

Sefton | Spring 2026 FREE

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## ROBIN HOOD

SATURDAY 18 APRIL

1pm & 5pm

THE  
ATKINSON

Sefton Council



[theatkinson.co.uk](http://theatkinson.co.uk)

01704 533 333

Southport, PR8 1DB

  
THEATRE  
PRODUCTIONS

JULIA DONALDSON · SARA OGILVIE

# GOZZLE

Hatching this spring at  
WWT Martin Mere Wetland Centre

March 20  
- May 31



Discover a season of firsts this spring, on a fun-filled wetland adventure with Gozzle the gosling.

**Search WWT Martin Mere**

**MACMILLAN  
Children's  
Books**

  
**WWT**  
For wetlands. For life.

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**Publisher** - Andy Forster

**Editorial**

61 Leamington Road, Ainsdale,  
Southport PR8 3JZ  
Tel: 01704 531888

**Design** - Sarah Bannister at Ten64 Productions

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## Get ready to level up your Easter School Holidays at The Strand

To celebrate the new Super Mario Galaxy Movie release, the Strand are bringing the magic of the Mushroom Kingdom to the Strand Shopping Centre, Bootle. Get ready for an action-packed character event featuring favourites from Super Mario Bros. —including heroic Mario, his brother Luigi and the king of mischief himself, Bowser!

Meet & greet with your favourite characters & Short Storytelling.

**Mario Bros Friendship Oath -Take the Plumber Pledge and officially become a "Bros" for the day!** **Bowser's Power Up Dash -A high-energy space hopper race —with prizes for the winning team members!** **Luigi's Musical Statue Challenge -Freeze when the music stops... or you're out!** **Mario's Mini Disco & Bowser's Bubble Machine** **FREE Face Painting** **Themed Craft Zone**

This FREE Easter event promises games, laughter, music and unforgettable family fun —the perfect way to keep little adventurers entertained during the school holidays.



## SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS - EASTER PANTOMIME 2026!

When the Magic Mirror (Tim Lucas) reveals that Snow White (Chantelle Morgan) is the fairest of them all, the Wicked Witch (Shania Pain) orders a dramatic end to the young Princess' life, but luck is on Snow White's side as she escapes into the deep dark forbidden forest and finds shelter in a strange cottage, the home of seven unusual characters.

The Wicked Queen will not stop until Snow White has gone, and taking things in her own hands, a poisoned red apple is all she needs to ensure she regains the title of the Fairest of Them All.

Meanwhile, Prince Fredrick is looking for his bride and with the help of Theatre Royal favourites Muddles (Lewis Devine) and Nurse Nelly (Richard Aucott) true love is sure to win the day!

Tickets available from [www.sthelenstheatreroyal.com](http://www.sthelenstheatreroyal.com)



## Don't miss this brand-new laugh-out-loud, egg-stravagant Easter adventure for the whole family.

Starring the Fabulous Fanny Galore as the glittering Spirit of Sherwood, alongside Easter panto favourites Ben Parsley (aka the ever-hilarious Silly Billy), Rob Stevens, Terry Burns and Katherine Hickmott – this all-star cast is ready to steal your hearts (and a few laughs too!).

Join Robin Hood and his band of Merry Folk as they outwit the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham, save the townsfolk, and help our hero win the hand of the fair Maid Marion – all in true panto style!

Packed with toe-tapping tunes, dazzling dance routines, side-splitting comedy and audience participation galore, Robin Hood is a feel-good family treat that's guaranteed to hit the bullseye this Easter!

Book your tickets now – it's going to be Sher-woodn't-miss-it!

[www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)



# APPLY NOW!

Their future starts here! If you know a school leaver ready to take the next step, applications for **St Helens College** are still open for September 2026. Take a look at the courses we have on offer:

- Animal Management
- Automotive
- Business
- Catering and Hospitality
- Creative Arts
- Construction
- Computing and IT
- Early Years
- Engineering
- Hairdressing and Beauty
- Health and Social Care
- Music and Performing Arts
- Public and Uniformed Services
- Science
- Sport and Fitness
- Travel and Tourism



St Helens College



Submit your  
application here

f @ X /sthelenscollege

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Providing you with a more rounded picture of your child's school...

**Ofsted exists to raise standards of education and care for children. Our inspections shine a light on where schools need to make improvements, but we also celebrate the very best practice we find across the country so that other schools can learn from it. Importantly, we report back to you, the parents and carers we serve, to help you make informed decisions about your child's education and care.**

At the end of last year, we began inspecting schools in a different way – looking at a wider range of areas and awarding grades on a five-point scale, without one overall judgement. And we now publish the findings in new report cards, which have been designed with you in mind - to provide you with better and more detailed information about the school your child attends. The colour-coded 5-tier grading system gives you an at-a-glance view of a school's performance across the different

inspection areas, while the narrative provides more detail about what it is doing well and where it can improve. And all report cards are fully accessible on mobile phones and tablets.

It's important to say that our previous inspection grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate) cannot be compared to the new grades (exceptional, strong standard, expected standard, needs attention and urgent improvement). We're reporting on more of the issues that matter to you, for instance - how the curriculum and teaching are being delivered, what attendance and behaviour are like at the school, and whether children are being kept safe. And our new way of grading means that schools could achieve highly in some areas and do less well in others. This is completely normal and it's the real



beauty of our new report cards. They offer a richer and deeper level of information about your child's school that will help you understand all of its strengths as well as what it needs to improve. Our recent YouTube video explains the changes we've made to the way we report to you.

A crucial element of our new approach to inspection is its focus on inclusion, which is both a standalone evaluation area schools are graded against, and also a thread woven through each of the other evaluation areas. We want to make sure that every single child is seen, heard and encouraged in their aspirations, no matter their starting point in life. So, inspectors look at whether schools are providing high-quality support to help all children achieve, belong and thrive, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known to children's social care. Because we know that if schools are getting it right for these children, then they will also be getting it right for all other children.

