



### **Year 1 Class Assembly**

Today the children in Year 1 led a lovely class assembly on Friendship. They share what it meant to be a good friend and their work in English and PSHE. Well done to them all!

### **Year 2 History Workshop**

On Thursday Year 2 enjoyed a visit from Richard Stevenson (That History Bloke) who taught them all about life in Victorian times on the Quayside as well as the events of the Great Fire of Gateshead and Newcastle. Year 2 are looking forward to visiting the Quayside on Tuesday to see these sites and how the Quayside has changed.

### **School Lunches**

Please complete the school meals form to make your child's lunch choices by clicking on this link. The form is open from 7am on Mondays until noon on Wednesdays. <https://forms.office.com/e/cJQL8kYdyb>

### **Online Safety Workshop**

Next Tuesday is Internet Safety Day and throughout the week the children will be exploring online safety through their computing and PSHE lessons. Clennell Solutions will also be offering a parent online safety workshop on Monday evening at 5pm. The link to the zoom session can be found in parentmail. Please ensure children are not present during this session as the content is not appropriate for them.

### **Parent Workshops**

The Toby Henderson Trust is an excellent website to use to support families who need support and advice around autism. There are regular webinars and the next one is on Tuesday 13th February 9.30am-11.30am all around autism and mental health difficulties. Click the link to sign up

<https://www.ttht.co.uk/event/autism-and-mental-health-difficulties-webinar-4/>

or just use the website to find out lots of fantastic information <https://www.ttht.co.uk/>

We also shared a link this week to a parent workshop for families with children with neurodiversity being led by Now and Beyond. You can sign up to that workshop here

<https://nowandbeyond.org.uk/resources/a-very-modern-family>

### **Children's Mental Health Week**

Next week is Children's Mental Health Week and the theme of the week is 'Our Voices Matter'. The children will be learning about the importance of their mental health and wellbeing and how to express their feelings and emotions. On Friday morning we are hosting a coffee morning at 9am for parents with the Connect Mental Health team to explore ways to support mental health both in school and at home, for the children and for adults.

### **Dates for Diary**

*Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February – Year 2 trip to Quayside*

*Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February – SEND Parents Coffee Morning*

*Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February – Spring Term Parents evenings*

*Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February – Reception class family Celebration of the Word*

**Next week is Zebra week on the school lunch menu**

**Don't forget to visit our school website for further school information**

**[www.stmarysonline.co.uk](http://www.stmarysonline.co.uk)**

All 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 [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about PERSUASIVE DESIGN ONLINE

'Persuasive design' refers to the techniques that companies employ to influence our thoughts and behaviours when we're on the internet. These approaches can be spotted on websites, in apps and even as part of some video games. Persuasive design means that this content has been deliberately presented in a way that's intended to encourage you to spend your time or money (or both). These methods often prove highly effective at keeping people engaged and invested for longer than we might expect.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### POTENTIAL ADDICTION

In the digital world, persuasive design can make certain activities more addictive and harder to walk away from: some people may begin to feel anxious or irritated without access to their device or their favourite app, for example. It can also often leave users feeling isolated, as - if they spend most of their time on social media - they may start to find it difficult to talk to other people in real life.

#### MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Scrolling online or gaming without regular breaks is proven to be harmful to our mental health. The constant bombardment of news stories (many of them negative), images and influencers' posts can create sensations of unease, uncertainty and FOMO (fear of missing out). Young people can get so immersed in this environment that they become less likely to spot misleading posts.

#### PROLONGED SCROLLING

Social media can draw any of us - regardless of age - into a continuous pattern of refreshing our screen, following posts and links down rabbit holes or reading countless comments made by others. This aimless scrolling can eat up time which could have been spent on more productive activities. It could also lead younger users into areas of the online world which aren't age appropriate.

#### SENSORY OVERLOAD

Repetitively scrolling, clicking on links or playing games can create an unending stream of new information and visual stimuli. Put it this way: social media isn't exactly renowned as a carefree, chilled-out environment. Such overstimulation can become too much for young people to handle, resulting in sensory overload and causing them to feel stressed, overwhelmed and exhausted.

#### COSTLY ADDITIONS

Video games sometimes display offers for downloadable content or loot boxes which can be bought with real money. While these 'microtransactions' temptingly promise to improve a player's gaming experience, most of the time they are money sinks. Young people in particular, excited by the chance of enhancing their game, could spend quite a sizeable sum very quickly indeed.

#### PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

Hours spent sitting and scrolling means far less time moving around and getting exercise: hardly ideal for a young person's physical health. Additionally, prolonged exposure to the light given off by a phone's screen can lead to eye fatigue and discomfort, especially if viewing it in the dark. Extended phone use before bed can also impact on sleep quality, affecting mood and energy levels over the following days.

# KEEP SCROLLING

# WIN TO WIN

27 new posts

## Advice for Parents & Carers

#### ESTABLISH LIMITS

Talk to your child about setting some time limits on how long they can use their phone, tablet or console in the evenings or at weekends - or perhaps how often they can go on a specific app, game or website. You could also decide to involve the whole family in creating this shared screen time agreement, making things fair (and healthier) for everyone.



#### ENCOURAGE MINDFULNESS

Acknowledging any addiction is key in overcoming it - and compulsive scrolling is no different. If anything mentioned in this guide sounds familiar, it could help to have an honest, open chat with your child about how much time they spend online. Get them to think about how often they scroll through social media aimlessly or habitually open it up whenever they have a spare moment.

#### NIX NOTIFICATIONS

Stop knee-jerk responses at the source by turning off push notifications and alerts. Whether it's a gaming notification or a social media update, these not-so-gentle reminders are designed to catch our attention and lure us back to our device. Switching them off - or even deleting any particularly intrusive apps - can help prevent your child from being reeled back into the online world.



#### MAKE A CHECKLIST

Considering a list of relevant questions can be an effective way of helping children figure out why they're scrolling on certain sites or consuming particular pieces of content. A checklist can prompt young people to ask themselves if they're learning anything or benefiting from this activity - or if they're wasting their time. Taking a step back can sometimes help us to see things more clearly.



### Meet Our Expert

Rebecca Jennings has more than 20 years' experience in the field of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), as well as delivering workshops and training for young people, parents and schools, who is also a subject matter expert on RSHE for the Department of Education.



The National College

NOS National Online Safety #WakeUpWednesday

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# NSPCC

## Online gaming and keeping children safe

**Do you know your whispers from your skins? Your Fortnite from your EA Sports FC 24?**

As part of the NSPCC Game Safe Festival, we're encouraging parents, carers and those working with children and families to have conversations about online gaming.

**GamCare will be sharing expert advice, and you'll hear directly from young people.**

**Our webinar will help you:**

- understand how young people game online.
- learn about tools and resources that support safe play.
- gain the knowledge you need to keep children safe.



**GAME SAFE  
FESTIVAL**

**7 February 2024, 7pm-8pm, via  
Zoom. Book your place via this link:  
[nspcc.org.uk/gamesafe/tickets](https://nspcc.org.uk/gamesafe/tickets)**