

St. Thomas' C.E. Primary School

Newsletter

08.09.2023

Dear Parents,

I would like to welcome you all a new school year at St. Thomas'.

It has been lovely to see all of the children come into school enthusiastically and settle into their new classes. I was particularly impressed with how our new children have settled. We have welcomed 10 new children into reception and 5 new children into key stage 2. I am looking forward to seeing what this year brings and the next stage of life at St. Thomas'.

A note on worship...

Generosity



'God Loves a Cheerful Giver'

2 Corinthians 9:7

Our worship theme for this half term is Generosity, which ties in beautifully with our Harvest Festival celebrations later on this month.



Stars of the Week



Molly T., Lola-Rose L., William B., Bradley B., Anna C.,

Noah P., Hugo H., Stevie S., Brady M-W., Holly H.,

Lillie-May C., Iris O., Reagan W., Hope S.,

Theo S. and Katie P.

Events for the Week

Beginning

10.07.23

Monday

Ukulele lessons

Whole class Ukulele lessons for Emerald class

After school Rugby for years 3, 4, 5 and 6

Tuesday

Keyboard, strings and woodwind lessons

After school football for years 4, 5 and 6

Wednesday

Guitar lessons

After school multi-skills for years 1 and 2

Thursday

After school netball/basketball for years 3, 4, 5 and 6

Friday

From the office...

- Please ensure that **school dinners** are ordered by midnight on **Sunday** for the following week. If you are asked for an organisation code, please use **78487851**
- **Wisepay** details have been sent out to all parents. If Wisepay doesn't work for you, please contact the school office.
- **Flu vaccines** consent letters must be returned by 15.9.23 at the latest.
- **Letters for after school clubs** will be in your child's book bag.
- Please remember to **write names in uniform**. We already have some lost property!

Up coming events

Wednesday 20th September Karen Riding (specialist social, communication and autism teacher from Rochdale Additional Needs Service) will be hosting a **coffee morning** for parents of children with **autism and/or communication difficulties** in school from **9.00am-10.00am**. This is an opportunity to meet with Karen and find out about her work, but also an opportunity to get together with other parents whose children have specific additional needs.

Thursday 28th September is our annual Macmillan Coffee Morning fundraiser in aid of Macmillan. This is a charity very close to many people's hearts due to the fantastic work they do to support cancer patients and their families.

Most school events are posted on the school website on the calendar. We try to keep this as up to date as possible.

Wellbeing



The infographic features a teal background with white clouds. At the top, a colorful sunburst logo is followed by the title 'Wellbeing Apps' in large blue letters. Below the title, six app descriptions are presented in white cloud shapes, each with an app icon and download links for Google Play and the App Store. At the bottom, a group of five diverse, happy young people are jumping and holding up their smartphones. The footer contains logos for Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS and Enfield CAMHS.

Wellbeing Apps

Mindfulness is a type of meditation that is all about being aware of the present moment

Mindful Gnats is an app designed to teach young people simple mindfulness and relaxation skills.

Create music to capture your mood and express how you feel with the **Cove** app. Instead of words, create music to reflect emotions like joy, sadness, calm and anger. You can store your music in a personal journal, or send them to someone and let the music do the talking.

SuperBetter is a free web and app based programme created by game designers. Playing SuperBetter helps build personal resilience: the ability to stay strong, motivated, and optimistic even in the face of difficult challenges.

Learn to relax, manage your worries and improve your wellbeing with **Chill Panda**. The app measures your heart rate and suggests tasks to suit your state of mind.

moodgym

MoodGYM is a free, fun, interactive program to help young people with low mood. Based on cognitive behaviour and interpersonal therapy, it consists of five modules, which help you to explore: why you feel the way you do and changing the way you think.

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS Enfield CAMHS
Mental Health Specialist Team Initiative

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 apps 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

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+



CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

Even if your child only connects with people they know, they may still get friend requests from strangers. The Quick Add option lets users befriend people the app recommends – but these 'friends' are merely a username, which could have anyone behind it. Accepting such requests reveals children's personal information through the Story, SnapMap and Spotlight features, potentially putting them at risk from predators.