Now that schools aren't being awarded an overall, single word judgement, there are more ways they can share their inspection outcomes. Schools are free to promote and celebrate their successes however they wish - and I'm sure you'll have seen many do this on banners at the school gates, quoting from their Ofsted report. But we also want to make sure that parents have easy access to the full report card, so you can understand those findings in context. That's why we recently launched new QR code badges for schools, which link directly to their Ofsted report. We've asked schools to display these badges wherever they are promoting their inspection outcome.

We're confident that our new inspections are fair on school leaders and staff, because they are designed to offer a collaborative experience and a balanced evaluation of their work, which takes their unique circumstances into account. And I'm pleased to say we've had some really great feedback from headteachers across the country who have found our new approach to be a

welcome and positive change.

We hope that you, the parents, will also see how our new approach reflects the feedback we heard from you. As always, we will keep working with both parents and educational professionals to continually improve the way we go about our work.



*Lee Owston HMI  
National Director  
for Education*



A dark blue rectangular graphic containing the Ofsted logo (three stylized figures above the word "Ofsted" in white) on the left and a large white QR code on the right. Below the logo and QR code, the text "Read our report" is written in a large, light blue font, followed by a light blue arrow pointing up and to the right.

# Discover a great read for your child...

## Tales from The Dell: Poems & Paintings from the Wild

**Author:** Paul Taylor  
**Publisher:** Troubador Publishing

Tales from The Dell is a wonderfully heart-warming and charming collection of children's animal stories, beautifully written and well suited for children and adults alike.

The writing is complimented by beautiful original artwork of the characters.

The author's affinity for wildlife shines through, with the stories intended to educate youngsters about the behaviours and characteristics of some of our furry and feathered friends, as well as giving youngsters and adults alike great pleasure.



**OUT NOW**

**The Jukebox Time Machine:**  
**Earth Angels**  
**Author:** Mark Roland Langdale  
**Publisher:** Troubador Publishing

Holly Wild lives in a world of his own. He has his own internal jukebox inside his head. He is an orphan after his parents died in a car crash in Texas, while visiting the home of Buddy Holly. When they died Holly's parents left him a Diner in Hammersmith, but it is very run-down, and he is struggling to keep the business afloat. Luckily Holly has the help of some weird and wonderful Earth Angels, some Troubadours from the past and most importantly a jukebox time machine. With it, Holly can go back in time and meet his rock and roll heroes such as Billy Fury, Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran. Holly goes on a musical magical mystery tour of time and space which follows and seems strangely connected to the famous Magical Mystery Tour of the Beatles.



**OUT NOW**

## Yes, You Can Travel With Kids: A No-Stress Guide to Easy, Affordable Family Travel

**Author:** Jenna Carr  
**Publisher:** Dorling Kindersley Ltd

When Jenna Carr became a mum, she refused to give up her love for travel, and has spent the last six years showing parents how to travel with kids effectively. Now, in Yes, You Can Travel With Kids, Jenna is sharing everything she knows, including:

- How to plan cost-effective adventures, including setting a realistic budget and finding cheap flights
- The best destinations to consider, from holidays abroad to staycations
- Ways to keep the kids entertained from journey to destination
- Tips for travelling confidently with a bump, newborn, toddlers and big kids
- Easy-to-use packing checklists and budget trackers



**OUT NOW**

**The Amazing Adventures of Archie: How Archie Got His Scarf**

**Author:** V.P. Goody  
**Publisher:** Troubador Publishing

A family holiday in Cornwall provides lots of fun for George and Beatrice and their dog Archie, especially when they run into a mystery to solve! The children are on holiday with their parents in Trelorna, Cornwall, a beautiful fishing village which is such a break from their home in Crystal Palace, London.

The children end up getting involved with pirates, communists and criminals – but they do manage to enjoy lashings of brilliant food.



**OUT NOW**

# APPLY NOW!

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- Business
- Catering and Hospitality
- Computing and IT
- Construction
- Creative Arts
- Early Years
- Engineering
- Hairdressing and Beauty
- Health and Social Care
- Performing Arts
- Public and Uniformed Services
- Science
- Sport and Fitness
- Travel and Tourism



Submit your application here



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## St. Mary's College & Preparatory School

**SEAL  
OF  
APPROVAL**

### FOR ST. MARY'S COLLEGE & PREPARATORY SCHOOL FROM INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORS

St. Mary's College & Preparatory School in Crosby has received the seal of approval from inspectors

from the UK's national independent schools watchdog.

Following a three-day visit assessors from the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) concluded that the school meets all five key standards they have set.

This is the best possible outcome the school could achieve under the ISI's revamped assessment system which no longer uses one-word, Ofsted-style gradings.

The assessors' verdict on the school covered key areas such as the quality of education, the physical and mental health of students, safeguarding, leadership and management and the social and economic education of pupils and their contribution to society.

The report praises school leaders for 'creating an environment in which pupils demonstrate a love of learning and flourish academically'. This helps them to develop as 'mature individuals with strong moral values' and become 'successful and caring citizens'.

A key element in this success is St. Mary's 'engaging curriculum that ensures the acquisition of core knowledge and skills, while offering scope for pupils to pursue their individual interests'.

Teachers are also recognised by inspectors for their 'good subject knowledge' and for 'planning well and using a wide variety of techniques to enable pupils to make good progress'.

Elsewhere in the wide-ranging report the ISI assessors say they were impressed by pupils' behaviour and by St. Mary's extensive extracurricular programme 'that enables pupils to develop their interests and aptitudes in sport, music, drama and a wide range of other activities'.

St. Mary's Principal, Mike Kennedy, commented: *"We're delighted with the assessment we have received from the ISI inspectors. It recognises many of what we regard as the key strengths of the school which is very encouraging."*

*"Overall the assessors were clearly impressed with what they saw, and by the many pupils and staff members they met and spoke to."*

*"I would like to thank everyone associated with St. Mary's whose ongoing commitment and effort have contributed to making this first-class ISI report possible,"* added Mr Kennedy.

St. Mary's College Preparatory School is holding an Open Morning on Tuesday 21st April, 9.30am - 12pm.

Please pay them a visit and see for yourself what makes St. Mary's so special.

