

Whole School Mass

On Thursday we celebrated our first school Mass of the year and our first Mass with Father Andrew in the parish. It was such a joyful celebration of our school community and wonderful to see so many family members joining us. Please check our school calendar for future Mass dates.

Connect Session for Parents

The Connect MHST invites Parents and carers supporting children and young people with social, emotional, and mental health needs to a virtual support Session on Wednesday 25th September 2024, 6pm on Zoom. The virtual session is a place for parents and carers to share their experiences, help and support each other and get information and advice to support them. September's support session will focussed on Self Care for Parent/Carers. This link will take you to a flyer where you can click or scan the QR Code to register your interest and to receive the Zoom invite. <https://shorturl.at/btQT2>

School Lunches

Please complete the school meals form to make your child's lunch choices by clicking on this link. Menus are available on our school website. The form is open from 8am on Mondays until noon on Wednesdays. <https://forms.office.com/e/miMkUpPTB5#>

Safety on the yards

It is wonderful to see so many children coming to school on bikes and scooters each day, especially while we have good weather. However please can we remind children that they should not be riding these across the yards at the beginning and end of the day as we have young children on the yards. Children should also not be accessing the play equipment before or after school even with their adults. Thank you for your support

Donations

Reception class would love some donations of natural objects such as conkers and pinecones. Year 1 are doing a history unit on Toys so if anyone has some old toys they could look at these will be carefully looked after and returned.

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 24th September – *SEND Coffee Morning at 9am*

Thursday 26th September – *Year 1 Class Mass at 10am*

Thursday 26th September – *First Holy Communion Meeting for Y4 Parents at 7pm in Church*

Friday 27th September – *Reception/Year 6 Special Friends Assembly*

Monday 30th September – *Year 3 Trip to Rising Sun*

Monday 30th September – *High Borrans Meeting for Year 6 parents at 6pm*

Next week is MONKEY week on the school lunch menu

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

www.stmarysonline.co.uk

Online Safety

#wakeupwednesdays

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

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about FINAL FANTASY XIV



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

The video game Final Fantasy XIV launched in 2010, and, despite being critically panned, it saw an overhaul that has made it one of the biggest success stories in gaming. Its huge world, epic story and versatile combat system have continued to draw in new players, but there's a lot that trusted adults need to be aware of – not least the cost of paying monthly to play.

ALWAYS ONLINE

Final Fantasy XIV is an MMORPG, which stands for Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game. Much like World of Warcraft, players create a character in a chosen class and level up by completing quests to gain power and items. The game requires a constant internet connection, whether you're playing on PC, Mac, PlayStation or Xbox, and there's no option to play offline.

REGULAR EXPANSIONS

As with similar titles in the genre, players can purchase expansions to unlock additional content for the game. Those without the expansions will be locked out of certain new quests and activities, meaning that young people who play regularly will potentially have the next release earmarked on their calendar, ready to buy it as soon as possible.

IN-GAME PURCHASES & SUBSCRIPTION FEE

Users need to pay £8.99 per month to play Final Fantasy XIV, but there is a free trial. If someone stops paying, they'll lose access to their character (although they'll be able to pick up the payments again and resume where they left off). If a player forgets to cancel their payments, however, those subscription fees will continue rolling on automatically.

VOICE & TEXT CHAT

Final Fantasy XIV lets players send chat messages in-game or speak to each other over voice chat. On the one hand, that provides plenty of choice for how those enjoying the game can interact with their fellow fans. On the other hand, however, it's easier than in many games to receive unprompted messages from a stranger, with whom you constantly share your play space.

VIOLENCE

While Final Fantasy XIV has a fairly light tone throughout some of its quests, many involve killing enemies and sometimes even wild animals. The violence isn't especially strong – more comparable to a cartoon or anime style – but the act alone may make some children feel uncomfortable, if they're not yet able to separate fictional harm from the real kind.

POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION

As with World of Warcraft, there's an element of addiction to Final Fantasy XIV. The gameplay loop can be quite engrossing, as minutes turn into hours and hours into days while playing alone or with friends. This can potentially lead to missing real-life events, a lack of interest in any activities not related to the game and procrastination around responsibilities like schoolwork.

FREE TRIAL

Advice for Parents & Educators

MANAGE PLAYTIME

Playtime limits are a great way to counter the addictive qualities of games like Final Fantasy XIV. They allow you discuss why it's still important to enjoy things outside of gaming while still letting a child enjoy playing online with their friends when it makes sense to do so. It's all well and good to have fun with a game, so long as they're able to step away and reconnect with the real world.

MAKE USE OF THE FREE TRIAL

The Final Fantasy XIV free trial is a generous one, with no limits on how long someone can play until their character hits level 70. That's easily dozens of hours for a child to go through the game, complete quests, and see if they enjoy it before purchasing expansions or subscribing to a membership. They may well move on to something else before you need to spend so much as a penny.

PLAY TOGETHER

The free trial makes it extremely easy to jump into Final Fantasy XIV and play alongside a child, provided they're old enough. Not only does that help you ensure that settings are adjusted for their privacy and safety, but it may also end up becoming a bonding experience for you both and any other family members that want to try it out.

REMEMBER, IT'S A PEGI 16

Despite its often-relaxing nature, Final Fantasy XIV carries a PEGI 16 rating for violence and drugs (although the latter is due to a character smoking a pipe on occasion). There's minimal blood, but characters can attack enemies (and other players) with weapons and spells. Take a look at some gameplay videos to see if the content is appropriate for a younger player.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor-in-Chief of GGRecon, and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A longtime fan of online games, he's also a parent, and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has previously been published at sites including IGN, TechRadar and plenty more.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/final-fantasy-14>

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