

# St. Thomas' C.E. Primary School

## Newsletter

15.12.23



## Stars of the Week



**Jack D., Bridget, Erin, Brady, Anna C., Isla, Codie and Hunter**

**Well done to you all!**

### 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.
- Children taking part in **after school sports** need to bring a **PE kit to school** to change into if it is not their usual PE day.

### Christmas Hamper Drawer

There is a mystery winner of a hamper! A ticket was drawn with no name on the back. The winning ticket is one with a **pale pink border, number 51**. If you have the ticket, please telephone the school office by **Wednesday lunchtime** to claim the prize.

If no one comes forward, we will redraw the ticket on Wednesday afternoon and inform the winner.

## Events for the Week

### Beginning

18.12.23

#### Monday

Emerald class Ukulele Concert at 10.50am

Ukulele lessons

Brass Lessons

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

Christmas Party for reception, year 1 and year 2

#### Wednesday

Guitar lessons

Christmas Party for Year 3, year 4, year 5 and year 6

After school multi-skills for years 1 and 2

#### Thursday

Christmas Jumper Day

Christmas Dinner Day

Reindeer Run

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

#### Friday

Nativity Service in church at 1.45pm

## Christmas Parties



Children come to school in their party clothes on the day of their party. Some letters state that the children come in school uniform and then get changed. Please ignore this instruction!

## Nativity Service



On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December we will be holding our annual Nativity and Carol Service in church. All are welcome to attend. This is the perfect way to end the term and begin the festive holidays. The children from Amethyst class set the scene, whilst the children from Sapphire class narrate the story of the very first Christmas.

## Christmas Concerts



Congratulations to all of the children from Amethyst, Ruby, Opal and Emerald classes who put on superb Christmas Concerts. It was a real treat to watch them perform so confidently. They worked hard to learn their lines, song lyrics, dance routines and sign language.



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# FORTNITE

CHAPTER  
**4**

AGE RESTRICTION  
**PEGI  
12**

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Fortnite may be something of a veteran in gaming terms (having launched back in 2017), but it remains massively popular – with more than 250 million people playing online every month. That's partially due to the competitive nature of its player-vs-player combat, its pop culture crossovers and its constantly shifting map. Significant updates are rolled out with each new version of the game – known as 'chapters' – and within these sit shorter 'seasons', which bring more subtle changes. The latest iteration, Chapter 4 Season 2, adds a cyberpunk-themed city and anime-style areas, for example, along with new weapons and characters.

## ALWAYS ONLINE

There's no single-player offline mode in Fortnite: it can only be played online. Internet access can sometimes be an issue when you're out and about (both in terms of connectivity and using up data), so you may find that dedicated young Fortnite players are often less enthusiastic about trips away of a certain length – such as days out and holidays – than you might have expected.

## IN-GAME COSTS

Fortnite is free to download and play, but it does offer various additional purchases – cosmetic skins, rare weapons and so on – which don't really impact on gameplay, but can cost quite a significant amount. These items are bought with game's currency, V-Bucks – which can be earned through playing, but are also often purchased from the game's store for real-world money.

## POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Part of Fortnite's appeal is its ongoing crossovers with other popular franchises, ranging from movies and TV shows like The Walking Dead to comic book characters including Batman to other games such as Street Fighter. This means you could find your child asking questions about the creature from Alien or who Geralt from The Witcher is a little sooner than you'd possibly anticipated.

## CROSSPLAY AND PARTY CHAT

Fortnite is popular with vast numbers of gamers – of various ages. Crossplay lets friends play with and against each other, regardless of whether they're on an Xbox, PlayStation or PC – while party chat allows them to communicate during the game. This chat feature can also, therefore, put youngsters at risk of hearing inappropriate language from older players in the heat of virtual combat.

## VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

At its core, there's no avoiding that Fortnite is about shooting other players to eliminate them. That said, there's no blood or gore; the violence is generally rendered in a cartoonish style, and there are frequent comical touches to lighten the mood (fishing mini-games, for example). The machine guns, shotguns and other weapons often look and behave realistically, however, so discretion is advised.

## FREQUENT UPDATES

The game's developers release content in 'seasons' that usually run for around ten weeks. Each fresh update sees items added to the in-game store, changes to the environment's map and a different overarching theme (such as 'medieval', 'pirates' or 'party'). These regular renewals help to hold players' interest – but also give young gamers plenty of reasons to keep returning to their screens.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### MATCH GAMING TIMES

Younger players tend to want to play Fortnite alongside their friends. With this in mind, it could be worth speaking to the parents and carers of your child's social group and trying to coordinate their gaming around certain hours of the day. Safety in numbers is obviously a factor here, but it will also help your child feel that they're getting adequate opportunity to socialise with their friends online.

### SET SPENDING LIMITS

Fortnite's rotating store is a not-so-subtle mechanism for coaxing players into splashing out on those sought-after items before they disappear again for weeks. This could potentially lead to surprise outlays on your card if your child is tempted into an impulse purchase. You could consider setting up a prepaid card for them to use – or ensuring that any online purchases require adult authorisation.

### USE UPDATES AS REWARDS

Fortnite's seasonal updates are free – but each also brings the option of a 'battle pass', unlocking exclusive rewards for playing the game and completing set challenges. The passes cost around £8 (and are available as part of larger bundles) and can be an effective reward to young Fortnite fans for good behaviour or academic performance, or as an incentive for chores like tidying their room.

### BE WARY OF SCAMS

The immense popularity of Fortnite with more trusting younger audiences means that there's no shortage of scammers looking to fraudulently obtain passwords and other personal data through techniques like phishing. As the developers point out on many of Fortnite's landing screens, they never ask for a player's account password outside of the game: make sure your child knows this.

### ENJOY FORTNITE TOGETHER

Fortnite also offers split-screen gameplay, meaning that two people can play simultaneously via the same TV or computer. That's ideal for siblings or when your child's friends visit – but it also offers you an opportunity to spend time doing something fun with your child, while also being able to make sure they're playing the game safely. Who knows, you might even teach them a thing or two!

## Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site [GD&E.com](http://GD&E.com) and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. A long-time gamer, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



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# Wellbeing

## Christmas Activities

That are good for your mental health



Make some homemade hot chocolate with real chocolate, it really has to be experienced!



Bake some treats, like gingerbread people. They're delicious and the activity taps into your creative side!



Watch a feel-good movie with an open fire. Films can help immerse you into the happier headspace.

Wrap up and go for a winter walk. Exercise is good for your mental health and we can't stop just cause it's a bit nippy out! Plus it's a great opportunity to look at Christmas Lights!



Donate some money/goods to charity. SVP's giving tree is a great appeal to help those in need. It feels good to give back!



Make a home-made Christmas jumper for any in person/zoom parties. Hot glue on tinsel and baubles or print off some memes or puns and stick them on. It's a great talking point and will give you a laugh!



Get Tidy. Christmas can get cluttered and messy with gifts and decorations. A tidy space can equal a tidy mind!



Do not neglect your mental health. Talk to a GP/Counsellor if you feel overwhelmed or low.



### PTA Film Night



The Parent's Association are holding a family film night on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December from 6.00pm. Tickets cost £3.50 and can be purchased on Wisepay. Children must be accompanied by an adult.