**0151 924 6302**

**[www.stmarys.ac/prep](http://www.stmarys.ac/prep)**



**St. Mary's College  
Preparatory School**

**Join us for our Open Morning:  
Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April, 9.30am - 12pm**

*Visit us and discover what makes  
St. Mary's Prep so special*

**0151 924 6302    [www.stmarys.ac/prep](http://www.stmarys.ac/prep)**

*The independent Catholic school for boys and girls of all faiths aged 0-18*



## Ready for Easter with Liverpool ONE



Signs of Spring are all around, and at Liverpool ONE the whole family can enjoy fun in the city this Easter! With entertainment, shopping and dining, it's the perfect mix for the whole family. Hunt for tasty Easter treats and get stuck into fun activities, all while soaking up the Spring vibes in Chavasse Park. Liverpool ONE is the place to be this season!

### Egg-citing Activities

Join us for our **Easter Party on Good Friday 3 April**, a free event filled with fun activities, live entertainment, an Easter bonnet competition, and plenty of surprises! Bring the whole family and experience some Easter fun to be enjoyed by everyone.

Then while you're here, head to **Gravity MAX** and take in a world of gaming, fun and thrills, from e-karting to VR experiences, including bowling and darts. Junkyard Golf Club is the place if you're looking for crazy golf with multiple courses that will spark the imagination! **Upside Down House** is also a clear

winner with the kids, so up (or should that be down?) your selfie game with his fun and outrageous attraction.

### Shop 'til you Hop

Kids favourites are all in one place at Liverpool ONE, with stores like **Pop Mart**, **Kenji**, **Miniso** and **The Entertainer** to get them browsing and spending their pocket money. Take home a special keepsake from the day at **Build-A-Bear** or **LEGO**, or nourish their minds with the impressive children's book section at Waterstones, and while you are there remember to pay the **Paddington Bear** statue, as your favourite marmalade loving bear is waiting for kids of all ages outside Waterstones.

Get outdoors while you're here! After a winter cooped up, get stuck into the **Spring Nature Trail**, which guides children through our beautiful green spaces as Spring makes its appearance for 2026. Older kids will also enjoy the **Heritage Trail**, taking them 300 years into Liverpool's past. Both self-guided tours are completely free.

### Tasty Treats

After a day full of fun, refuel at one of our dining spots! We are home to family favourites including **wagamama**, **TGI Fridays**, **Five Guys** and **PizzaExpress**. Or for a sweet Easter treat,



why not stop by **Heavenly Desserts** or **MyCookieDough**.

Keep an eye out for special Easter deals, including **Kids Eat Free offers** at many of our restaurants, making it even easier to enjoy a family meal.

### Liverpool ONE PLUS+

Be the first to hear about the latest events, competitions, birthday perks and much more by joining **Liverpool ONE PLUS+ Members Rewards**. The best bit? Signing up is totally FREE! Head to [www.liverpool-one.com/plus/](http://www.liverpool-one.com/plus/) For more information about family plans, visit [www.liverpool-one.com](http://www.liverpool-one.com)







## WINTER ILLNESSES

*By Sue Hampshire,  
Associate Medical Director,  
St John Ambulance*

**We are now well into a new year and seeing the signs of Spring. However, seasonal bugs and illnesses are still affecting lots of people. St John Ambulance would like to share advice for keeping well and also for what to do if you catch some of the common seasonal illnesses.**

The cold weather has not left us so please be aware of those who may be vulnerable, and if possible, make sure they are safe and well. Have you seen them recently, are their lights on, are just a couple of questions to ask yourself.

There are things we can do to try to prevent ill health, including making sure our vaccinations are up to date, keeping warm, making sure our homes are insulated, and our appliances are safe. We recognise the current difficult financial situation for many people and hope there may be local warm spaces/hubs in your area, often in libraries and churches which offer both warmth and company. Keeping over the counter medicines in case of ill health is useful, including pain killers and cold and cough treatments.

However, although we may try to keep safe, we will often catch the common bugs, including colds, coughs and flu.

Symptoms of colds can include a runny or blocked nose, sneezing, sore throat, persistent cough and a temperature. The advice for coughs and colds is similar – plenty of rest and fluids, staying at

home and avoiding contact with others if you have a temperature or feel unwell. If needed, take paracetamol or ibuprofen. A hot lemon and honey drink may soothe a sore throat.

If you have Norovirus, the winter vomiting virus, symptoms can include feeling sick, being sick, diarrhoea, aches and pains and a temperature. The advice is to rest and have lots of fluids, taking small sips if you feel sick to avoid dehydration. You should stay at home until you've not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least two days. Symptoms usually start to go after 2 – 3 days.

Flu symptoms come on quickly, and include very high temperature, an aching body, tiredness, cough, sore throat, feeling or being sick with loss of appetite. The advice is sleep, keep warm, drink plenty and to take pain relief when needed.

There are other simple measures we can take to help prevent spread of bugs. These include adequate and frequent hand washing, wiping down surfaces, using disposable tissues and throwing them away as soon as you've used them and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean. Covering the nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing will help to prevent spread as will using a tissue when doing so or using the bend of your elbow.

Most illnesses will get better in a matter of days. If you need more advice your pharmacist is a great person to ask. They can advise on treatments and remedies that will help your symptoms. If you are worried about symptoms advice should be sought from the 111 service. It is especially important to get expert help if you are suffering from breathing problems or chest pain.

# Decrease Holiday Screentime

**As concerns over childhood screentime rise, holidays are the perfect time to introduce screen-free habits with positive associations. Here are 5 ideas to decrease screentime whilst on holiday.**



## 1. SET EXPECTATIONS BEFORE YOUR HOLIDAY

Before you even pack your bags, have a quick family chat about the screen rules on your trip – how much time is allowed, when it's okay to use devices, and what happens if the rules are broken.

Clear communication reduces conflicts and ensures that everyone knows the purpose of digital boundaries. Framing the holiday as a chance to connect and disconnect from screens also sets the tone for a relaxed, fun-filled break.

## 2. CREATE "SCREEN WINDOWS"

Instead of allowing constant access to devices, establish designated "screen windows" during which kids can use phones and tablets, ideally for no more than 30 to 60 minutes at a time. Avoid random or spontaneous usage and keep meals completely screen-free to encourage conversation, laughter, and shared memories that no phone could replicate.