EXCESSIVE USE

Snapchat works hard on user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). Spotlight Challenges tempt users into spending time producing content in search of cash prizes and online fame, while it's easy for children to pass hours watching Spotlight's endless scroll of videos.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some videos and posts on Snapchat aren't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people (teens in particular) to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beauty' effects on photos can set unrealistic body-image expectations – creating feelings of inadequacy if a young person compares themselves unfavourably with other users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

VISIBLE LOCATION

Snap Map highlights a device's exact position on a virtual map which is visible to other users. There are options to restrict who can see this information: all friends, only you (Ghost Mode), or selected friends. Snapchat also has real-time location sharing, which is intended as a buddy system to ensure friends have reached home safely – but which could also be used to track a young person for more sinister reasons.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TURN OFF QUICK ADD

The Quick Add feature helps people find each other on the app. This function works based on mutual friends or whether someone's number is in your child's contacts list. Explain to your child that this could potentially make their profile visible to strangers. We recommend that your child turns off Quick Add, which can be done in the settings (accessed via the cog icon).



CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS

In 2021, Snapchat rolled out a new safety feature: users can now receive notifications reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well, as opposed to strangers. This 'Friend Check Up' encourages users to delete connections with users that they rarely communicate with, to maintain their online safety and privacy.



DISCUSS AI

Although My AI's responses can often give the impression that it's a real person, it's essential that young people remember this certainly isn't the case. Encourage your child to think critically about My AI's replies to their questions: are they accurate and reliable? Remind them that My AI shouldn't replace chatting with their real friends, and that it's always better to talk to an actual person in relation to medical matters.



CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it's important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Remind your child that once something's online, the creator loses control over where it ends up – and who else sees it. Likewise, it's vital that children understand that some challenges which become popular on the platform may have potentially harmful consequences.



KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Snap Stories are visible to everyone your child adds, unless they change the settings. On SnapMaps, their location is visible unless Ghost Mode is enabled (again via settings). It's safest not to add people your child doesn't know in real life – especially since the addition of My Places, which allows other Snapchat users to see where your child regularly visits and checks in.



BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with your child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending sexual images to them, your child can select the three dots on that person's profile and report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user (annoying or malicious messages, spam, or masquerading as someone else, for example).



Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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#WakeUpWednesday

Sources: <https://help.snapchat.com/en-gb/articles/2020090206802-What-is-My-AI-on-Snapchat-and-how-do-I-use-it> | <https://uk.newsroom.com/en-gb/news/2021/04/20210420-snapchat-warns-of-ai-chatbot-risk> | <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-56866464>

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Weekly Round up

All classes this week have been spending their time settling into new routines, finding out about each other and trying to remember what they learned last year! Our subject teaching will begin properly on Monday. There have been some changes to the way we teach some of our subjects. Maths is going to be taught in year groups. Reception and Year 1 are going to be taught by Miss Wardle (not at the same time), Year 2 are going to be taught by Mrs Stewardson, Year 3 by Miss Hobbs, Year 4 by Mr Northcott, Year 5 by Mrs Williams and Mrs Robinson and year 6 by Miss Lockley. PSHE will now be taught weekly, rather than once a fortnight and PE will be taught by class teachers.

Our school website has overviews for each subject under the 'Our Curriculum' tab. You will be able to find out what we teach, how we teach and why we teach in the way that we do. For some subjects, there will be useful links for you to explore. Each class also has a page, where teachers will update information.

Share My Work Afternoons

On the last afternoon of each half term (or the previous day, if we are in church), we will be hosting a 'share my work' afternoon. Parents will be invited to come into school from 2.00pm to sit with their child and share with their child the work that has been completed that half term.

The plan is to make this a 'drop-in' style event and parents can come in at any time between 2.00pm and 2.45pm and then join us for our final assembly of the term at 2.50pm if they wish to. This will give those who have children in different classes the opportunity to visit them all.

Head Boy and Head Girl

Each the year the children in year 6 get the opportunity to stand as head boy and head girl. They then have to deliver a speech to their class. The children in the class then vote for who they would like to represent them and our school.

This year our Head Boy will be **Harry Szlatoszlavek** and our Head Girl is **Phoebe Finch**. The post of Deputy Head Boy has be given to **Branden Fraine** and the post of Deputy Head Girl has gone to **Emilia Roberts**.

Congratulations to them all.

P.E. Days

Amethyst – Tuesday and Thursday

Ruby – Tuesday and Wednesday

Opal - Tuesday and Thursday

Emerald – Monday and Wednesday

Sapphire – Monday and Friday

All children wear their PE kit for school on PE days.