodland and Eco Warriors are now busy working towards the Level 5 Award!

We used gift cards received from our previous awards to purchase spring bulbs and plants from Harrow Garden Centre. A special thank you to Ellie and the team, who were incredibly helpful and generously donated additional plants and seeds to our school. It is wonderful to see our local community supporting the children's outdoor learning.

A huge thank you also goes to the parents who joined us to help the children plant spring-flowering bulbs, plants and garlic ready for next year. Together, we are creating our beautiful new Woodland Discovery Garden, which we look forward to seeing come to life in the new year. Thank you to everyone for helping our Whitchurch Woodland continue to grow and flourish.

Mr Coutinho, Forest School Leader







The Whitchurch Woodland



More Woodland News

We have introduced two new features to Whitchurch Woodland, helping to make the area even more inclusive and engaging for all our children.

First we have a new water wall, created using recycled plastic bottles and natural materials, where children can explore water through hands-on play, experimenting with pouring, movement and flow. We have also created a new sensory wall, designed especially to support children with sensory needs. It provides different textures, sounds and materials for children to touch, explore and interact with at their own pace.

These additions will help us continue developing Whitchurch Woodland as an inclusive outdoor learning environment, where children of all needs and abilities can explore, learn and enjoy nature.

Mr Coutinho, Forest School Leader





The Whitchurch Woodland



Year 3 Forest School Sessions

Year 3 have had a fantastic time exploring and learning in the Whitchurch Woodland! We have worked together to learn about different plants, animals and their habitats, developing our understanding of nature and the importance of protecting wildlife.

One of our biggest achievements was creating a new Wildlife Corner, helping to build a mini pond and bug hotel using natural and recycled materials. During our sessions we enjoyed foraging, den building and exploring the woodland - developing teamwork, creativity and problem-solving skills along the way.

We also learnt about fire safety and the fire triangle, discovering what a fire needs to burn and learning about fire lighting in a safe, supervised environment.

To celebrate our achievements in the woodland we enjoyed a special campfire session with hot chocolate and freshly made popcorn around the fire. Year 3 have helped make the Whitchurch Woodland an even better place for wildlife and future generations of children to explore, discover and enjoy.

Mr Coutinho, Forest School Leader

"I enjoyed the den building, I would like to do more planting." Alaina







Staff Snapshot



Name: Krishna Dhall
Role: Year 6 Class Teacher

All about me

Hello! I'm Mrs Dhall, the new Year 6 Class Teacher and English Leader at Whitchurch. I'm originally from Stanmore and, before joining Whitchurch, I spent two years teaching in Dubai, which was a fantastic experience. I've really enjoyed getting to know the wonderful Whitchurch community and have been made to feel so welcome. I'm excited to be part of the Whitchurch team and look forward to a fantastic year ahead!

Hobbies and Interests

In my spare time, I love travelling and exploring new places, discovering different cultures and making new memories. I'm also a keen reader and enjoy getting lost in a good book. I enjoy keeping active too, especially going to the gym.

Best part of my role

English has always been one of my favourite subjects, and as English Leader, I'm especially passionate about helping children discover a love of reading. The best part of my role is inspiring children to become confident, curious learners who enjoy exploring stories, sharing their ideas and expressing themselves. I'm really looking forward to creating lots of special memories with Year 6 and helping the children feel confident, motivated and excited about all the opportunities ahead!







Autumn 2026
Lunch Menu

Allergens are listed on our website (click here)

Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery





Salad bar and bread available daily

	WEEK ONE 31/8, 21/9, 12/10, 9/11, 30/11	WEEK TWO 7/9, 28/9, 19/10, 16/11, 7/12	WEEK THREE 14/9, 5/10, 2/11, 23/11, 14/12
MONDAY MAINS	Cajun Chicken Pizza Served with Herb Diced Potatoes & Peas Margherita Pizza Served with Herb Diced Potatoes & Peas (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad	Chicken Katsu Curry with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans Vegetarian Katsu Curry with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve)	Turkey Korma Curry with 50/50 Rice & Broccoli Vegetarian Keema Curry with 50/50 Rice & Broccoli (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad
DESSERT	Vanilla Shortbread	Apple & Sultana Flapjack	Orange Oat Cookie
TUESDAY MAINS	Turkey Tikka Masala Curry Served with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans Sweet Potato & Chickpea Curry Served with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve)	Chicken Hot Dog Served with Herby Diced Potatoes & Garden Peas Grilled Cheese Sub Served with Herby Diced Potatoes & Garden Peas (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad	Chicken Burger Served with Jacket Wedges & Corn on Cob Vegetable Burger Served with Jacket Wedges & Corn on Cob (Ve) (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve)
DESSERT	Tropical Fruit Salad	Tropical Fruit Salad	Tropical Fruit Salad
WEDNESDAY MAINS	Lamb Bolognese, Served with Pasta & Broccoli Vegan Bolognese, Served with Pasta & Broccoli (V) (Vg) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad	Roast Chicken Served with Roast Potatoes, Gravy, Carrots & Peas Lentil Loaf Roast Served with Roast Potatoes, Gravy, Carrots & Peas (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve)	Lamb Bolognese Pasta Bake Served with Broccoli Vegetarian Meatballs Served with Pasta & Broccoli (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (V) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad
DESSERT	Carrot Cake	Garden Brownie	Lemon Drizzle Sponge
THURSDAY MAINS	Chicken Fajitas Served with Rainbow Rice & Corn on Cob Quorn Fajitas Served with Rainbow Rice & Corn on Cob (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve)	Tuna Pasta Bake, Served with Garlic Bread & Broccoli Macaroni Cheese, Served with Garlic Bread & Broccoli (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad	Chicken Sausage Toad in the Hole Served with Mash, Gravy & Peas Vegan Sausage & Mash with Gravy, Peas & Carrots (Ve) (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve)
DESSERT	Peach & Raspberry Jelly	Orange & Mandarin Jelly	Strawberry Mousse
FRIDAY MAINS	Fish Fingers Served with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas Cheese & Tomato Pinwheel Served with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad	Fish Stars, Served with Chips, Peas or Baked Beans Farmhouse Omelette, Served with Chips, Peas or Baked Beans (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve)	Battered Fish, with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas Cheese & Onion Lattice, with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad
DESSERT	Vanilla Ice Cream	Strawberry Ice Cream	Chocolate Ice Cream

Allergen Information: Menu descriptions may not list every individual ingredient. We are aware of the presence of allergens requiring labelling, so please ask a member of the catering team should you require any more details. Vegetarian options are indicated by the symbol (V) and Vegan options are indicated by the symbol (Ve).

COOMBS CATERING PARTNERSHIP









2026-2027
Term Dates

Holidays during term time are not permitted



Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery

Autumn Term 2026

Autumn 1st	Wednesday 2nd September to Friday 23rd October
Half Term	Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October
Autumn 2nd	Monday 2nd November to *Friday 18th December (2pm finish)*
Staff Training Day	*Tuesday 1st September (no children in school)*

Spring Term 2027

Spring 1st	Tuesday 5th January to Friday 12th February
Half Term	Monday 15th February to Friday 19th February
Spring 2nd	Monday 22nd February to *Thursday 25th March (2pm finish)*
Staff Training Day	*Monday 4th January (no children in school)*

Summer Term 2027

May Day Bank Holiday Monday 3rd May

Summer 1st	Monday 12th April to Friday 28th May
Half Term	Monday 31st May to Friday 4th June
Summer 2nd	Monday 7th June to *Friday 16th July (2pm finish)*
Staff Training Days	*Monday 19th July, Tuesday 20th July and Wednesday 21st July (no children in school)*

FOR FAMILIES IN RECEIPT OF MEANS-TESTED FREE SCHOOL MEALS

HAF HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & FOOD IN HARROW

FREE FAMILY FUN

THIS OCTOBER HALF TERM!

MAGNA



Autumn Adventure

Elmgrove Primary School
Kenmore Avenue, Harrow, HA3 8LU

26 & 27 October

WOODLAND ADVENTURE



Outdoor Family Fun

All Saints Church
90 Uxbridge Road, Harrow, HA3 6DQ

28 October

BE ACTIVE



Halloween Family Fun

29 October

Roxbourne Primary School
Torbay Road, Harrow, HA2 9QF

Longfield Primary School
Dukes Avenue, Harrow, HA2 7NX

Belmont School
Hibbert Road, Harrow, HA3 7JT

ALRIDHA FOUNDATION



Family Fun Day

Harrow Arts Centre
171 Uxbridge Road, Pinner, HA5 4EA

31 October

WHAT'S ON ?

- SPOOKY SCIENCE, SLIME & POTIONS
- HALLOWEEN CRAFTS
- GLOW-IN-THE-DARK GAMES
- INFLATABLES
- WOODLAND ADVENTURES
- DANCE, FAMILY FUN & MORE

SCAN TO SEE WHAT'S ON & BOOK

PLACES ARE LIMITED. ADVANCE BOOKING REQUIRED.

HTTPS://YOUNGHARROWFOUNDATION.ORG/HAF-PROGRAMME

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthrals young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK ... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of The Rainbow Within, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



Sources: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-63204805
https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-algorithms/

National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

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