By structuring screen time, children can enjoy their devices while still appreciating offline moments.

## 3. MAKE THE ALTERNATIVE MORE EXCITING

Prepare a holiday activity bag with new books, puzzles, or travel games. You could even channel the retro nostalgia of your own childhood by teaching your child to use analogue items like a compass, physical map, or digital camera – the latter two of which have seen 40% and 68% increase in search interest in the last two years.

For day trips, choose destinations that are naturally screen-free, like long walks, historic castles, sprawling parks, nature trails, and stargazing nights. When the offline options are fun and stimulating, kids will happily leave screens behind.

## 4. GIVE THEM RESPONSIBILITY

Even on holiday, kids enjoy taking on new tasks and responsibilities, which can give them a sense of ownership and excitement.

For example, when staying in a campervan, involve them in practical roles such as setting up the awning, filling water containers, or being the "chief navigator" during journeys. Assigning meaningful responsibilities encourages participation, teaches them new skills, and reduces their reliance on screens for entertainment and fulfilment.

## 5. MODEL THE BEHAVIOUR

Children closely observe adult habits, so it is crucial for parents and guardians to set healthy screen time examples. If the grown-ups are constantly checking phones, the kids will follow suit.

Leave your phone away from the table before meals and consider sharing your child's digital detox hour each day. Demonstrating your own enjoyment of time offline can help reinforce positive habits for the whole family.

Many thanks to [www.camplify.co.uk](http://www.camplify.co.uk)

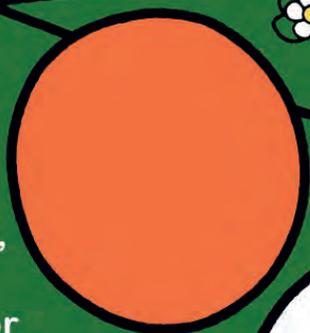
# miffy welcomes spring

[tattonpark.org.uk/easter](http://tattonpark.org.uk/easter)

28 MARCH – 19 APRIL 2026

Come play with miffy! Explore the spring gardens, enjoy family games, meet farmyard friends, and hunt for Easter chocolate rewards.\*

**T**  
TATTON  
PARK



Opening  
Doors for  
Adult Learners  
at St Helens and  
Knowsley Community  
College

*Dyana ESOL and Digital Skills*

**Returning to education as an adult is often described as daunting but at St Helens and Knowsley Community College it becomes something far more powerful: a fresh start, a practical investment and, for many, a life changing turning point. Across five campuses, the College plays a vital role in supporting adults who want to upskill, retrain or rediscover confidence in the classroom, helping people take meaningful steps toward new careers, with renewed ambitions and brighter futures.**

What makes St Helens and Knowsley Community College stand out is its understanding of the realities adult learners face. Many juggle work, family commitments and financial pressures and the thought of stepping back into education can feel overwhelming. The College responds with flexible, accessible learning routes tailored to real lives: part time study, evening classes, short professional courses and supportive pathways that allow learners to progress without disrupting daily routines.

Yet flexibility alone does not transform lives - people do. Tutors, advisors and support teams provide personalised guidance, helping adults to navigate funding, to build essential study skills and, most importantly, to believe in their own potential. For many, the College becomes the starting point for rediscovering purpose, identity, and self confidence.

The impact of this approach is clear in Dyana's story. Dyana joined the College after she arrived in the UK and wanted to improve her English. She began with an ESOL course, then progressed to Digital Skills to strengthen her computer confidence and to connect more easily with others. Her dedication led to a role

as an Expert by Experience with the Refugee Resettlement Service at St Helens Borough Council, where she now helps refugees access vital support. Determined to keep progressing, she says: "I am proud of how far I've come and want to achieve even more."

Equally inspiring is Claire. Working as a Level 2 Teaching Assistant, she wanted to deepen her early years knowledge and to progress her career, with hopes of becoming a speech and language therapist. Encouraged by a colleague, she enrolled on the BA (Hons) Early Years Practice at University Centre St Helens, choosing evening classes to balance study with work and family life. Her confidence has grown enormously and she says: "Do it...I absolutely love it and would 100% recommend the course."

For adults ready to advance further, University Centre St Helens provides a natural next step. With higher level qualifications delivered locally, learners can study for degrees and professional qualifications without the cost or commute of leaving town. Its close knit teaching environment ensures mature learners feel supported, valued and never lost in the crowd.

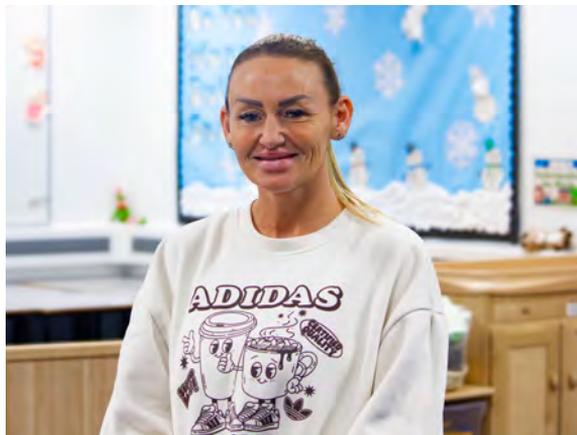
Together, St Helens and Knowsley Community College and University Centre St Helens are redefining what lifelong learning looks like, proving that education has no age limit and that transformative opportunities exist at every stage of life.

For many adults, it starts with one brave decision: taking that first step back into education.

To find out more about adult education at St Helens College and University Centre St Helens, visit: [www.sthelens.ac.uk](http://www.sthelens.ac.uk)

To find out more about adult education at Knowsley Community College, visit: [www.knowsleycommunitycollege.ac.uk](http://www.knowsleycommunitycollege.ac.uk)

*Claire BA Hons Early Years Practice*





University Centre  
St Helens

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Smaller Class Sizes | Lower Tuition Fees  
Personalised Support



**Alexandra**  
Foundation Degree  
in Criminal Justice

## Apply online for **September 2026**

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- Game Art
- Graphic Design
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- Microbiology
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- Teacher Training
- Theatre and Performance
- Tourism and Hospitality Management



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UNIVERSITY



Pearson



## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

As national reforms to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision continue to develop across England, with a £4bn overhaul announced, many families are following updates around assessments, support plans and school processes.

While these changes aim to improve the system and deliver better outcomes for children, parents and carers may be wondering what they can do right now to support their child's education at home.

Here, Lisa Spann, Managing Director at Fledglings, shares seven practical strategies families can use to create a positive, structured and confidence-building learning environment during this period of transition.

### 7 Ways to Support Your Child's Learning at Home During SEND Changes

Lisa Spann, Managing Director at

Fledglings, said: "SEND reforms aim to build a more responsive and effective system, but meaningful change does not happen overnight. While developments continue, the home environment remains one of the most powerful places to nurture a child's confidence and love of learning.

"Support at home does not need to replicate school perfectly. In fact, children with SEND often thrive when learning is adapted to suit their pace, interests and regulation needs. Small, consistent adjustments can make a significant difference."

#### 1. Create Predictable Routines

"When wider systems are evolving, predictability at home becomes even more valuable. Clear daily routines reduce uncertainty and free up cognitive energy for learning.

"Consider establishing a

consistent after-school structure, for example, snack, short break, focused learning time, then downtime. Visual timetables displayed on the wall, simple written checklists, or now-and-next boards can help children understand what is happening and when. Giving five or ten-minute countdown warnings before transitions can also prevent resistance and reduce stress.

"Over time, consistent routines promote independence. Children begin to anticipate expectations and manage their time more confidently, which strengthens executive functioning skills."

#### 2. Use Visual Supports For Clarity

"Many children with SEND process information more effectively when it is presented visually rather than verbally. Visual supports reduce reliance on working memory and make tasks

feel clearer and more achievable.

*"Colour-coded subject folders, step-by-step task cards, illustrated instructions, or even photographs of completed work can all provide clarity. For children who struggle with written output, mind maps, speech-to-text tools or drawing ideas before writing can ease frustration."*

*"Importantly, visual systems should be kept simple and consistent. When children know exactly where to find what they need, it builds organisational skills and lowers anxiety."*

### **3. BREAK LEARNING INTO 'MICRO-TASKS'**

*"Sustained concentration can be particularly demanding for children with attention, processing or regulation differences. Breaking tasks into short, timed segments, typically 10 to 15 minutes, makes learning feel contained and achievable."*

*"Using a visual timer can help children see how long they are expected to focus. After each segment, incorporate a short movement or sensory break before returning to the next small task."*

*"This structure reduces overwhelm and increases the likelihood of completion. Frequent opportunities for success help maintain motivation and prevent avoidance behaviours."*

### **4. BUILD REGULATION BREAKS INTO THE DAY**

*"Emotional regulation underpins every aspect of learning. If a child is dysregulated, anxious or overstimulated, academic progress becomes secondary."*

*"Plan regulation breaks proactively rather than waiting for frustration to escalate. This might include stretching exercises, wall pushes, deep pressure activities, listening to calming music, or spending a few minutes outdoors. Some children benefit from access to a 'calm box' containing sensory tools such as fidget items or weighted lap pads."*

*"When regulation is prioritised, children are better able to engage, retain information and feel positive about learning."*

### **5. STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL**

*"During periods of reform, consistent communication between home and school is essential. Even brief weekly email updates can ensure everyone understands what strategies are working well."*

*"Sharing observations about focus, mood, or successful adaptations at home gives teachers valuable insight. Equally, understanding classroom expectations allows parents to reinforce similar approaches during homework or revision."*

*"A collaborative partnership helps ensure children experience continuity rather than mixed messages, which is particularly important when wider systems are evolving."*

### **6. FOCUS ON STRENGTHS, NOT JUST GAPS**

*"Children are acutely aware of where they struggle. Actively building on strengths protects self-esteem and encourages resilience."*

*"If your child loves gaming, incorporate reading*

*comprehension through game guides or creative writing through character design. If they enjoy art, use drawing to explore science concepts or illustrate vocabulary. When interests are woven into learning, engagement increases naturally."*

*"Celebrating small wins, completing a task independently, attempting a challenging question, or managing a transition calmly, reinforces progress and builds long-term confidence."*

### **7. KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT HELPS**

*"As SEND reforms continue, maintaining clear records can be empowering. Keeping notes on strategies that work well, patterns in behaviour, completed work and examples of progress provides valuable evidence."*

*"This documentation can support productive conversations during school meetings or reviews, ensuring your child's needs remain clearly understood. Even a simple weekly reflection, what went well, what was challenging, what adjustments helped, can guide more informed decision-making and advocacy."*

*"Periods of reform can feel uncertain, but they also present an opportunity for families to reflect on what truly supports their child's learning. By focusing on structure, communication and encouragement, parents can create a steady foundation that supports academic growth and emotional wellbeing."*

**Discover more advice and practical resources for supporting children with SEND at**

<https://www.fledglings.org.uk/>





**Artificial intelligence (AI) might not always be obvious, but it has quickly become a common part of our daily experience. In this article, the NSPCC examines what the rise of AI means for children, and offers some tips and support to parents.**

Technology is developing at a rapid rate, and whether it's an app on your phone to 'fix' a photo, or something you're encouraged to use at work to help write an email, AI is more accessible than ever.

But while they might be useful when used responsibly, there is a worry that AI – and specifically AI chatbots – are shaping young people's digital experiences.

This has reached a point where some children feel they are developing friendships with AI characters, which could have a potentially dangerous impact on healthy social development.

The NSPCC is concerned when we look at new and emerging technology, like generative AI, about the impact it will have on children's safety, and our services are already being contacted by young people on the topic.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, Childline recorded almost

200 counselling sessions with mentions of AI related phrases.

#### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

Generative AI – where content such as images and videos are created using an AI tool – is being used to create sexual abuse images of children, enable perpetrators to sexually extort and groom children, or sexually harass and bully children.

Chatbots have also created other forms of harmful content, encouraging eating disorders, sharing images glamourising self-harm or misrepresenting information to make it harder to tell what is 'real'.

The NSPCC believes it is hugely important for parents, carers and professionals, like teachers, to understand not only the dangers of AI, but also how children and young people use it. Regular conversations can help with this, and if a young person feels comfortable sharing their online

experience with you when there isn't a problem, they will be more inclined to speak to you or seek support when there is one.

Recently, the NSPCC supported Vodafone's Safer Internet Day campaign, which included a discussion about the benefits and dangers of AI and chatbots.

For families looking for support, the NSPCC and Vodafone have created a suite of resources to encourage families to have conversations around AI chatbot use, help build children's media literacy and promote healthy digital wellbeing.

#### **WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO HELP KEEP CHILDREN SAFE?**

One of the top tips we have for parents who want to speak to children about using AI chatbots is to start with curiosity, not concern.

Ask which AI tools they use and what they find helpful or

interesting about them while also sharing which ones you use too – this creates an open dialogue and helps you both understand each other’s experiences.

Talk about where AI is being used, the risks and benefits, and remind them that AI chatbots cannot have a real connection with humans.

Even if conversations feel personal or friendly, they do not have genuine emotions, and cannot replace a human connection with friends, family or trusted adults.

Remind them that while AI chatbots can be helpful for quick answers, they can also make mistakes, so it is always a good idea to verify important information from trusted sources, especially for school or health-related questions.

Likewise, not everything AI shows young people might be real – videos, text and images might look genuine, but common indicators like overly ‘perfect’ appearances, unusual body parts or movements or things that simply don’t quite look right may suggest they’re not real.

### **PRIVACY, ONLINE SAFETY AND FURTHER ADVICE**

As with all online safety conversations, it’s vital to discuss privacy and how important it is for children to keep personal information private and not to share anything that they wouldn’t with a stranger.

It can be fun to explore critical thinking and analysing a piece of AI-generated content together. Ask questions like: *“Does this seem accurate?”*, *“Where might this information come from?”* and *“How could we verify this?”*.

Most importantly, ensure they know they can talk to you or another trusted adult, like a teacher, if anything worries them online or offline.



\*Further online safety advice for families is available at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk), and adults with concerns about a child can contact the NSPCC Helpline on **0808 8005000** or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

\*Children can contact Childline 24/7 on **0800 1111** or visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) for advice, tips and confidential support about anything troubling them.



## Here's how to encourage them to open a book.

Reading is in sharp decline. According to The National Literacy Trust, reading enjoyment for 8- to 18-year olds has hit a record low, with just one in five young people reading daily.

The reason for this? Competition with screen time. Children are watching videos and interacting with social media regularly, leaving books struggling to compete.

### WHAT IMPACT DOES A LACK OF READING HAVE ON A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

A reduction in reading impacts a child's vocabulary and reading stamina, and some pupils struggle to keep up with the school curriculum.

The Government is so worried about this that the Department of Education has launched the National Year of Reading, in partnership with the National Literacy Trust. The aim of the campaign is to encourage everyone to incorporate reading into hobbies and interests.

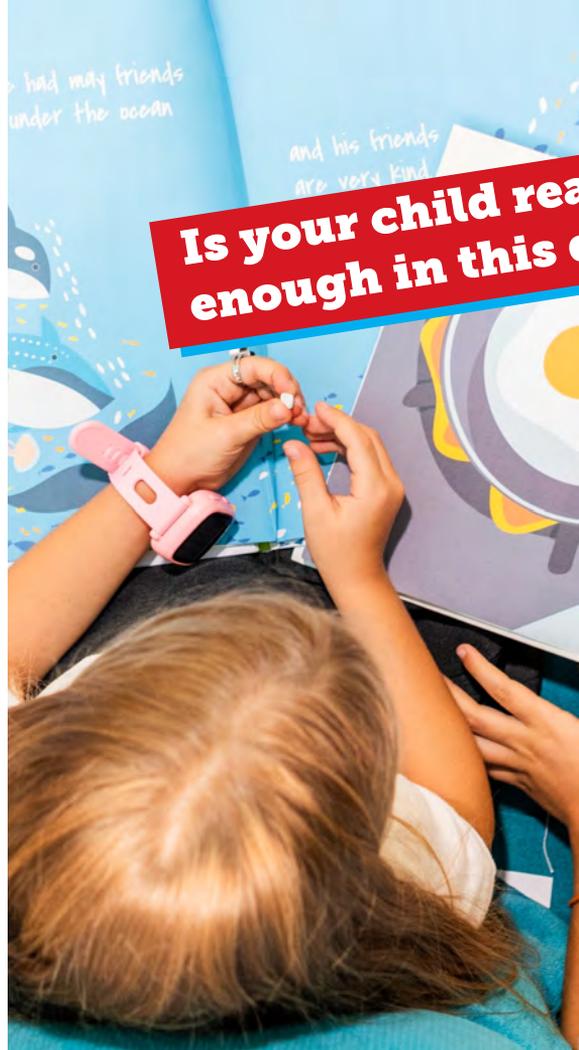
I work with many families to help children improve their reading skills, and one of the biggest struggles amongst parents is finding enough time to support their child's reading.

To help bridge this gap, I have facilitated community focussed initiatives, such as after-school reading cafes and educational workshops. These sessions have empowered parents to engage with their child's progress in a relaxed setting, ensuring that every child, regardless of their starting point, has the support they need to develop vital literacy skills.

This is something you could look to set up with friends and family in your local community.

Limited access to literacy resources at home can be a significant barrier to early development. To address this at the school I teach, we have championed a robust home-reading initiative, ensuring that high-quality, engaging texts are consistently available for families.

We introduce wordless narratives as a foundational step, empowering parents to co-



create stories with their children. This approach not only builds essential pre-reading and inference skills, but also protects a dedicated 'shared-learning' window, strengthening the emotional bond between the child and their caregiver through focused, one-on-one interaction.

### WHAT CAN PARENTS DO AT HOME TO ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILD TO PICK UP A BOOK INSTEAD OF THEIR PHONE?

I am a strong advocate for repetitive reading, as revisiting familiar texts is essential for building a child's linguistic confidence and memory.

## Reading in the digital age?



I encourage parents to view literacy as a flexible, high-quality interaction rather than a rigid task. Even a ten-minute 'reading window' integrated into daily routines - such as before meals or at bedtime - can have a profound developmental impact.

For families who find reading to be a point of conflict, I recommend 'shared-reading' models, such as alternating pages, to reduce cognitive load and maintain a positive, low-pressure emotional connection.

For parents of SEN children, it is important to think about environmental compartmentalisation. I have facilitated

initiatives where schools offer dedicated after-school spaces for literacy support, allowing children to meet their educational requirements within the school setting.

This ensures that the home remains a low-demand sanctuary - a vital 'safe space' where the parent-child relationship can flourish without the potential friction of academic pressure.

Software such as Clicker can provide vital multi-sensory reinforcement. By employing synchronised audio-visual feedback - where text is highlighted as it is read aloud - children can develop strong phoneme-grapheme correspondences. This technology allows learners to bridge the gap between auditory processing and visual recognition, significantly boosting the confidence of those with dyslexia or speech and language challenges.

### Other tips include:

**Giving your child choices** - Let children choose books based on their interests to build a love for reading rather than forcing specific books.

**Choose different types of reading material** - It doesn't have to be a book every day, you could choose a comic book, magazine or newspaper.

**Use libraries** - Libraries are a great resource, offering a whole range of reading material for free. There is something for all the family.

**Read yourself** - show your child that you read too and speak to them about the books you like to read.

In today's digital world, it is harder than ever to encourage children to sit and read, but by trying new ways of getting them engaged in books, you can create an environment at home that encourages the exploration of books and stories, supporting their learning and development for the future.

*By Molly-May Saych, a Key Stage One primary school teacher and SEN tutor, FindTutors*





**Gozzle MARTIN MERE**  
20 March – 31 May

Join Gozzle's wetland adventure. Follow the interactive trail to discover what it takes

for your fuzzy little friend to become a grown-up goose. From her first nibble to her first splash... right up to the day she flies away on her first migration.

Along the way, you'll strike some funny animal poses. Hop along stepping stones to practice your balance. Seek out a meal using your sense of smell. And keep your eyes peeled for the 15 mini Gozzles hiding along the route. Can you spot them all?

[www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/martin-mere](http://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/martin-mere)

**Lambing Week at the Farm TATTON PARK**  
28 March – 5 April

Are you baarmy about lambs? Learn how our farm team spot the signs of lambing and how they look after sheep and care for lambs during this special time. 12pm & 2pm daily talks (Closed Mondays)

[www.tattonpark.org.uk](http://www.tattonpark.org.uk)

**Construction Club THE ATKINSON**  
Every Last Saturday of the month  
10:30 - 12:30  
FREE

Calling all young inventors, creators, and builders! Join us for our Construction Club and unleash your imagination with a massive supply of LEGO® bricks.

Construction Club takes place on the last Saturday of each month. Admission is free, but spaces are limited, so please arrive in good time. Children under 12

must be accompanied by an adult.  
[www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)

**SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS - EASTER PANTOMIME 2026 ST HELENS THEATRE ROYAL**  
28 March – 12 April

When the Magic Mirror (Tim Lucas) reveals that Snow White (Chantelle Morgan) is the fairest of them all, the Wicked Witch (Shania Pain) orders a dramatic end to the young Princess' life, but luck is on Snow White's side as she escapes into the deep dark forbidden forest and finds shelter in a strange cottage, the home of seven unusual characters.

The Wicked Queen will not stop until Snow White has gone, and taking things in her own hands, a poisoned red apple is all she needs to ensure she regains the title of the Fairest of Them All.

Meanwhile, Prince Fredrick is looking for his bride and with the help of Theatre Royal favourites Muddles (Lewis Devine) and Nurse Nelly (Richard Aucott) true love is sure to win the day!

[www.sthelenstheatreroyal.com](http://www.sthelenstheatreroyal.com)



**Miffy Welcomes Spring TATTON PARK**  
28 March – 19 April

Follow miffy into the Gardens, where little explorers can search for

springtime

surprises on a scavenger hunt, play games and discover the sights, sounds and smells of the season. Meet miffy's farmyard friends as you help her prepare for a special Easter picnic before heading inside the Mansion to

see what Easter treasures miffy has found! A joyful spring adventure for the whole family with Easter chocolate rewards.

[www.tattonpark.org.uk](http://www.tattonpark.org.uk)

**Story & Rhyme Time THE ATKINSON**  
Every Wednesday  
11:30 - 12:15  
FREE

Explore stories through rhyme and help develop your child's language and communication skills while meeting our parents and carers. Together with our friendly librarians, babies and under-fives will enjoy learning new songs, dancing, and making friends.

[www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)

**Ride the Giant Wheel TATTON PARK**  
28 March – 4 May

Reach for the skies and enjoy stunning panoramic parkland and garden views from a giant observation wheel. Share a special moment with family and friends and spot your favourite landmarks from 35 metres high!

[www.tattonpark.org.uk](http://www.tattonpark.org.uk)

**Musical Storytelling TATTON PARK**  
3 – 6 April

Step into miffy's world and enjoy classic stories, performed by interactive storytellers Connection with Wonder in the gardens.

Construction Free drop in sessions throughout the day.

Construction Standard garden and parkland admission applies

[www.tattonpark.org.uk](http://www.tattonpark.org.uk)

**The Wizard of Oz ALBERT HALLS BOLTON**  
4 April - 2pm & 6pm

Join Dorothy Gale as she befriends a brainless Scarecrow, a loveable Tin Man and the cowardly Lion on their quest to thwart the evil powers of the Wicked Witch of the West. With a little help





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## 4 APRIL 2026

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Starring Coronation Street star Steven Arnold as Scarecrow, Pantomime Favourite Rebecca Lake as Dorothy along with Television legend Basil Brush as the Virtual Wizard of Oz.

[www.alberthalls-bolton.co.uk](http://www.alberthalls-bolton.co.uk)

**Robin Hood Easter Panto  
THE ATKINSON**

**Saturday 18 April 2026  
13:00 - 15:00 & 17:00 - 19:00**

Join Robin Hood and his band of Merry Folk as they outwit the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham, save the townsfolk, and help our hero win the hand of the fair Maid Marion – all in true panto style!

Packed with toe-tapping tunes, dazzling dance routines, side-splitting comedy and audience participation galore, Robin Hood is a feel-good family treat that's guaranteed to hit the bulls-eye this Easter!

[www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)

**ZOG  
THE ATKINSON - 1 - 2 May**

Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's classic, feel-good story is brought to roaring, soaring life in this delightful musical for children.

Zog is the keenest dragon in Madam Dragon's school. He's also the most accident-prone, flying into trees, and even setting his own wing alight. Thankfully, a kind girl comes along to patch up his scratches and scrapes – but can she help him with his biggest challenge yet, so that he can finally win a golden star?

[www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)

**Duck Race Weekend  
MARTIN MERE - 2 - 4 May**

Bring the whole family and cheer on your decorated rubber duck in Martin Mere's much loved Bank Holiday Duck Race - now turning into a whole weekend celebration! There's a race each day on Saturday 2 and Sunday 3

May, plus three races on bank holiday 4 May. With brilliant prizes to be won, will your rubber duck race their way to victory?

[www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/martin-mere](http://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/martin-mere)

**Ice Age Adventure Live  
THE ATKINSON - 29 May**

Brace yourselves for a mammoth mission in the frozen world of Ice Age Adventure Live! Journey back in time to meet incredible prehistoric animals in the coolest family show this side of the arctic circle!

Join our fearless explorers as they trek through snow-packed valleys, outfit sabre-toothed surprises, and make friends with the COOLEST CAVEMEN, even bringing back some extinct DODO friends for the ride!

[www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)



**Roman Day  
CHESTER  
RACECOURSE - 30  
May**

Canter on down to the racecourse on Saturday 30th May to experience an action-packed historic family fun day. For young racegoers, a day filled with thrilling

themed activities awaits. And the best part is?

Kids go free – and all activities are included!

Don't worry adults, you haven't been forgotten! Get ready for thrilling racing, toe-tapping music from our DJ and plenty of good times.

[www.chester-races.com](http://www.chester-races.com)

**The Utterly Revolting Science Show  
THE ATKINSON - 30 May**

Brace yourselves for the Rude Science team's hilarious, high-tech, highly-explosive new journey through the human body, packed with burp biology, fart physics and revolting edible chemistry. Expect enormous bottoms,

edible fireworks, burp machines and the world's loudest fart in this riotous science spectacular.

[www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)

**NICE! Stories and Rhymes  
with Michael Rosen  
THE ATKINSON - 13 June**

Poetry legend Michael Rosen celebrates his 80th birthday with a brand-new live show!

Michael looks back at a lifetime in poetry, performing beloved classics including Hot Food, No Breathing and Chocolate Cake, along with never-before-heard poems from his new collection Peas On Your Knees.

NICE! Is a show for all ages, from the young to the young at heart.

[www.theatkinson.co.uk](http://www.theatkinson.co.uk)

**Africa Oye  
SEFTON PARK  
20 - 21 June - 12 noon to 9:30**

Africa Oyé is a family celebration of music and culture for all ages!

Taking place in Liverpool's Sefton Park – one of the city's most picturesque green spaces – the two-day festival is a family friendly weekend with live music, a range of workshops and activities, and much more.

In addition to the international artists and DJ stages, this year's Oyé will have an enhanced 'Family Area', offering audience members of all ages and abilities the chance to try out world dance, song, musical instruments, arts and more ... with a programme of free workshops, suitable for all the family.

Soak in the unique Oyé atmosphere and enjoy the sounds and culture of Africa and the Caribbean.

Tickets available at [africaoye.com](http://africaoye.com)



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# ROMAN DAY

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# Family Fun at Liverpool ONE this Easter

## Easter Party at Liverpool ONE

FREE, Good Friday 3 April

Join us on Friday 3 April for a free fun-filled Easter Party with live entertainment, interactive activities, an Easter bonnet competition, and plenty of surprises for the whole family. Don't miss out on this egg-citing event!

Visit: [www.liverpool-one.com](http://www.liverpool-one.com)



## Paddington Bear at Liverpool ONE

College Lane

Our beloved Paddington Bear statue sits outside Waterstones, waiting for new friends to share a marmalade sandwich with him! Take a selfie with Paddington before you head into Waterstones to read all about his adventures in London.

Visit: [www.liverpool-one.com/whats-on/paddington-at-liverpool-one](http://www.liverpool-one.com/whats-on/paddington-at-liverpool-one)



## Family Cinema at ODEON

There's so many releases to love at ODEON this Easter! Choose from The Magic Faraway Tree or The Land of Sometimes, or for smaller cinemagoers, Bluey at the Cinema is back. Load up on the popcorn and snacks, and sit back in the luxe surroundings of ODEON. Family tickets are available.

## Kids eat for less or FREE!

Restaurants at Liverpool ONE are offering deals for family dining this Easter break, with kids eating for less, or even free! The full list is available on our website.

Visit: [www.liverpool-one.com/whats-on/kids-eat-free-menus/](http://www.liverpool-one.com/whats-on/kids-eat-free-menus/)



## Fun For All The Family

Big and little kids alike will find something to thrill them at Liverpool ONE, with the best brands in the country bringing the fun. Experience just about every arcade game you can think of at Gravity MAX, and get stuck into VR games and e-karting. At Junkyard Golf Club, crazy courses spark the kids' imagination, and competitiveness! Explore the topsy-turvy world of Upside Down House, with selfie opportunities in every upside-down room!

## Nature Trail at Liverpool ONE FREE

Perfect for mini explorers, the Nature Trail guides you through Liverpool ONE's Chavasse Park, where you can learn about the vibrant plants and wildlife in the heart of the city. The free self-guided trail takes around 60 minutes and is available online or at the Information Centre on Wall Street.

Visit: [www.liverpool-one.com/nature-trail](http://www.liverpool-one.com/nature-trail)



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AS NURSE NELLY

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